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Ernest Hemingway's *Fiesta*, Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and the Development of Femininity and Masculinity in the 1920s

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I confirm that this thesis is my own work written using solely the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

České Budějovice, 10.5. 2021 Krejzlová Anna

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Annotation

The main aim of this thesis is the analysis of the characters from Francis Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and Ernest Hemingway's *Fiesta* (1926) with a focus on the female protagonists. To fully understand the characters, the work first concentrates on the historical background. The theory primarily centres on the American society living in the 1920s, discusses the term *The Lost Generation*, provides an overview of the changes the women experienced in relation to the term a *New Woman,* and examines the real-life models that inspired both authors in creating the female characters. Subsequently, the work analyses female characters according to several themes: social standing, money, appearance, morals, relationships, and power. After the analysis, the problem of masculinity is discussed. At first, the thesis describes the changes in the perception of manliness from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century and then, the male characters and their view on masculinity is examined in relation to the theoretical background.

Key words: Fitzgerald, Hemingway, female characters, New Woman, masculinity

Anotace

Cílem této diplomové práce je analýza postav z amerických románů *The Great Gatsby* (1925) Francise Scotta Fitzgeralda a *Fiesta* (1926) Ernesta Hemingwaye, s hlavním zaměřením na ženské postavy. Nejdříve se práce pokusí popsat historicky kontext obou děl, který je, mimo jiné, důležitý i pro porozumění analyzovaných postav. V rámci teorie se zmíní o událostech, které se staly v Americe roku 1920, poté se pokusí přiblížit problematiku takzvané *Ztracené generace*, probere změny v životě žen, které úzce souvisí s termínem „*New Woman*“, a na konci této teoretické části popíše události a osobnosti, které se staly inspirací pro ženské postavy pro oba romány. Dále následuje samotná analýza ženských postav na základě několika témat: postavení ve společnosti, peníze, vzhled, morálka, vztahy a moc. Práce se také zaměří na problematiku maskulinity od 19. po začátek 20. století, která se stane výchozí pro analýzu mužských postav.

Klíčová slova: Fitzgerald, Hemingway, ženské postavy, New Woman, maskulinita

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Introduction

Ernest Hemingway and Francis Scott Fitzgerald are recognized as two of the most prominent American writers, especially known for the works they had written in and about the era of the 1920s. The success of their creative work, however, did not fade away with time. Nowadays, their fiction is not only widely read and enjoyed by the average or occasional readers, but also discussed at seminars, and analysed by numbers of scholars, critics, and academics. The main aspects that make their work still relevant may probably be the wide range of authentic characters, captivating themes, or the reader's personal fascination with the era itself. This thesis will consider all these aspects in the analysis of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and Hemingway's *Fiesta* (1926), but the main focus will be on the gender issues and their portrayal in both stories.

Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is set in New York during the prohibition era, also known as the Jazz Age, and tells the tragic story of an ambitious self-made man, Jay Gatsby, who earns his money by an illegal business – selling alcohol at drugstores – in order to win the heart of Daisy, a prominent woman whom he had known early in life but who is now married to a domineering Tom Buchanan. Gatsby arranges great parties in the hope that Daisy finds her way to him, but she does not seem to notice until Nick, Daisy's cousin, and the narrator of the story, helps Gatsby to get her attention and reunite them. Gatsby believes he can repeat the past and convince Daisy to get a divorce so she can be with him. However, although her husband indulges in affairs and treats her badly, Daisy decides to stay with him. Before they completely part ways, Daisy gets herself and Gatsby in trouble – she accidentally hits one of Tom's lovers, Myrtle, by a car and drives away. Gatsby is ready to take responsibility for it but ends up being murdered by Myrtle's husband George.

Hemingway's *Fiesta* deals with a young group of disillusioned American and British expatriates, shaken by the tremendous experience from the war, living in Europe. The narrator of the story is Jake Barnes who, during the war service, suffered an injury that made him impotent. Jake falls in love with an attractive, modern woman, Lady Brett Ashley, but his injury and her sexual desires along with her relationship with Mike Campbell make it impossible for them to be together. The story starts in Paris where the group spends time partying and drinking, and where Robert Cohn, a Jewish author, and the "outcast" of the group, becomes infatuated with Brett. The group then travels to Spain

to see the bullfights. Although they are all enthusiastic about the excursion, the complicated relationships between the male characters and Brett become the reason for the tension in the group and later cause conflicts and quarrels. Brett falls in love with a young bullfighter Pedro Romero and flees with him to Madrid. Nonetheless, soon after, she realizes that she does not want to spoil him, since she is older than him and "broken" by her experiences, and thus she sends him away eventually. The story ends with her, talking with Jake, contemplating what life would be like if they could be together.

Both works reflect the era of the 1920s and both demonstrate the changing conditions of the gender roles. Therefore, it is no surprise that they have been widely discussed in terms of the gender issues. Nowadays, one might find numbers of works exploring their male and female characters with a variety of theories and conclusions – some of them seem to condemn or defend the protagonists' behaviour or decisions quite radically. This thesis will thus use and examine some of the ideas and attempt to provide an objective opinion on the characters in relation to the critics' theories, historical background, and the plot.

The beginning of the twentieth century was highly influential to many artists, primarily due to the shocking experiences with the first modern war and dramatic changes in the socio-economic sphere of the time. There is thus little wonder the artists felt inspired and, perhaps, duty-bound to immortalize such developments. That is why the thesis will first provide a short overview of the era. In order to approach the main focal point of this work, one needs to understand the circumstances that formed and helped to produce both novels, and what led the authors to portray their characters the way they did. This thesis will thus attempt to generally summarize the most crucial years of both authors' lives. At first, the work will concentrate on the Great War – how the war was presented to the American public, how it failed society's expectations and affected its mentality. Subsequently, the post-war period will be examined, along with its advantages, disadvantages, and difficulties.

The work will discuss the artists labelled as the representatives of the Lost Generation in order to make a certain connection between real life and fiction since both novels also deal with the characters that seem to feel lost, uprooted, senseless, or dissatisfied with their life – just like their creators and people around them. The thesis will focus on the main problems the representatives of the Lost Generation went through and on the ways that helped them to deal with them. In relation to their effort the thesis will provide a short outline about American citizens becoming expatriates in Paris. Being acquainted with the

background of these circumstances is very helpful, especially for understanding Hemingway's *Fiesta*, where the story begins in Paris with American and British expatriates. The work will then continue with another subchapter regarding The Lost Generation that will deal with the tendencies of the works the authors produced during the era of 1920s. It will also attempt to explore the basic tendencies of the *High Modernism* and *Harlem Renaissance* writings, as they are inevitable parts of the period that should not be overlooked.

Since the thesis will primarily concentrate on the female characters, the development of the *New Woman* will be the next important subject for the discussion. The term New Woman is usually associated with fashion and a new morality; however, the chapter will also focus on other aspects that defined the modern woman of the 1920s – education, political involvement, sports, and others – these features will be accompanied by a few specific examples in each field. This part of the thesis will be especially useful for the following analysis and characterisation of the female characters.

The last theoretical chapter will discuss Hemingway and Fitzgerald's approach towards writing and what it means for these authors to write according to their personal experience. The discussion will be based on Jackson J. Benson's essay "The Life as Fiction and the Fiction as Life", which describes the writing style, that both authors use, as "daydreaming". Subsequently, two subchapters regarding models for Hemingway and Fitzgerald's novels will approach the "backstory" that helped to create the fiction.

After the description of the historical background, the literary interpretation will follow. At first, the female characters will be introduced in terms of their social standing along with their approach towards money and status. This chapter will also utilise the knowledge from the previous discussions, and the female characters will be characterised according to their willingness or efforts to become independent like the New Woman. The next chapter will be dealing with the female characters' behaviour and how it might differ from their appearance. It will review existing explanations by critics, attempt to elaborate on them, and validate the assumptions. Another theme to analyse will be love, or in some cases, the illusion of it. This chapter will consider the complexity of the relationships in both stories and question the honesty of it – the analysis might also confirm or bring other findings of the nature of the female protagonists. The subsequent chapter will only deal with two main protagonists – Daisy and Brett – because these two might be explored in relation to the term *Femme fatale*. Firstly, the term will be explained and related to the general interpretation of Daisy and Brett. Afterwards, the analysis will

deal with the aspects both women have in common with the term Femme fatal and also with the mythological figures (Circe and Siren) that are generally considered mischievous and dangerous like the Femme fatale. The analysis of the female characters will be concluded with the chapter concerning the characters' approach towards the meaning of life.

The last part of the thesis will be dedicated to the male characters because they affect and *are* affected by the female characters. The debate will be concentrated on masculinity and its issues. At first, the thesis will provide a short overview on the historical context concerning manliness, how it was defined from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century, and what were the main challenges that confronted the "raw masculinity" – this part will primarily be based on the collection of essays by Michael Kimmel. This theoretical background will be used in the analysis of the male characters. In addition, the protagonists will also be discussed in relation to the individual aspects that influence their masculinity – women, social status, the war, and others.

1 Life after The Great War

In April 1917, the USA joined European warfare which was, at that period, called *The Great War*. Although the war itself lasted four years (from 1914 to 1918) and America "only" participated distantly for a year, the war thoroughly affected the American society – especially the young generation (Ruland and Bradbury: 1997, 277). The post-war situation exacerbated the division in society and opened questions about American identity together with its role in the world (Blower: 2011, 20). This period welcomed new "consumer society" along with the disillusioned generation that defied the conservatives clinging onto traditions, moral ideals, nativism etc.

When decided that the U.S. would no longer be neutral, the involvement in The Great War started to be advertised in a quite idealistic, positive way. It was perceived as an opportunity that would spread democracy and freedom – a peacemaker that will end all the wars around the world. People were encouraged to support the war and "make" history. The pro-war propaganda was disseminated at the churches, schools, or theatres so the involvement in the conflict could gain a widespread support. Those who refused to support it and participated in creating anti-war street pamphlets or making speeches were threatened with penalties and imprisonment – the Congress passed two laws for these cases: The Espionage Act of 1917 and the Sedition Act of 1918 (McNeese: 2010, 31-40).

This "positive propaganda" must have been one of the main reasons for the disillusionment and other changes that appeared or expanded after the war. When the U.S. entered the war, there was already a great number of casualties and "the Allies were war-weary and uncertain of the war's outcome," (ibid., 47). Not only did the troops face poisonous gas, machine-guns, tanks, aerial bombardments, but they also suffered from hunger and diseases that were as dangerous as the manmade weapons. They had to adjust to the trench system, new strategies, and technologies – technologies that were more fatal than ever (ibid., 45-55). Another issue that contributed to the distrust and scepticism towards "any authority figure, military or civic" (Curnutt: 2000, 17) during and after the war, was the newspapers censorship along with its romanticising of the war that made the war seem as a necessary evil "for maintaining morale" (ibid.)

Although the Allies eventually defeated the Central Powers, the enthusiasm of the victory was overshadowed by the aftermath of the war and other emerging problems. The

Great War brought about many deaths, cost billions of dollars, and left Americans anxious about the possibility of another war. Apart from these problems, the war was also one of the main reasons that caused the spread of the Spanish flu around the world in the spring of 1918. As the American troops returned home, the disease expanded overseas and brought about twice as many victims as the war itself. The fear of the deadly disease lasted approximately nine months. During this time, every fourth American got infected by the virus – with no vaccine or specific medications invented, the infected were most likely to die (McNeese: 2010, 75-77).

Another thing that continued after the war and worsened certain conflicts was a prohibition. Alcohol was always regarded as a problem, especially by the Fundamentalists, social activists, and people from the countryside. The primal idea of the prohibition was the aspiration to raise the numbers of abstainers, reduce immorality, violence, and poverty. In 1917, another argument appeared and most likely helped to procure more supporters in favour of the prohibition. Many claimed that the alcohol could negatively affect the outcome of the war. It was also suggested that grain, that was utilised to produce the alcoholic beverages, should be used for food production instead. The "prohibition moved from a moral demand to a necessary war measure" (Carlisle: 2009, 159). During the war, there was only a little oppression to the thought. However, when the war ended, the prohibition stopped being respected as it used to be. After the war, it seemed less relevant for Americans to ban the production and consumption of alcohol. Therefore, the prohibition started to be strongly challenged and "inspired" many Americans to participate in organized crimes which included bootlegging and opening speakeasies (ibid., 159-161).

In 1919, the American society also dealt with race riots. The African Americans who moved to North to get a job during the wartime were perceived and treated like intruders after the victory. Dissatisfied with their condition, the African American leaders attempted to fight for equality. However, their attempts resulted in deaths and damages, as well as another financial shortfall (Reeves: 2000, 81-82). Apart from that, the American radicals (communists, anarchists etc.) were trying to lead *their* revolution and "called for an uprising of the country's working class," (McNeese: 2010, 78). Their methods of gaining success (for example, mail bombing[1]), increased society's fear of extremists, especially communists, and resulted in raids and deportations of the radical

[1] The radicals sent explosive packages via postal system. Some of these attacks reached its goal – attorney general, Alexander Mitchell Palmer was destroyed by such a delivery or Georgia senator lost his hands.

groups and their members. Due to these issues, America faced "a new wave of nativism spread" (ibid., 79-81) that generally disapproved of immigrants because they were mostly being linked to the radical groups and perceived as one of the main problems for the American nation. In connection with the new nativism, the organization called *The Ku Klux Klan* was revived. However, this time, with the exception that they were not as secretive about their identities as their progenitors, and only a native-born could gain a membership (ibid., 80-86). But they kept the main thoughts of the old KKK – as Tim McNeese puts it: "like its predecessor, the new Klan targeted blacks, as well as Roman Catholics, Jews, immigrants, and foreigners of any kind," (ibid., 83) because they were perceived "as a horrific threat to white Protestant America" (ibid., 86).

Nonetheless, post-war America cannot only be defined by the uneasiness described above. This period was also significant for the rise of the urbanization as well as new innovations and discoveries. Despite the difficulties, the 1920s might be noted as the era of prosperity. Mass production together with the rise of advertising fostered mass consumption and created a new standard of life. One of the most notable changes occurred in family life thanks to the growth of electrical networks – mainly in the industrialized areas. Many households were equipped with refrigerators, radios, vacuum cleaners, electric stoves, and other helpful utensils that facilitated the housework (Carlisle: 2009, 9). Other improvements of the period were innovations connected with transportation and communication. The growth of car the industry brought about a cheap mass production of automobiles for affordable prices. On account of these changes, almost every average American could own a car which also helped to connect people from the different segments of the country. Due to the experiences with the war, the airplane industry also increased its production. While some airplanes were sent for the use of the American navy and army, other planes were used for ordinary necessities such as mail service (McNeese: 2010, 114).

Another notable aspect that defined the post-war period was a new way of entertainment that emerged due to the new technologies. The innovation of the radio and expansion of movie theatres gave the young people possibility to share interests with people of the same age. While in the earlier period, adolescents defined themselves through their families, in 1920s young people centred their attention primarily on their contemporaries. Thanks to the openness of this materialistic and consumer culture, a new loose morality was introduced. Young women gained more freedom (see Chapter 3), the "old" family life faced a crisis due to the growing numbers of divorces, people did not

hide their affection as much as in the earlier years, and attended speakeasies, private parties where they danced to the Jazz music, smoked, drank alcohol etc. As the innovations made the world "smaller", all the newest trends were far more reachable and settled in the culture more easily. That is probably why Charleston, Jazz, and Blues became a typical symbol of entertainment in 1920s (Carlisle: 2009, 21, McNeese: 2010, 87).

However, not everybody perceived the urbanization and other changes as a source of "colourful", multifarious life. Fundamentalists, that primarily dwelled in the South and rural areas of the Midwest, clang onto more traditional lifestyle. Apart from disputing alcohol, Catholic and Jewish immigrants, they were also opposed to "modernity", and demanded "strict conformity to sacred texts," (Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Fundamentalism", 2019). But with the new era, people sought for modern way of life and started to pay more attention to science and other radical theories "that eroded belief in the power of humanity to determine its destiny" (Curnutt: 2000, 8) – for example, to Charles Darwin's theory of evolution that rejected the idea of divine powers being the creator of humanity, and supported the notion that "nature was a product of chance rather than design" (ibid. 8). Another influential theorist was Friedrich Nietzsche who, among other things, claimed the humanity should not cling onto religious notions like modesty, submission, or morality, but rather gain power by one's own will and aggression. Also, it cannot be forgotten that Sigmund Freud discussed the mind of individual, claiming that every individual's behaviour is dominated by unconscious mind – according to his statement, people cannot control their behaviour, because they "follow" overpowering urges of their mind. With these approaches, the ultimate truthfulness of Bible along with the "faith in civilization's ability to evolve through discipline and self-control," (ibid. 9) was attacked and questioned. Fundamentalists rejected these new notions of the society and attempted to oppose to it. This rising change of the society with its innovations deepened the tension between the conservative tradition and modern "mentality" and caused conflicts.

Although 1920s was the era of rapid industrial and economic growth that connected and drew people closer together, it was also a period of a great unrest, anxiety, and misapprehension. It was time of prosperity and of major hardships and unsettledness that, among others, gave birth to a new, disillusioned generation – *The Lost Generation.*

2 The Lost Generation

The Lost Generation is a term that concerns all, mostly young, Americans influenced by the tragic events of The Great War. In a narrow sense, it is a literary term used for American writers such as Ernest Hemingway, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, William Faulkner, Gertrude Stein and many more who lived during this period and approached the war and post-war experiences in their stories (Ruland and Bradbury: 1997, 277). In fact, the creation of the concept has its roots in the literary field. It is accredited by Ernest Hemingway to the American writer Gertrude Stein who accidentally heard the term from a garage owner who lamented the unreliability of his assistant comparing him to the young, uprooted generation: "You are all a *génération perdue*" (Hemingway: 1996, 24)

As mentioned above, this generation placed itself against the values of the "old" era and conservative society. One of the most important reasons for that was the disillusionment from the war – because the war was presented as a manifestation of the society's values like heroism, a noble contest ensuring freedom and glory, and people were constantly facing the romanticized version of it. But, when they experienced it, it had nothing to do with heroism or nobleness. It was a homicidal folly fought in imprisoning trenches that resulted in too many pointless deaths. Stricken by the war and its destructive powers, many lost their faith. God was dead to them; how else could such a situation happen (Curnutt: 2000, 17)?

Although the post-war situation brought about many technological improvements, radical theories and loose lifestyle that overshadowed the idea of tradition, the Lost Generation did not live in a complete symbiosis with the newly developing modern society either. The increasing materialism and dehumanization caused distress and melancholy. Society's demand from people to possess things repelled the new generation that highlighted the absurdity of ephemeral pleasures and the shallowness of riches (Ruland and Bradbury: 1997, 278-279).

The word "Lost" quite precisely characterizes the nature of this generation – they felt uprooted, uncomfortable neither with the old nor the new world, they lost God, joy, love, reason, future, and they wanted to express these feelings and find themselves again. To achieve that, some of them decided to move anywhere they could to recover from the society that felt too strange and alienated from them. Some of them found their refuge in

Greenwich Village in New York City where mostly bohemians settled and formed a new lifestyle that eventually spread throughout the U.S. They came up with several revolutionary ideas: instead of mechanical methods of learning, they wanted children to evolve their authentic personality, they fought for women's equality, highlighted the importance of creative work, travelling, and perception of the moment which should be enjoyed to the fullest (Monk: 2008, 75-76).

However, there was another place that called upon them; according to an article in *Saturday Evening Post*, Greenwich Village could not reach the "high standard" of *Paris*. The commentator considered the Village as a place that only yearns to be as magnificent and grand as the *City of Lights* (Blower: 2011, 19).

2.1 Paris as "A Moveable Feast"

The American expats travelled to Paris and other European cities for various reasons. They not only wanted to escape from the responsibilities or conservative society and its preservation of old morals, but some of them also wanted to form a "cosmopolitan or internationally minded" identity (Curnutt: 2000, 15). They wanted to pay more attention to arts and experiment with it. The City of Lights enabled not only the development of one's artistic style but also opened an imagined door to a formidable source of knowledge and eminent art. It was ready to welcome artists, students, journalists, investors, performers, and many more. It also became a secure shelter for female expatriates who defied traditional gender roles, for the discriminated people of colour, and homosexuals (Blower, 2011, 4-20, Curnutt: 2000 15). Apart from being considered a charming place for its sidewalk terraces, never-ending merriment, markets, cafés, and other attractions, it was also a very affordable place to live (Blower: 2011, 1). As Kirk Curnutt explains, the affordability was mainly caused by the economic decline after the war and a low exchange rate. In the early 1920s, the Americans could exchange one dollar for approximately fourteen to twenty-five francs. For example, Ernest Hemingway's first apartment cost 250 francs a month (which was around 20 dollars a month); he with his wife would spend 2,000 dollars a year – all the basic needs as well as the meals in the restaurants, tours, celebrations, or gatherings included (The Hemingway Project, 2018). In 1924, Francis S. Fitzgerald with his wife and daughter moved to France *primarily* due to the financial affordability. His income was probably too low to get by in America and the French currency seemed very convenient. While in America, their rent

would be around 300 dollars a month, the rent of their new house in the south of France was around 79 dollars a month (Hook: 2002, 59). Harold Stearns commented on the life in Paris that if the expatriates were not particularly wealthy, they might not afford the most luxurious living, but the city provided them with "enough to eat well, sleep comfortably, buy a book or two, and be able to move about" and, in his opinion, there was no point in craving more (Curnutt: 2000, 74-75). This economic situation in Paris was also very convenient in the matter of free time – instead of being under the constant pressure of earning enough money, the artists had time to stop, enjoy the moment, write a novel, a poem or create any other work of art (ibid. 74).

The City of Lights created numerous fellowships. Young artists and intellectuals could easily get in touch with the "high priests of art" (Cowley: 1994, 14) – established figures who were ready to hold a discussion about their skills, art, and other intriguing subjects. Individuals such as Gertrude Stein who lived in one of the most notorious addresses – *27 rue de Fleurus* – where she would regularly hold salons. Her work was not accessible to many readers, but people kept visiting her for her thoughts on literary techniques and her devotion to art in general, and also for the extensive collection of Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso paintings she owned (Monk: 2008, 41). Another important expatriate was Sylvia Beach, a publisher and the owner of *Shakespeare and Company* bookstore and library. She was not an artist herself, but her shop was "an important hub of modernist activity" (Curnutt: 2000, 25). It concentrated on works written by the authors from the U.K. and the U.S., hence the frequent customers were primarily the Anglophone expatriates. However, it soon caught also the attention of the French such as André Gide, Paul Valéry, Jules Romains, and others (Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Sylvia Beach", 2021). Sherwood Anderson was another notable figure who, at that time, was at the peak of his popularity. Apart from his short-story collection *Winesburg, Ohio* (*1919*), he was also known for advising his fellow artists Gertrude Stein, Harold Crane, Ernest Hemingway, etc. In fact, Anderson had a great influence on Hemingway – he was the main reason Hemingway chose France over Italy. Anderson introduced him to Stein, Ezra Pound and Sylvia Beach, and recommended his works to the publishers (Curnutt: 2000, 24-25). The expatriates were also able to "meet with Joyce in his apartment, talk of Shakespeare's historical sources with Pound in Hôtel Jacob, sit with Valéry on the park benches of the Tuilleries to question his ideas, attend and take part in Dadaist 'happenings' […]" (Cowley: 1994, 14).

Paris represented liberation and a new start. Although for Fitzgerald the European culture was "distasteful", he managed to find his "mood of high creative excitement" (Hook: 2002, 59) in its environment and work on his most famous novel – *The Great Gatsby;* for Hemingway it represented an inexhaustible source of inspiration – not only for its environment but also his friendships with the fellow writers who would help him develop his writing skills and authentic style (Blower, 2011, 218), Harold Stearns compared his life in Paris to a dream (Monk: 2008, 83) and for Gertrude Stein, the City of Lights became a home (ibid., 7).

Even though Paris was such a delightful inspiration to the expatriates and seemed practically overrun by them, many areas of the capital remained undiscovered or overlooked. The majority of Americans paid attention primarily to the places noted as the most prominent in the guidebooks. Numerous artists would be housed in Montmartre or Montparnasse, where they would also gather in the notorious nightclubs and cafés such as the Jockey or the Dôme. They would spend the days around the Opera and the evenings at the Champs-Elysées or Bois de Boulogne where they would have their dinner or visit a cocktail bar. These selected areas were "adapted" to the expatriates and their needs and sufficiently substituted their home. In most cases, they revolved around the English-speaking community and did not need to be fluent in French. The basic knowledge of the vocabulary was enough to communicate with the waiters, taxi drivers etc. (Blower: 2011, 43, Curnutt: 2000, 16). However, some Parisians were not particularly enthusiastic about the "invasion" of the American expats. They complained about the situation and the fact that Paris became "The Americans' Playground" where French people represented a "scene-shifters to keep the show running," (Blower: 2011, 7)

Although the expatriates left America physically, because of the discontent they experienced there, many of them did not abandon the U.S. in their minds. They only "transported the debates [on national condition] to a new ground" (ibid. 39). Their goal was to help the modern culture to grow and be prosperous in international terms from a distance (ibid.). The expatriates did not escape abroad to gain a different citizenship, the escape only reflected their sense of deracination and discontent, not their desire to find their roots elsewhere (Curnutt: 2000, 13-14).

2.2 Literature

As mentioned above, the authors were influenced by the events surrounding *The Great War*, its aftermath, and the post-war period. Not only did it change their personalities and way of life, but it also became one of the major themes described in their fiction. Those who experienced the terrors of the war utilised their memories to make the brutality and senselessness of it approachable to the readers. Such stories are characteristic for their ironic tone which was supposed to reflect the soldiers' inability to understand the absurd situation. Its protagonists are usually portrayed as emotionless, cynical observers rather than participants or creators of the action (Curnutt: 2000, 18). The war is portrayed for example in some of the stories collected in Hemingway's *In Our Time* (1925) or his novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). In these works, the author addresses the suffering and confusion that soldiers experienced in the Army. Reflecting on a terrifying reality, the stories break illusions of heroism and mock romanticized visions of sacrifice. Thanks to his unadorned and direct writing style the narratives acquire an authentic, merciless atmosphere (Ruland and Bradbury: 1997, 284). The criticism of the war and the Army is also discussed in *Three Soldiers* (1921) written by Dos Passos who, like Hemingway, drew upon his personal experience as an ambulance driver (ibid., 277-278).

The reflections on the post-war situation and American society were presented for example in Fitzgerald's debut novel *This Side of Paradise* (1920), his short-story collection *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920) or *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922). Fitzgerald was considered a chronicler of the modern era – on account of these stories, many people labelled him as a "flapper novelist" because he centred his attention on young people and their "teenage rituals" (Curnutt: 2000, 42). However, Fitzgerald also described the frustration this young generation felt after experiencing the Great War. The narratives show the inner struggle and inability to find a purpose in life that seemed damaged and meaningless (Berman: 2009, 2). A similar topic can be found in Faulkner's first novel – *Soldier's Pay* (1926) which also portrays the inability to reconnect with normal life after the war. Or in Hemingway's *Fiesta* (1926) that deals with the problems of the disillusioned and dissatisfied generation and demonstrates the uprooted life of the American expatriates (people like himself) – their feelings, unbound behaviour, hard drinking, etc. The problems of modern American life were also discussed in Anderson's

Many Marriages (1922) where the author attacks the conservative society and highlights the need for liberation (Rideout: 2006, 456).

Fitzgerald's later novels remained focused on the seemingly glorious Jazz Age, but the most fundamental theme in these narratives became the collapse of the American Dream. In these works, he approaches the life full of uninhibited behaviour, wealth, and recklessness which goes hand in hand with shallowness, the transience of material things, and emptiness (Ruland and Bradbury: 1997, 279-280). This collapse is revealed in narratives like *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922) and, most importantly, in *The Great Gatsby* (1925).

Another tendency was to push the literature further via experimentation with language, themes, and styles. Such works would also reflect the contemporary life, like the ones described above, but the authors of so-called *High Modernism* invented a completely different approach to the expression of their feelings, experiences, impressions, and thoughts. The writers attempted to describe the stream of consciousness and approach its complexity, they played with the fragmentation of the text, drew allusions to the religious texts, ancient legends, and other myths or classical literature, they used dynamic language, repetitions, neologisms, poetic grammar, and foreign languages such as Latin, Greek, French, or even Chinese, and many other innovations. One of the most famous works of this kind is T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) that articulates his thoughts on the post-war society. The atmosphere of the poem is rather dark and unhappy and expresses the sense of ruined culture and the need for change. As the novels mentioned above, it conveys the "despair and detachment of the century," (Curnutt: 2000, 40). Ezra Pound's poem *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920) might be perceived as another negative view but not only on the new culture and society, but also on the "failings of contemporary artists" (Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley", 2019). Nonetheless, one of his most important works is *The Cantos* – an extensive but incomplete poem that combines the old and contemporary worlds and expresses the "nature of civilisation" (Curnutt: 2000, 38). James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) represents another eminent work of the 1920s. Its plot draws a parallel between the Odysseus myth and pre-war Dublin and attempts to describe the dissatisfaction along with the feelings of not belonging that are established in the modern era. Hilda Doolittle was also an important writer who mostly wrote about women, suggestive or intimate content, and "the psyche or soul of humanity" (Friedman, 1975, 802). She discussed history and tradition, connected the modern world with the ancient one, and disregarded the

materialism of the new era. In the 1920s, she published two poem collections – *Hymen* (1921) and *Heliodora and Other Poems* (1924) that helped to define the newly developing imagist movement (ibid.). Gertrude Stein and her works such as *Tender Buttons* (1914) were an inspiration to many artists, primarily because she managed "to make language submit to the writer's will" (Curnutt: 2000, 29). She did not use language for mere descriptions, but she worked with its sound and rhythm – there is a certain musicality of the language in her writings (ibid.). Although her house was often crowded by artists and art enthusiasts who wanted to talk about literary techniques and other topics concerning art, her works were "deemed valuable more for its influence than for its own merit," because of they were difficult to approach (ibid. 28).

It is also important to mention the Harlem Renaissance authors as this African American movement fully developed in the 1920s. Some of these authors perceived the arts as a medium that would display the greatness of the African American culture – in other words, it was supposed to "improve image and position of blacks" (Howes: 2001, 36). The stories would examine history, culture, traditions along with the identity and achievements of black heroes/protagonists. One of the most significant authors to promote these themes was W.E.B. Du Bois who believed that the authors should abandon their personal interests and show the African American community in the best possible light to gain equality. Nonetheless, there were also authors who opposed to such an idea and wanted to use the variety of themes that would define the black culture and identity in the most authentic way. They wanted to show the real world with all the qualities and flaws related to it. They would not hesitate to use slang and dialects, exhibit the life of the poor, or include prostitutes or homosexuals in their works. Some of the authors who believed in the genuine, yet raw, approach were Zora Neale Hurston who paid attention to folklore and cultural identity in her story "Drenched in Light" or theatre play *Color Struck* (1926); Langston Hughes with his poem collections *The Weary Blues* (1923) or *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927) that presented the ups and downs of the people living on the periphery of the society (the poor, gamblers, prostitutes, alcoholics etc.); Wallace Thurman who in his first novel *The Blacker the Berry* (1929) talks about his struggles associated with his dark skin, and portrays the prejudice and oppression of the black people; Nella Larsen and her novel *Quicksand* (1928) exposing psyche of a black heroine that is in search of her identity, Helen Johnson and many others. (Howes: 2001, 35-51)

3 Women in the 1920s

The 1920s were a decade that followed the rise of a new, modern woman. In terms of womanhood, the Jazz Age is mostly associated with the term *flapper*. The name might bear several meanings. According to Theodore W. Eversole, the term already existed before the Great War. It was addressed to women who longed for independence. Their attempts were compared to little birds learning to fly – in other words, "flapping their wings to be free" (Carlisle: 2009, 54). Tim McNeese, however, offers a different explanation for the term. He claims that it served as a pejorative name "for the girls' practice of wearing their galoshes loose, allowing them to ´flap´ around their angles" (2010, 87). Although the name is associated with different meanings, the way New Women's life changed is distinguished by several related aspects.

One of the aspects relates to the way flappers looked. Modern women's thoughts on their appearance changed. They no longer saw an "hourglass figure" as an ideal of the female body. Instead of maintaining a curvy figure, women (especially those from the upper class) became more interested in dieting (Carlisle: 2009, 238) which resulted in thin "boyish" figures. For this new style, they cast out the "voluminous skirts" and replaced them with loose, sleeveless dresses characterized by higher hemlines and reduced necklines. In terms of the hairstyle, they wore a so-called bob cut – a straight, short haircut reaching the jaw that was usually covered by various kinds of hats (ibid, 21-27). To make their visage special, women also started to use make-up for which they received negative remarks, especially from the conservative community, because at that time, make-up was associated with prostitutes and low-class women (Streissguth: 2007, 43).

Although the flapper's fashion is one of the most typical images that come to mind when discussing women in 1920s, there were other significant changes that modified modern women's lives. One of them was urbanization. Cities were on the rise which brought about intriguing opportunities and caused a great shift from the old mores to the "new morality" (Carlisle: 2009, 28). The widespread prosperity and the new urban lifestyle enabled women to spend more time outside the house and increased their presence in public life. The parents' constant supervision was liberalised or rebelled against. Young women shocked the elders with their audacious behaviour that involved smoking, drinking, or, as already mentioned above, wearing make-up (ibid, 21-23).

In the 1920s, "basic education" was accessible to all young women in the US. More and more towns were provided with secondary schools for girls as well as for boys. Some of the young women coming from wealthy families were also able to study at private schools or universities (Bingham: 2011, 26). Thanks to the opportunity to study at college alongside young men, women were also able to get to know them outside the family house. New relationships evolved in a completely different way than traditional courtship. Instead of meeting and getting to know each other in the sitting room, in front of the young girl's parents, the "modern" couples would usually spend their time in cinemas, restaurants, carnivals, private parties, etc. They would also travel by car – as the new era increased the possibility to own one (Carlisle: 2009, 23; Streissguth: 2007, 43).

The newly gained courage and freedom opened the discussion on the birth control issue (Carlisle: 2009, 15). Women became less interested in protecting their reputation and marriage lost its stability with an increasing number of divorces which greatly shocked the old generation (Streissguth: 2007, 43).

The changes in women's lives, however, did not only revolve around daring and shocking the old generation, rebellion, or fashion. Many of them still fought for their rights and equality very actively. The National League of Women Voters was founded in 1920. Its goal was to acquaint women with their rights and counter any discrimination they suffered. One of the greatest steps towards their efforts was the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920 which guaranteed the right to vote for women. Although it was a huge success and a great change in women's lives, the suffragists knew they were only at the beginning of their path (Bingham: 2011, 28-29).

Thanks to the rising unemployment during the Great War, some women were able to take over the job positions that became available as more men enlisted in the army. They would drive trucks, make deliveries of food and other products, or carry mail, etc. These new opportunities and experiences raised women's ambitions and helped them to effectively argue against their opponents who claimed women should primarily care about their wifely and maternal duties (Carlisle: 2009, 15-17). Although with the post-war period, the number of women workers increased – because they "had proven themselves adequate to many lines of work that had been exclusively male" (ibid, 17) – they still experienced unequal treatment. Not only were they underpaid despite working long hours, and got fired so their position was given to men; they also faced the question – how to handle work and family life at the same time (Bingham: 2011, 18; Carlisle: 2009, 17)?

The Equal Rights Amendment proposed by activist Alice Paul in 1923 hoped to solve the problems mentioned above and more. However, it met with disagreement even from women themselves. There was a possibility that with such a proposal, women would lose their labour protection law[2] – which might lead to worse working conditions. The proposal was eventually rejected by Congress (Bingham: 2011, 30-31). Another person notable for her attempts to contribute to the improvement of women's lives was Ethel Puffer Howes. In 1925, Howes established the Institute for the Coordination of Women's Interests at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. Such an institution was meant to help women combine a career with family life and provided a day care for children. It also became an inspiration for other organizations dealing with the cognate matter (ibid., 12-13). Although women's powers were still quite underrated, some of them managed to achieve higher positions. For example, Nellie Tayloe Ross or Miriam Wallace Ferguson who were two of the first women elected as governors of a state (ibid., 32).

Great achievements were also gained in various sports disciplines. For example, in baseball which is still one of the most popular sports in America. The first woman who played professional baseball was Lizzie Murphy who also got to play alongside men. Murphy's baseball skills were watched by many admirers. Other eminent baseball-players were Jackie Mitchel or Edith Houghton who became a well-known baseball player when she was only ten years old. Women also competed in domestic and foreign tennis championships – one of the most significant female tennis-players was Helen Wills who, among other accomplishments, participated in the Paris Olympics and earned two gold medals (ibid., 34-37). In terms of the aquatic discipline, Gertrude Ederle is considered one of the most popular female swimmers in America. Ederle participated in the Paris Olympic Games in 1924 where she won a gold and a bronze medal; she also "broke seven records in a single afternoon at Brighton Beach" (Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Gertrude Ederle", 2020); and was the first woman to cross the English Channel in 1926 (Bingham: 2011, 35).

Women also significantly contributed to the arts. The period not only brought to the fore eminent female playwrights, novelists or poets, women also occupied themselves in composing, painting, photographing, sculpturing, etc. Among the artists who stood out

[2] Labour law, in general, defines the rights and obligations of an employee. It ensures equal opportunities and wages, good health and safety conditions etc. In 1920s, women were absolved from activities such as working the night shifts or handling heavy and dangerous tools. Some women were afraid that the activists' call for the work equality could abolish these exemptions and that they would be obliged to perform the same work as men (Bingham: 2011, 30-31).

were for example the pianist, composer, and conductor Ethel Leginska, who established the Boston Women's Symphony Orchestra; the painter Georgia O'Keeffe with her unique style portraying the United States; the sculptor Adelaide Johnson who created the Capital Suffrage Monument which was considered her most illustrious work (ibid., 42-49), and many others.

4 Reality in fiction

"All you have to do is to write one true sentence [,]" (Hemingway: 1996, 7) was the rule Hemingway used when writing. In other words, it meant to write a story that should be based on the author's experiences – about the genuine world one knows well. In Hemingway and Fitzgerald's narratives, the tendencies to centre the attention on one's experience are very strong. Their insights are helpful not only for their depiction of the era, which allows the perceiver to imagine the spirit of period more vividly, but also draws the reader closer to the authors themselves. However, one cannot forget the fact that their novels are not memoirs (nonfictional genre). Although they are inspired by the authors' memories or experiences, they are still works of fiction portraying the imagined world.

Jackson J. Benson describes this approach towards writing as a process of "day-dreaming" (1989, 348) that requires constant analysing of the reality and contemplating "what if"? (ibid. 349). The authors become inspired by a certain person, emotion, or situation in their life and attempt to *reimagine*, or even *exaggerate* the facts. They might also use the knowledge or emotions from one incident and give it a completely different meaning. In Hemingway's case, it is for example the imagery of the war wound in his fiction. In a real life, it seems that Hemingway's war wound had affected him, but one cannot claim his trauma was comparable to his characters' suffering. Benson therefore suggests that Hemingway probably became *inspired* by the incident and imagined: *what* would happened *if* he "were wounded in such way that [he] could not sleep at night? […] What if [he] were wounded in such a way that [he] could no longer have sex – what would life be like?" (ibid. 351-352) and many other "what if" possibilities and variations that later became a part of his writings. With this day-dreaming process, one can transform and recreate reality in a desired way. All the models, memories, or experiences are only a material that is processed to embody fiction, not reality.

4.1 Lady Duff Twysden alias Lady Brett Ashley

When *Fiesta* was published in 1926, it was received with mixed feelings. Not only had Hemingway utilised his memories from travelling to portray the setting authentically, but the novel was also based on real people and their actions. Certainly, the story was very successful, nonetheless, not all of Hemingway's friends were content with the way he reimagined them, and with the fact their surroundings might easily identify them with the characters (Baker: 2001, 146).

Lady Duff Twysden, a British aristocrat, was one of those people who had been immortalised in Hemingway's novel. It was she who became the model for a charismatic Lady Brett Ashley. When Hemingway met her, she was thirty-two years old (almost the same age as Lady Brett). With her short hair, tall but thin figure, unusual boyish style and daring behaviour, she represented the typical flapper. Twysden liked to spend time with men and amaze them with her abilities such as heavy drinking or playing bridge. Her unconventional lifestyle, as well as her appearance, was attractive even for Hemingway (who was, at that time, married to Hadley Richardson) (ibid., 120). They became close friends and spent time in bars, nonetheless, their relationship probably never crossed the line. Her presence in his life certainly awoke prohibited desires – desires he later inserted into his *Fiesta* (ibid., 129)

It is very clear where the inspiration for the book came from. Just as Brett was engaged to Mike Campbell, Twysden was about to marry Pat Guthrie. But the engagement did not stop her from having an affair with Harold Loeb, an American writer who became a model for Robert Cohn. Later, when she, her spouse Pat, her lover Harold, and their friends Bill Smith, Don Steward, Hemingway, and Hadley travelled to Spain, everybody knew it would be an uneasy trip (Bruccoli: 1998, 53).

Among other experiences, they visited the bullfights, just like in the novel. Having already seen the violent scenes, (as the most experienced of them) Hemingway liked to watch the reactions of his friends. At first, Twysden did not favour violent attacks. Later, however, she became an eager devotee of the bullfights which must have raised her stature in Hemingway's eyes. During the holiday, their companions were getting more suspicious about the relationship between them. Hemingway, Guthrie, and Loeb kept an eye on each other with apparent jealousy (which brought about a few awkward situations). Although Twysden was the main reason for the quarrels in the group, she still selfishly received and enjoyed the overall attention and financial support of the men (Baker: 2001, 124).

4.2 Zelda and Ginevra alias Daisy Buchanan

Like Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald's work was also inspired by real-life experiences. According to Mary Jo Tate, there were several strong sources that influenced him, but his wife, Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, had one of the most significant effects on his life and work (2007, 3). Not only did Zelda review Fitzgerald's work and provided him with suggestions, but she also allowed him to use her diary and personal correspondence for inspiration (ibid., 49).

In *The Great Gatsby*, Zelda's presence might be felt in the main female character, Daisy Buchanan. One of the key aspects that demonstrate the connection between fiction and real life is the statement Daisy made after giving birth to her baby: 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool — that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool,' (Fitzgerald: 2001, 13). Apart from being a poignant note on the generic problem of sexism in the 1920s, the statement is a reimagined version of Zelda's reaction to the birth of her new-born daughter Scotty (Tate: 2007, 302). The quote links both women and their awareness of social inequality. Zelda's behaviour might be considered more loose, rebellious, or unconventional, but her thoughts on American society are still similar to Daisy's.

In the novel, it is also possible to notice several details that resemble Zelda's relationship with Fitzgerald. For example, their first meeting. During his stay at Camp Sheridan (an Army training facility), Fitzgerald met the eighteen-year-old Zelda Sayre at a country club dance in July 1918. Being the most popular beauty and coming from a respectable family made her quite favourable among suitors. She and Fitzgerald fell in love, however, due to his uncertain financial situation she did not want to marry him until he provided her with a secure future. The initial difficulty in marrying Zelda is reflected in the novel (Dickstein: 2010, 11). When Gatsby meets Daisy (who is the same age as Zelda at the time), he is also in an Army camp. Although they went in different ways on account of different circumstances, Gatsby is also aware of the fact that he is not a suitable partner for his lover. Both Gatsby and Fitzgerald are attracted to young prominent women who motivated them to fulfil their life goals and work even harder to seek success. This particular struggle certainly influenced Fitzgerald's writing; however, Robert and Helen Roulston along with other critics claim that Zelda was not the only muse he "inserted" into his story (qtd. in Dickstein: 2010,135).

Before Zelda Sayre became Fitzgerald's wife, there was Ginevra King – who is thought to be another model for the character of Daisy Buchanan. Fitzgerald met Ginevra in 1915 at a party in St. Paul. She was very desirable – not only was she beautiful, but also wealthy and "socially prominent" (Dickstein: 2010, 1; Tate: 2007, 332). Fitzgerald fell in love with her instantly – or perhaps with the idealized image of her. They met a few times, but their relationship was maintained primarily via letters which they exchanged for two years. The letters uncover her discontent and frustration with social and family demands along with "prescribed" gender roles. Just like Daisy, she balanced romantic ideals and reality (Bleil, 2011, 2-7).

Later, Ginevra spurned Scott because of their diverse, incompatible personalities, and because she was surrounded by other suitors who, in comparison with Fitzgerald at that time, had a clear vision of their future (Bleil: 2011, 2). However, he was not a suitable partner for a young wealthy woman – as somebody remarked in front of him: "Poor boys shouldn't think of marrying rich girls," (Tate: 2007, 332). Nonetheless, her short presence in Fitzgerald's life was generally very beneficial for his work and contributed to the creation of Gatsby's lost and unfulfilled love. Moreover, thanks to Ginevra, Fitzgerald became acquainted with the amateur golfer Edith Cummings who became a model for one of the characters – the "self-made woman" Jordan Baker (Bleil: 2011, 2).

According to Robert and Helen Roulston, Daisy resembles King more than Fitzgerald's wife Zelda because of her formidable personality and wealthy background (Dickstein: 2010,135). However, is it possible to accurately distinguish which of Fitzgerald's lovers helped to create Daisy? It seems more likely that Fitzgerald had both women in mind. Which would explain why Daisy's dark hair colour turned during the story into a "yellowy" one[3] (Fitzgerald: 1993, 74).

[3] Zelda's hair color was light, Ginevra's hair was dark.

5 One's Place in the World

This chapter functions as an "introduction" into the world of the female characters before the work dives into more specific analysis. It primarily discusses their place in the society and how the position might affect them. Also, it utilises the discussion from chapter 3 to position and analyse the fictional characters in relation to the era of the 1920s.

Money *cannot* assure happiness – this statement is twice as applicable in *The Great Gatsby* where the lives of protagonists are shaped primarily by money, and Jay Gatsby is definitely not the only character to prove that. Coming from an American upper-class family from Louisville, Daisy finds many advantages in such a life. She is a popular young lady, attractive to all her suitors, enjoying her high standard of life. However, soon she finds out about the downside of her lifestyle as she experiences probably her first stern hit of reality which comes with a suitor whom she claims she is in love with – Jay Gatsby. Daisy does not know that Gatsby only pretends to be from the same sort of social class when he claims he is "fully able to take care of her" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 95), however, the problem is not in his origin. It could have been the main reason for their break-up, but before she can even find out about his "false pretences" (ibid.), the war service intervenes in their relationship. She is determined to wait for him, but his return does not seem to be any closer. At this moment, she starts to sense the burdensome reality of "biological and social pressures" (Saunders: 2018, 151). With her potential partner gone, she is facing a crushing dilemma. On one hand, she clearly wants to marry Gatsby, but on the other hand, she is too afraid of waiting and "wasting her prime fertile years for a man whose continued absence may cause her to miss out on optimal mating options" (ibid.). The uncertainty of his return is unbearable, therefore, following the rules of the society seems less hazardous. Moreover, "she was feeling the pressure of the world outside" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 96). A young girl of her status is *expected* to find a suitable partner soon, get married, and start a family. Daisy is urged not to wait, but to make sure her future life is secured, and the social status gets enhanced, or at least maintained. A happy future is, at that point, perceived as something only a husband can provide his wife with. The notion that she must get married early, otherwise she cannot attain a decent life, has been engraved in her psyche so strongly that she eventually breaks her promise to Gatsby and decides not to wait anymore. Having grown up in this kind of a system, she probably does not see any other sensible solution, that is why she lets her future be resolved "by some force – of

love, of money, of unquestionable practicality," (ibid.) – to put it simply, by anything as long as it was done quickly.

Although the stereotypical role of wife and mother does not seem to fulfil her, Daisy follows the path of a traditional woman. She is incapable, or perhaps, not interested in using the social and economic liberation she gains by marrying wealthy Tom Buchanan – she does not participate in the progress women were making in the public sphere (such as art, sport, or politics), although as a wealthy woman, she could probably find even more promising opportunities than an average woman. Undoubtedly, she got stuck between the old and new world's norms – between the traditional and modern woman. On one hand, she thinks it is necessary for her to get married, raise a child, have a good reputation, stick to the family values, but on the other hand, she also indulges in consumerism, drinking alcohol, smoking, or later, in a sexual affair. Apparently, she cannot decide which world she belongs to, and thus she fails in both of them. She seems to have little or no maternal instincts as she does not take care of her daughter properly (despite the fact she has no other responsibilities), and the relationship with her abusive husband is falling apart due to infidelities they both indulge in. But at the same time, her discontent is not strong enough to make her face up to the stereotype and social norms – she never thinks of a break-up or full emancipation seriously. There might be two reasons for that. The first one is that although Daisy is not happy with Tom, she is not interested in any change – they suit each other in terms of their wealthy background, keeping a good reputation, materialism, or cynicism. Also, as previously mentioned, she cares about her "optimal mating options" (Saunders: 2018, 151) which might suggest that she, like Tom, is an elitist who believes in a supremacy of certain people – especially those of Nordic rase – and in the prosperity of those who were *born* at the top of the social ladder. Although she complains about Tom and his infidelities, he still provides her with some sort of certainty and stability which she clearly needs the most. This idea can be supported by the fact that even when Gatsby reunites with Daisy and offers her an escape from her marriage, she eventually refuses him and stays with her husband. It might be suggested that she refuses him because he lied to her about his origin and wealth, however, one cannot forget that she showed her doubts and unwillingness to get a divorce *before* she knew about his illegal business. The second reason might be the fact that even if she wants to change her life, she is too afraid of the final consequences of such an uncertain decision (like divorce or emancipation) because it would most likely affect her social status and reputation. And therefore, she prefers to remain a "beautiful little fool" (ibid., 13), despite

her unhappiness. However, this idea is probably something that Gatsby and Nick only wish to see in her – a victim imprisoned in despair that needs to be rescued. When in fact she does not seem to care about saving but rather entertainment or distraction from what bothers her.

Daisy's friend Jordan is a living proof that it is possible to be emancipated and belong to the wealthy class at the same time. Both women were probably nurtured the same way, however, Jordan clearly has different priorities and aspirations that lead her directly towards a modern lifestyle. Although she admired Daisy earlier, Jordan decided to turn her life in a different direction. Undoubtedly, she wanted to be independent, therefore she built her place in the society as a professional golfer – which was one of the new possibilities for women. Although she might not be as wealthy as Daisy, she still belongs to the upper circles and she does not even have to wear a mask of a "beautiful little fool" (ibid.) that according to Daisy, is the only way a woman can live in this world. She seems not to care about traditional norms (or any norms at all) and what the society might expect from her which enables her to be herself – cynical and straightforward. Certainly, she must have faced the expectations of society and its notion of marriage being a necessity. Nonetheless, her strong personality resists the illiberal pressures and enables her to be classified as a "self-made" New Woman. The main difference between Jordan and Daisy is Jordan's strong self-reliance and fearlessness. Jordan knows what is best for her and does not let anyone or anything affect her. She always needs to be in control and take the high road – that is how she proves her independence. However, there is also a downside to her apparent obsession with control because it makes her resort to lies and immorality, which does not exactly match with the idea of the New woman and gaining the respect they fought for. But clearly, Jordan cannot help it – when she sees a problem, she is not afraid to deal with it in any possible way. Although it might mean to lie or accept the end of a relationship, remain alone, and lose the opportunity to settle down.

Myrtle, as well as her husband George Wilson, comes from the lower-class society, but she seems to perceive herself as predestined to something exceptional. For her, George Wilson is someone who "wasn't fit to lick [her] shoe," (ibid., 23). Their marriage was not pressured as Daisy's, but in comparison with Daisy, Myrtle (who lacks social status) could not choose from a variety of suitors. With limited options, she simply picked someone whom she thought "was a gentleman," (ibid.) but in the later years of marriage, she started to loath their life in poverty – which she mostly blames her husband for.

Although coming from a different environment, both Daisy and Myrtle are not as distinctive as it might seem at a first glance. They are concerned with the same issues – wealth and social status. However, while Daisy wants to enhance her wellbeing with marriage, Myrtle wishes to gain some wealth as a mistress at least. Paradoxically both achieve the desired result thanks to Tom Buchanan. They both know that choosing him ensures them certain benefits – they have more to gain with Tom than without him. And at the same time, both experience his abusive behaviour, which they are willing to tolerate for his social status (or, at least in Myrtle's case, for the illusion of it). Myrtle envies Daisy and her luxurious way of life, she yearns to stand in her shoes. However, she does not realize her visions of Daisy's lifestyle are distorted. She does not see the downside of Daisy's marriage because her eyes are blinded by all the lavish gifts Tom gives her. According to Saunders, in Myrtle's "mind, her relationship with Tom has raised her social standing, and she enjoys playing the lady," (2018, 142). Living with such a man makes her feel worthy, confident, "classy and important" (ibid) which results in her worsening behaviour towards other people she considers below her.

No character from Hemingway's novel seeks wealth as furiously as those in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In *Fiesta*, money and social status are discussed in a quite different way. Some protagonists settle for such amount of money as enables them to survive the day. Their main concern is the present because it seems that the future does not hold any promise.

Where exactly does Brett come from is not discussed in detail. At one point in her life, she got married to a British aristocrat. Due to this marriage, she gains a certain social status and advantages (such as lending money). However, as a sailor's wife, she faces more affliction than enjoyment. As she sarcastically puts it: "I've had such a hell of a happy life with the British aristocracy!" (Hemingway: 2019, 185), proving that living in a wealthy society does not mean gaining happiness. Unlike Daisy, she decides to run from her husband, although it deprives her of the high status and makes her an expatriate – an uprooted woman with no secure or regular income. In other words: a woman that does not fit into traditional society. After her lifechanging experiences (working as a nurse during the Great War, losing her loved one, living with a violent husband) she does not care about social norms and their expectations. In her way of thinking, she might be likened to Jordan – new-fashioned, audacious, and sharp. However, unlike Jordan, she can be independent only if somebody supports her financially. She does not work or participates in politics, sport, or arts. She functions as an image of the New Woman, but

at the same time, her dependence on others makes her more like Daisy stuck between the old and new world, except that Brett's reliance on other people who take care of her enables her to become relatively free. She does what she wants with whom she wants, even if it means to go against conventions – but only as long as she has got someone by her side.

As shown in the discussion above and both novels, belonging to the wealthy social class does bring certain benefits but does not assure fulfilment. It is well-known that in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald criticizes the higher society, and demonstrates that striving to gain more most likely imprisons and distorts people: Daisy behaves like a passive product of the social constructions; Myrtle, living in an illusion, looks down on people from the same class, mocking their littleness; even Jordan resorts to cheating to remain in control of her life.

There is some truth in Fitzgerald's criticism; money moves the world indeed, however, its power also depends on the individuals. Regardless of the origin – whether one comes from the higher or lower circles – money can spoil anybody's character. For instance, if Brett were the same character as Daisy or Myrtle, she would never divorce her violent husband. But she has a different nature and does not let herself be bound; not even by people who she is dependent on. She rather keeps her reputation of the shrew than become imprisoned as someone's possession. Certainly, Daisy might be perceived as a victim of society – constantly pressured to things she might not want to do. But at the same time, she imprisons herself through her materialistic behaviour. She knows there is an option to become independent (her best friend proves it) nonetheless she does not want to step outside her wealthy comfort zone and take over the responsibility for her life – which is most powerfully demonstrated at the end of the novel when she accidentally hits Myrtle with a car and fails to declare her mistake, letting everybody believe that Gatsby is Myrtle's murderer.

6 A Book and Its Cover

Looking at the names of the female protagonists, one might distinguish the essence of their characters only by looking at them, not knowing the story. While Brett and Jordan possess rather *manlike* names, Daisy and Myrtle's names are, without a doubt, very *feminine* – both representing plants with white-coloured petals. Based on the name alone, one might feel that Brett and Jordan are going to be different – probably stronger or audacious; while Daisy and Myrtle can evoke docile, fragile, or perhaps simple-minded characters. Nonetheless, one cannot rely on such a simplified interpretation. The human psyche is more complex than that. This analysis attempts to take a deeper look at the inner and outer aspects of the female protagonists from both novels.

As was already stated above, Daisy acquired the notion that being "a beautiful little fool" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 13) is the only way women can live in this world. For most of the protagonists, she is pigeonholed as a nice and innocent foolish girl. Nonetheless, had she been foolish, she would have probably never uttered such a thing. A fool would never think of themselves as being an actual fool nor would they intentionally behave foolishly. On the outside, Daisy presents herself as a mirthful, almost silly-minded woman and loving mother, but deep down she is not only defiant and "cynical about everything" (ibid.), but also reckless and irresponsible. In a few parts of the novel, she clearly struggles with herself and does not know how to behave in certain situations. These moments reflect her burdened mind that is probably trying to relieve itself; but that only lasts a few seconds before she returns to her little performance:

„'You see I think everything's terrible anyhow […] Everybody thinks so - the most advanced people. And I know. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything.' Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom's, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. 'Sophisticated – God, I'm sophisticated!'" (ibid)

With this rapid switch of behaviour, Daisy lets Nick know she is more than just a pretty shell living her perfect dream – apparently, Nick is the only person that is aware of her "double identity". Others might perceive her as being easily manipulated, but the truth is, Daisy lets others manipulate her on purpose, she evidently knows very well what she is doing and why (see Chapter 5).

In her essay, Joan Korenman discusses Daisy's hair colour (see Chapter 4.2). Korenman thinks that apart from being an allusion to both of Fitzgerald's lovers, Daisy's hair might also symbolize her dual personality. She supports her argument by linking Fitzgerald's novel with traditional notions about fair colours being a sign of "purity and innocence," (Korenman: 1975, 576) – in other words, "qualities that romantic convention has long attributed to fair rather than dark women," (ibid.). Her theory seems convincing. Although blond-haired Daisy tries to stick to the traditional morals, Daisy the brunette breaks them. In the novel, two situations are supporting it – the first one is when Daisy talks about her daughter and the fact Pammy inherited her yellow hair; and the second one is when she spends time with Gatsby who kisses her "dark shining hair" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 95). By presenting her daughter, the fair-haired Daisy shows off her role as a mother and a good wife. However, when getting intimate with Gatsby, it is the dark-haired Daisy that slips from the social conventions. Just like the colour of her hair, her "darkness" and "fairness" change depending on the situation.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that even though she mostly struggles with her double identity, there is a moment when both her sides seem to come to terms. It is the scene, where Tom breaks Daisy's affair and sends her home with Gatsby. To comfort her distress, Gatsby lets Daisy drive the car which results in the unexpected murder of Tom's mistress (ibid. 92). In this passage, Daisy's reckless side drives off from the crime scene and lets the "innocent" side cope with the situation without having to take responsibility. Apparently, she does not tell Tom what she did which might suggest that both of her sides "agreed on cooperation" and united. Because of the ending, Daisy is mostly considered as a corrupted character. Many critics call her vicious or amoral. However, according to Leland Person, Daisy's "corruption is not so much inherent in her character as it is the progressive result of her treatment by the other characters," (1978, 251). Person also adds that she is rather "victim than victimizer: she is victim first of Tom Buchanan's 'cruel' power, but then of Gatsby's increasingly depersonalized vision of her" (ibid. 250). The first statement sounds convincing since Daisy talks about how she has changed and become "pretty cynical about everything" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 13) due to the impact Tom had on her, especially with his affairs. It seems possible, that in the past, she actually *was* "a beautiful little fool" (ibid.) but once she lost her illusions and realized that life is not a perfect fairy-tale, she became rather careless and eventually corrupted with time. Even Gatsby recognizes her attitude has changed: "I feel far away from her […] she doesn't understand […] she used to be able to understand. We'd sit for hours – "(ibid. 70). But

the second statement, claiming Daisy as a victim, does not seem to take in consideration that she *decided* to stay with Tom regardless of his "cruel power". Also, it is true that Gatsby depersonalizes her, but it does not seem to hurt or bother her. She actually enjoys the attention. One of the reasons for this is that she makes Tom pay for his affairs – this might be perceived in the scene, where Gatsby visits the Buchannan's house before the affair is revealed. Although she is not completely explicit, Daisy intentionally expresses her affection towards Jay in front of Tom because she knows he is going to recognize what is going on. Not to mention that she also uses Gatsby as her alibi and lets everyone think he was the one who hit Myrtle with the car and drove away. It might be thus declared that Daisy probably *was* a victim in her earlier life but as the years past, she also became a victimiser herself.

While Daisy presents herself as a fragile and naïve girl, Jordan's appearance and behaviour seem to be more unified. She does not make much effort to impress other people by acting like a nice girl that giggles all the time, having no particular reason. Instead, she is audacious, drives cars carelessly, swears and expresses her opinions although she might be considered rude. She follows her aspirations without looking back or overthinking. But, even if she does not explicitly show any sign of an inner struggle, like Daisy, she *does* have some flaws that she is trying to hide – by cheating and lying. As Nick describes her, she is: "incurably dishonest" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 38) – this "quality" of hers seems to function as a defensive system that she uses to keep her stability. She may be afraid that if she hesitated or made one mistake, she could lose her image as a strong, "self-made" woman and thus she tries to cover her imperfections with lies. Her appearance does not delude or mystify other characters, and her personality is definitely not as ambivalent as Daisy's, but her image is based on hiding her flaws and insecurities. It also seems quite likely she does so not in order to impress others, but mainly for herself. As already mentioned, she does not care what other people think of her, she is rather a self-centred person who thinks of *her* own good.

Like Gatsby, Myrle Wilson is not satisfied with the class she belongs to and wishes to get into higher circles. Unlike Gatsby who attempted to become a self-made man, Myrtle does not seem to care about being self-made woman and gets help from Daisy's husband to get where she wants. Nonetheless, similarly to Gatsby, she does not understand that being wealthy does not mean the same thing as belonging to the higher social class. Despite her effort, her dresses are not elegant, the interior of her apartment is tacky as well as the people she invites into it, and her behaviour seems artificial. But

with Tom, she almost truly believes her place is among wealthy people – although it is a mere illusion created by her lover. In her head, she keeps the notion of being an important, elegant lady having all the rights to herself above the lower-class people, as if she were not one of them: "'I told that boy about the ice,' Myrtle raised her eyebrows in despair at the shiftlessness of the lower orders. 'These people! You have to keep after them all the time,'" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 22). She tries to present herself as being one of the wealthy crowd. But in fact, she is a pitiful foolish woman too gullible to recognize that she is being used for Tom's pleasure. Her naïve and affected behaviour only highlights the fact that she does not belong to Buchanan's world; even Tom lets her know that her place is below himself and Daisy: either by lying about Daisy being a Catholic which prevents him from getting a divorce or by using violence against her. Nonetheless, her credulous and desperate nature cannot grasp and accept the ruthless fact and continues in the daydreaming.

Brett, as well as Jordan, attempts to run away from the old traditions. She does not want to be perceived as a meek, fragile girl. After what she has experienced, she builds up a tough, masculine personality that enables her to "subjugate the world" so she can be independent. However, as already mentioned, her liberty depends on her acquaintances which connects her to Daisy.

What if the dependency is not the only thing they have in common? Daisy created a mask she shows the world with an intention to "simplify" her life. What if Brett's attitude, too, is only a mask that was created with such an intention? What if she was looking for a way a woman can live in the world? Certainly, with the exception that Daisy resorts to the image of a fragile flower, while Brett wants to be known as a strong and independent woman. She splits with a partner when she wants, wears unconventional clothes, smokes, participates in hard drinking and activities that are considered masculine. But then she also finds herself trembling in Jake's arms declaring she feels miserable. She might pretend to have a fearless, strong-minded attitude but at the end of the day, her fragile, vulnerable side asks for attention. Also, to handle the constant effort to stay strong, she basically signs a contract with *John Barleycorn*[4]. Brett's drinking problem uncovers her mental discomfort and the weight she carries on her chest (but hardly-ever fully reveals) – her inner struggle might be likened to Daisy's.

[4] John Barleycorn is a personification of alcoholic beverages; the term was used in Jack London's eponymous novel.

Some critics, however, perceive Brett as idealized on the outside and rotten on the inside – she is always "damned good-looking" (Hemingway: 2019, 30) but men usually end up cursing her for her decisions. They even use Georgette, a prostitute from the novel, as a parallel to Brett's identity and her sexual encounters. When Jake looks at Georgette, he finds her pretty – until she shows him her "bad teeth" According to these theories, Brett, as well as Georgette, is pretty on the outside, but her inner side is spoiled and bad (Miller: 2002, 12). Nonetheless, the only persons who romanticise Brett are Cohn and Romero (to some extent). Although she attracts lots of men, they do not seem to idealize her. They admire her beauty, but at the same time, they know how controversial she is. Also, she might behave inappropriately, but she does not seem to be rotten or mischievous. As was already mentioned, she is apparently only a broken woman that distracts herself by unconventional behaviour. Moreover, she clearly regrets some of her decisions and "attempt[s] to live honestly" (ibid., 41). Her constant need for bathing can also be perceived as a need to wash away her guilt and start with a clean slate.

7 Love or Illusion?

In both novels, love, and relationships in general, are very complex. The stories describe both joyous and painful sides of it: starting from genuine love, through pretended one, to infidelities. With such a presentation of relationships, is it possible to believe the love confessions when the majority of protagonists contradict them by their actions and decisions? Or should it be perceived as a game that the unsatisfied characters use only as a pass-time activity?

7.1 Daisy's Love Triangle

When Daisy meets Gatsby, she is convinced she found a man who can provide her with a secure future – which is something she has been taught to look for when choosing a partner. Apart from that, she also seems to be genuinely in love with him. Although she received many offers from a variety of suitors, who wish to have the "privilege of monopolising her that night," or at least "for an hour!" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 48), she seems most intrigued and preoccupied with Gatsby. He charms her with his knowledge and his dreams about the future. Although he hopes she breaks up with him, she never does. Clearly, she truly loves him at the time otherwise, she would not attempt to keep the relationship when other suitors are eager to be with her. When the war service takes Gatsby away from her, she tries to run away from home to say goodbye to him. However, her plan is set back by her mother which makes Daisy angry. Her feelings for Gatsby are so strong that she refuses to talk to her family after the incident. She keeps corresponding with Gatsby in the hope that he will return soon.

Later, when she "begins to move again with the season" (ibid., 96), Daisy does not wish to "play around with the soldiers any more" (ibid., 49) – apparently, so they do not remind her of Gatsby and the loss she has experienced. She rather spends time with "a few flatfooted, short-sighted young men in the town who couldn't get into the army at all," (ibid., 49), which she might be doing to avoid another heart-breaking separation, or to pass the time until Gatsby arrives.

As was already mentioned, Daisy waits for Gatsby, but the outer world and her beliefs keep constantly pressing her into marriage and wifely duties. She feels miserable and nervous, she needs certainty, but Gatsby is unable to assure her there is nothing to

worry about. Where Gatsby fails, Tom Buchanan succeeds. As a self-confident man with the amount of money that promises a dreamlike future, Tom steps into Daisy's life, bringing everything she needs at that moment. For her, it is safer to accept Tom into her life and become his wife. She perceives him as a stable and powerful man who can take care of her.

Tom gains Daisy's interest and respect but does he also acquire her true affection? The day before the wedding, Daisy receives two objects – one of them is a string of pearls and the other one is a letter. While the string of pearls ends up lying in the bin, the letter is glued to Daisy's hand (Fitzgerald: 1993, 49). Whatever is written in the letter, it affects Daisy's feelings more than the glamorous gift from her future husband. Apparently, the letter comes from Gatsby, and the message in it makes Daisy almost call off the wedding. She wants to change her decision, but at the same time, she knows it is too late. After an emotional breakdown caused by inner struggle, she sees no other option than to repress her idealistic feelings. As Leland Person states in her essay: "[Daisy's] lyric energy (which so attracts Gatsby) must be frozen before she will marry Buchanan," (1978, 253). When Jordan and the maid get Daisy into the cold bath, Daisy's genuine "romantic impulses" are slowly transferring into the ice until the letter is damaged and Daisy becomes ultimately "paralyzed with conventional happiness" (ibid.). From that moment on, Daisy starts wearing a *mask* of a "beautiful little fool" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 13).

There were certainly moments when Daisy was content in her marriage. After all, Jordan as an independent observer acknowledges the fact; even Tom, "a brute of a man," (ibid., 10), reminds Daisy of the happy moments they spent together with "a husky tenderness in his tone," (ibid., 84); and Daisy admits it herself. Nonetheless, Tom's affairs after the wedding accompanied by his abusive, arrogant behaviour created a gaping abyss between them. The marriage that seemed the most rational now transformed into an unhappy one. Their marriage reminds one more of a coexistence agreement.

Daisy is a whole different person when Gatsby meets her again. The environment she lives in deformed her romantic ideals and taught her not to rely on them. Gatsby senses that something has changed, but he wants to believe she is still the same. He treats her with tenderness and makes her feel like the nice, innocent girl she used to be. Apart from using Gatsby for her revenge towards Tom, she also seems to be overpowered by sentiment and "seeks a lost moment from the past" (Person: 1978, 256) – and clearly enjoys her partially regained old life. Nonetheless, Daisy also realizes that she is no longer the same person that she used to be. This time, she has a husband, a daughter and her

psyche has changed. Therefore, she cannot fully return to those breezy, happy times with Gatsby. He wants her to wipe away the past and start from the point they ended. But she cannot do that for him. She is no dreamer now – apparently, the only reason she starts the affair with Gatsby is that it makes her feel good and worthy. She claims that she is in love with him, but it seems more likely she is attracted to the power she acquires over him and her husband. She enjoys Gatsby's attention, the feeling of freedom, and the fact she does something prohibited. But she does not love him the way she did before – she probably only loves how convenient spending time with him is. As Nick puts it, when she and Gatsby get confronted by Tom, Daisy looks "as though she realised at last what she was doing – as though she had never, all along intended doing anything at all," (Fitzgerald: 1993, 84). For the "mature" Daisy, Gatsby represents a tranquiliser, a mere distraction that helps her silence her marriage problems. However, once Gatsby's secret is revealed, he is no longer the representation of idyllic life which Daisy used for pleasure. Also, if Tom knows about the affair, fights for her, and promises he will treat her better, what is the point of keeping the lover? Therefore, she retreats to her husband because Gatsby has nothing more to offer her – the fairy-tale is definitively over. Gatsby tries to win her back by taking the responsibility for the murder Daisy perpetrated, but his sacrifice only brings Tom and Daisy's "secret society" (ibid., 13) closer. They restore their coexistence agreement and get back to their life as if nothing happened, leaving Gatsby forgotten behind.

7.2 Jordan's Tender Curiosity

Jordan does not rush to the altar to get married, as was already mentioned, she does not let herself be pressured. Although she is said to have many suitors "she could have married at a nod of her head" (ibid. 113), she rather enjoys her personal and sexual freedom. If she is to be with somebody, she probably wants to make sure that the one is going to be her "team-mate", and not somebody who would define her – that she can do herself. She is looking for someone solid, heedful, and attentive.

When Jordan meets Nick for the first time, she does not seem to be interested in him. Instead of fighting for his attention, she rather keeps an eye on an invisible object that is balancing on her chin (ibid. 7). When Daisy offers to "fling" them together and arrange a marriage, Jordan pretends to mishear it and calmly walks away. Later, when they meet at one of Gatsby's parties, she shows him no sign of affection at first. It is

possible to assume that she wants to get to know him – but in her own way. With her uninterested gaze and independent attitude, she makes clear that she does not need a man. She probably wants to see his reaction to such behaviour and detect, whether she has to worry about him being too dominant to respect her. And when Nick succeeds in passing the test, it is she who moves their relationship to the next level by inviting him to her house. Clearly, she likes to express her emancipation by making important moves herself and not waiting for the others.

“'You're a rotten driver: I protested. 'Either you ought to be more careful, or you oughtn't to drive at all.'
'I am careful.'
'No, you're not.'
'Well, other people are,' she said lightly.
'What's that got to do with it?'
'They'll keep out of my way,' she insisted. 'It takes two to make an accident.'
'Suppose you met somebody just as careless as yourself.'
'I hope I never will,' she answered. 'I hate careless people. That's why I like you.'"”
(Fitzgerald: 1993, 30)

From this scene, one might not only recognize the essence of Jordan’s behaviour but also her views on love and relationships. She admits being audaciously careless and that is why she needs someone who is careful – so she does not fall into a trap like Daisy. If she found someone like herself, she would not be satisfied. According to her statement, two dominant and careless powers would create a disaster. They would be opponents (fighting against each other) rather than team-mates (sharing the playground and being mindful of one another). That is probably why she acts so cold most of the time. She does not want to draw whomever into her life. With an attitude of a nice, naive girl, she would probably attract many “shrewd men” (ibid., 38) who would be careless of her self-made independence and probably attempt to disrespect or change her. She intentionally wards off such people and rather concentrates on those who let Jordan be herself.

When Nick breaks up with her over the telephone, she is probably shocked because the whole time, it was she who was the leader of their team. She thought of him as a reliable person, but he let her down; she clearly did not want to end the relationship yet.

Nonetheless, to prove to him she never needed his love, Jordan accepts the breakup with almost no visible emotion and starts to treat him coldly like one of the careless people she scorns. At the end she claims to be married to another man, but Nick thinks she is not being honest. If her engagement was not true, Jordan might be considered a representation of the stereotype of the independent woman who is doomed to be unsuccessful in love due to her focus on herself and her career.

7.3 Myrtle's Ambitious Climb

Throughout the story, one gets to know two opinions on George and Myrtle's marriage. The first one comes from Catherine who states that Myrtle was: "crazy about him for a while," and the second one is stated by Myrtle who, responding to Catherine's commentary, reacts quite affectedly: "The only crazy I was was when I married him. I knew right away I made a mistake," (Fitzgerald: 1993, 24). And then she starts talking about an embarrassing moment when she found out that George borrowed his wedding suit – which in her delivery sounds like the most condemnable thing one can do. Myrtle clearly exaggerates her earlier years of marriage and projects a bit of her current feelings into it. She probably only wants to please Tom and minimalize her guilt by providing some evidence of her being too good for her husband, whereas Catherine reflects on what she remembers without any agenda, which makes her a more reliable source of information.

One can only guess, how Myrtle treated her husband before she stumbled upon Tom, but it is possible to assume that since the affair started, their relationship has only gotten worse – if there was any love at all, it disappeared with Tom's intervention. Although she seems to be moonstruck by Tom, the reason she sticks to him is probably his money and sexual vitality rather than his personality. In spite of the fact her husband appears to be a humble, loving man, he is also described as "spiritless", "anaemic" (ibid., 17) and most importantly, poor. Tom, on the other hand, is arrogant and brutish but also very masculine, self-confident, and wealthy. For Myrtle, George's qualities seem insignificant compared to his "drawbacks". In comparison with Tom, he cannot fulfil her avid desires. If she had to choose between Tom and George according to their manners, she would probably run away with Tom immediately. However, she rather looks on the advantages of his wealth and perceives him as the opportunity to reach her aspirations while marginalizing his aggressiveness intentionally.

According to Judith Saunders: “Myrtle makes a desirable mistress […] the social disparity between them enables Tom to please her with relatively small financial investment,” (2018, 141). As was already mentioned, Tom makes Myrtle confident by providing her with a variety of gifts she could not afford before. Nonetheless, she does not seem to realize how rich Tom exactly is and how easily she gets manipulated by him. Another “convenient” things about her as a mistress is that she degrades not only her husband but also herself in front of him. Although he uses violence, she never wants to give up her lover and lose all the luxury he can acquire. That gains him even more confidence and power over her. Myrtle’s intelligence and self-esteem are high enough to mock her husband’s meek nature and status, but at the same time, they are too low to face up to Tom’s manipulative and violent behaviour.

Saunders also suggests another reason why Myrtle wants to keep the affair. Apart from the luxury, she might want to test her fertility. There is a possibility, that Myrtle’s husband “failed to deliver the reproductive resources” (ibid., 143) and Myrtle now attempts to get pregnant by her lover. Saunders states that if her attempts are successful, there are three options for the result. The first one is that George would think of the child as his; the second one is that the pregnancy would reveal the affair, end Myrtle’s marriage, and assure Tom’s financial support; and the third one is that both marriages will break, and Tom would want to stay with Myrtle and take care of the child (ibid.). It might be true, that Myrtle fears getting old without having a child and tries anything she can do to get one. However, it does not seem very likely since Myrtle never expresses such desire nor seems interested in the role of a mother.

7.4 Brett’s Collection

To Brett, falling in love means living in hell. Her lovers would probably object that she creates the hell herself, that her instability and affairs are the main reason for her lost and unhappy soul. Nonetheless, looking at Brett’s suitors, can one actually judge her for her inconstancy? True love that dies of dysentery, a psychotic husband that endangers her life, an alcoholic, an impotent, a nerve-racking romantic that attempts to change her to suit his imagination, and an unspoiled “child”. As Kathy Willingham states “she simply is not provided with many favorable options,” (2002, 48). Apart from the lack of options, her attitude towards love also comes from her traumatizing experiences – not only those she had with her partners but also the ones she had during the First World War. Working

as a nurse and watching the rising number of war victims made her rethink values and morals. As one of the representatives of the Lost Generation, she clearly does not see a point in keeping the traditional values after the war when human life has lost its worth. She probably asks herself, why should she follow the social demands when the same society lets people participate in mindless massacres leaving unimaginable numbers of casualties behind. Clearly, her mistrust in society and its values are reflected in the way she handles her love relationships.

There are not many details about Brett's relationship with Mike. Nonetheless, some situations from the story might serve as a source of information and help to understand it. When they meet, Brett finds herself at the point where she wants to escape her violent husband. Having no other place to go she most likely spends her days at the bars where she gets to know Mike better. Both disillusioned and lost, they need somebody who would take care of them. Mike apparently falls in love with Brett and wants to save her from her miserable marriage. Brett on the other hand only seems to use Mike as a refuge after escaping her husband. As she claims, they seem to "understand each other," (Hemingway: 2019, 134). Understanding of the other's needs is probably the only thing Brett can provide Mike with. She can comfort him, help him through the rough time or make love to him but cannot promise her genuine affection. Apparently, Mike is satisfied with her terms. Throughout the story, it is clear that he does not want to change her and mostly lets her do whatever she wants because he knows that is the only way he cannot lose her. He does not seem to mind her spending time with other men as long as it is only a short-term affair: "Brett's gone off with men. But they weren't ever Jews and they didn't come and hang about afterward," (ibid.). Despite the fact his approach to her behaviour is convenient for her, it does not seem to fulfil her anyway.

While Mike lets her do what she wants, Robert Cohn, who perceives Brett as his potential partner, tries to tame her. However, Brett is not interested in him and his romantic views. When they meet for the first time, she does not even notice his affection. Cohn is too different and too undamaged which is probably the reason why she does not think of him as her admirer at first. But when she finds out she feels sorry for him – another man who aspires to walk through hell with her. Despite this fact she is not interested in him, Brett agrees to spend time with Cohn on a vacation. Later, she claims that she did that because she "rather thought it would be good for him," (Hemingway: 2019, 83) but such a statement does not make much sense. Why would she care about the feelings of someone she barely knows? Or somebody whom she does not owe anything

to. Also, the trip was hardly any good for him. It seems more likely she thought of her own good – to fulfil her sexual desires. However, there might be a possibility that she wanted to try a different lifestyle and see whether it helps to calm her mind. With men like Jake, Mike, or Count Mippipopolous, she cannot achieve a tranquil life, they are too affected by the war and they remind her of it and its terrible outcomes – alcoholism, instability, impotence. But Cohn seems like a promise of tranquillity due to his relatively ordinary life and lack of experience with the war. Brett might be interested in that part of him; and her fragile side might want to be rescued for a while. Perhaps, she wants to heal her soul. In many scenes, she displays her discontent with the misery. However, she probably realizes that living a quiet life is impossible for her. She cannot stay in one place with one person. She always has to be on the move, probably to run away from her thoughts. The only thing that results from her vacation with Cohn is that she realizes her life is doomed to remain *lost*. Nonetheless, Cohn thinks otherwise, he believes that Brett can be changed – which frustrates her even more. He wants to be her knight and save her from her problems, but she knows it is impossible. He fails to understand her wounded personality. His constant stalking and sudden interventions into her life hold down her freedom and break her spirit – which results in Brett's increasing anger against him. On one hand, she probably knows he means well (perhaps, that is why she tries to defend him), but on the other hand, his romantic ideals are something she cannot identify with because they both come from two completely different worlds.

The connection between Jake and Brett might be described as a cyclical relationship. No matter the circumstances, it follows the same trajectory. Jake and Brett reunite, spend some time together, then discuss their relationship concluding they cannot be together, Brett flees from him and after some time, they reunite and experience it all again. Why do they keep hurting themselves with such an impasse? The main reason for Brett keeping Jake by her side is that he is a great and loyal friend to her. Whenever she needs him, he is there for her, accepting her personality. Both of them complement each other – both are diseased but in the opposite way. While Jake suffers the physical problem, Brett's illness comes from the inside. Their illness creates a barrier between them, but at the same time, enables them to keep a genuine friendship. That is why she rather marries Mike than him because she does not seem to worry too much about Mike's feelings. Mike apparently handles Brett's short affairs with a calmer mind than Jake. While Mike tolerates some of Brett's infidelities, Jake does not abide any of them. Only because he accepts her lifestyle does not mean he is content with it. The fact that Jake is eliminated

from making any demands on Brett probably makes their relationship easier for her. Knowing that their relationship is not going any further, Brett feels free to do what she wants, and Jake must cope with it. If she agreed to be involved with him more deeply, it would probably not make them any happier. Her perception of love has gotten distorted over the years. Most likely, he would think of himself as her true and only love (because that is how he apparently perceives her) and expect her to end the affairs. Where does such a conclusion come from? Many a time, Jake asks Brett to stay or travel only with him (Hemingway: 2019, 59). Why would he ask her if he did not want to change anything in her life? By making such suggestions, he clearly asks her to change for him – to quit her affairs. However, she would not be able to hold her passion down and give him what he wants. Such a result might also be impossible even if he were not impotent because *she* would remain broken.

When Pedro Romero appears in the story, everybody gets bewitched by him immediately. His power to attract people is almost as strong as Brett's. It is thus no surprise that after seeing him for only a few minutes, Brett falls madly in love with him – or at least with his talent, beauty, elegance, and tight green trousers (ibid. 153). Her affection seems to be rather shallow but at the same time, her sexual desires are too strong to stop. Brett uses Jake as her medium in order to get what she wants – as if she did not realize how painful it is for him. This part of the novel shows how strongly Brett gets influenced by her lust. She presents it like a disease that cannot be controlled. She proves many a time that her constraints do not stand a chance when she can choose from a variety of enjoyments. Nonetheless, the moment she chooses Romero seems like the most selfish one. She does not feel guilty hurting Cohn, Mike, and Jake. Paradoxically, her relationship with Pedro Romero seems like the only one that had a beneficial impact on her. Although it started as a selfish affair, she decided to be reasonable and put an end to it herself. Soon she realized that he was too young and pure for her miserable life. Keeping him by her side would not only spoil his character but also his promising career. Also, Romero clearly wishes to have a traditional relationship which includes monogamy, marriage, and eventually, children – for Brett, that would mean imprisonment. She rather walks out of this relationship feeling both good and miserable but most importantly, knowing she did the right thing.

8 Femme(s) Fatale(s)

Femme fatale is generally described as an irresistible, mysterious woman who leads her lovers into destruction. It is an idol-like figure that usually indulges in satisfying sexual desires, but in terms of emotionality, she might be considered cold-hearted, careless, or even cruel (Bade: 1979, 8). Femmes fatales are thus evoking diverse feelings like "attraction and repulsion, adoration and hatred," (ibid., 24). According to Patrick Bade, the depiction of the femmes fatales in paintings or narratives is often associated with animals and "bestiality" (ibid., 8). In particular, they are also connected with mythical aquatic creatures such as siren, mermaid, or nymph whose main goal is to drown their victims. Bade also suggests that the fate of these victims "can be interpreted as an unconscious metaphor for man's fear of being overwhelmed by female sexuality, or loss of identity and self control in sexual intercourse," (ibid.).

Brett and Daisy are both very powerful women in terms of luring man. To some extent, they resemble the dreaded femme fatale – both might be perceived as idol-like characters with a rather careless mindset, causing misery to the male protagonists. But can they be fully related to such archetypes? This chapter is going to analyse how big the range of Daisy and Brett's power actually is and whether they deserve to be named Femmes fatales.

8.1 Circe

When it comes to controlling emotions, sexual needs or mood, Brett does not exactly come to light as a competent master of her body. However, when it comes to men, Brett is a powerful woman capable of subjugating them all. As was already stated above, Brett went through a lot of affairs. However, that would not be possible without her abilities to attract others. Not only is she described as "damned good looking" (ibid. 30), but also as a goddess, aristocrat, or Circe (ibid. 135). These "titles" she were given by her admirers and seem quite positive, except the last one.

Circe was a dreaded, powerful enchantress that is most famous for her ability to turn her enemies into animals. She appears in Homer's *Odyssey* where she invites Odysseus's crew to feast with her. But the food she offers them has been bewitched, and they all turn into pigs. Odysseus, who at that time was not with his men, eventually saves

them and makes the witch turn the pigs back into men. In the end, Odysseus stays at Circe's island for a year and enjoys her hospitality. When they decide to leave, Circe provides Odysseus with her advice on how to avoid the dangers that are awaiting them on their journey (Bolton: 2002, 233).

When Cohn calls Brett "Circe", what does he mean by the statement? William Cloonan states that "over the time Circe became the image of women who were able to expose in men their swinish, sexually driven nature," (2018, 103). But he objects to Cohn's use of the allusion since it does not seem like a truthful statement about Brett. He also marks the use of such metaphor as Cohn's "tendency to respond to contemporary reality in a melodramatic fashion, using […] an exaggerated literary allusion," (ibid.). Cloonan goes on to defend Brett by stating that no man was encouraged by her to act like an animal – Jake and Romero never behaved badly; Mike's nature is nasty even without Brett, and Cohn himself does not act like a swine (ibid.). Although he annoys everybody and uses his physical strength against his "rivals", he always ends up crying and begging for forgiveness.

Nonetheless, some critics agree with Cohn's metaphor. For example, Kim Moreland claims that "Brett is Circe, turning men not into the chivalric knights they desperately want to be but into swine," (qtd. in Barlowe: 2002, 27); Wilma Garcia concludes that "in Hemingway's works […] the good woman is faithful and subservient to the needs of her man; the bad woman is not […] Brett Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises* is a woman who cannot be good, who cannot meet the needs of her man," (ibid.).

Brett does not meet the needs of men, but that does not necessarily mean she is a bad character. And at the same time, it must be noted that while she might not turn men into swine, she does *affect* them. Clearly, she is aware of her powers and utilises them to a certain degree. Her approach towards men is certainly not right or appropriate, nonetheless, none of them has the right to claim her as their possession. They know her nature, the way she behaves and her needs, therefore they must be aware of the risk of getting involved with her. It seems that Jake and Mike are mindful of the situation. Apparently, the only person that does not understand it is Cohn. Romero may also try to possess her, but he does not know her too well; moreover, the moment Brett tells him they cannot be together, he lets her go without any more pressure.

It appears that Cohn's misapprehensions and romantic ideals are the main cause for the rising arguments in the group after all. Although it does not seem likely at the first glance, Cohn is probably perceived as a threat to Jake and Mike because he attempts to go on a

vacation with Brett alone. He breaks the unwritten "rules" and seizes her for himself. They might fear that if he managed to do that, he could possibly steal her away from them for good. However, when they find out Brett is not interested in him, Cohn gets bullied by Mike as a punishment for his audacity and for triggering the false alarm. A different approach to a similar situation might be perceived when Brett runs away with Romero. The main difference is that she chooses him, she falls in love with him, and, for a while, she wants him to "seize" her. Romero, contrary to Cohn, represents a real threat because Brett is clearly crazy about him and he succeeds in taking her away. However, in this case, nobody reacts aggressively except for Cohn who still claims his right to her. Mike and Jake are *affected* by it, but they do not turn into swine to get her back. They *tolerate* her decisions, even if it hurts them.

8.2 Siren

Throughout the story of *The Great Gatsby,* one might ask what is the main reason that Gatsby is drawn to Daisy with such intensity? Is it his romantic soul or Daisy's money and status that is uppermost in his mind? And if it were the money, then why would he still fight for her when later, he is wealthy and probably surrounded by a choice of unmarried women? Can it be the status, or is there something else?

Although Daisy acts like a fragile, naïve girl, there is something about her; something that is able to gain her power over Gatsby. Glenn Settle claims that it is important to pay attention to Fitzgerald's detailed description of Daisy's voice because such "minute" detail might help one to understand Gatsby's eager attempts to get her. Analysing Nick's perception of Daisy's voice, Settle claims that Daisy and Gatsby's relation might be connected with the myths of the Sirens (1985, 115). In Greek mythology, a siren was "a creature half bird and half woman who lured sailors to destruction by the sweetness of her song" (Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Siren", 2020). As suggested by Settle, Gatsby might be perceived as an epic hero (a sailor) that undergoes a "seafaring quest when he meets Daisy," (ibid., 116).

When Gatsby talks about their first rendezvous, he claims that he intended to "[take] what he could get" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 94) and then let go. However, after some time, he realized that he is falling in love with Daisy. As he describes it: "there I was, 'way off my ambitions, getting deeper in love every minute, and all of a sudden I didn't care. What was the use of doing great things if I could have a better time telling her what I was going

to do?" (ibid., 95). At this point, one might notice that Gatsby (as a romantic hero) gets compelled by Daisy (the Siren). Drawn by her powers, he loses self-control and scales back his ambitions. Without a doubt, if he stayed with her any longer, his true origin would be uncovered; he would never make any money, and his romantic hopes would be destroyed. Nonetheless, he is "saved" by the war and gains his ambitions back by getting far from her – the destruction has been postponed. However, his mind remains affected by her.

While this story is slowly unravelling, Nick approaches Daisy's "mystical" power. At the beginning of the novel, he describes her voice as passioned, compelling and hard to forget. Even Nick is clearly enchanted by Daisy, forgetting the rest of the world while listening to her. It seems that her voice is somehow connected with her mask of a "beautiful little fool" (ibid., 13) because when she uncovers her inner struggle to Nick, one might notice the sudden change of her voice and its impact on him. In other words, once the "sweetness of her song" (Encyclopaedia Britannica: "Siren", 2020) – meaning her giggly and innocent side – disappears, Daisy as a Siren loses her powers.

"The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me," (Fitzgerald: 1993, 13)

Gatsby indulges in sentiment and idealism. For him, Daisy represents these aspects. He does recognize that something inside of her has changed throughout the years they did not meet but keeps on romanticising her. Once the whole story is revealed, one can agree with the assumption that the reason for Gatsby's attraction is Daisy's mask of a nice girl and her "low, thrilling voice" that expresses both "excitement" and "promise" (ibid., 8). His romantic soul seems to be the main reason why he keeps on fighting for Daisy. Her powers apparently compel him the most. There is no other character in the story who would be drawn by Daisy's powers as strongly as Gatsby.

"His hand took hold of hers, and as she said something low in his ear he turned towards her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most, with its fluctuating, feverish warmth, because it couldn't be over-dreamed – that voice was a deathless song," (ibid., 62)

Although Nick admires Gatsby's "romantic readiness" (ibid., 4), he is not much of an idealist himself. That is the reason why Daisy's powers do not seem to work on him with such intensity. Also, looking at Tom's character, it is clear that he is no romantic sailor undergoing an adventurous quest. He does not set any goals because with the money he inherited, his life already *is* a goal. He does not need to dream about things he cannot have nor fight for his beliefs. He simply buys them.

However, it must be noted that later in the story, Daisy's voice is also described as "full of money" (ibid., 76) by Gatsby himself. What does this suggest? Were his intentions drawn by money and not his romantic soul after all? As was already mentioned, Gatsby realizes Daisy has changed – perhaps he can also sense the change of her personality in the tone of her voice. It is possible, that when Gatsby and Daisy meet for the first time, her voice was not as "full of money" as it has been after her marriage. In her previous life, she apparently believed in true love and perfect world, but after marrying Tom, she clearly realized, there are no ideals she can hold on to. Her idea of love was eventually distorted. The only stability she could count on was wealth. Although she lost her trust in her husband, she could at least have his money – "that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in [her voice], the jingle of it, the cymbal's song of it," (ibid., 76). Gatsby seems agitated by that discovery, and his remark about her voice being "full of money" seems more like a disappointment – which would support the idea that he is just a romantic soul that wants to be loved in return.

However, one cannot forget about Daisy's status which definitely affects not only her voice but also her noble image – that is something Gatsby cannot acquire on his own like money. Throughout the story, Jay is described a bit like Myrtle – he is quite tacky, his parties are offensive, the place he lives in is appalling and "unprecedent" (ibid. 69); especially for people like Daisy and Tom who were *born* with a certain sense of "propriety" at the top of social ladder. As one gets to find out at the end of the story, Gatsby believes that "he had a big future in front of him" (ibid. 110), he was very ambitious from a young age, always "improving his mind" (ibid.), he even chided his father to eat decently. There must have been something in him that wanted to achieve the greatness and nobility of higher circles from the start. And that may be the main reason why he fell in love with Daisy in the first place. Rather than her individual personality, he was probably more attracted to the class she represented. She was the last step he had to make to fulfil his dreams. This suggestion, however, does not completely discard Gatsby's romantic soul, why else would he be drawn to just one, particular woman in his

life. But he probably should be perceived more as an epic hero undergoing the adventurous quest in order to win over the heart of a noble dame *and* reach the peak of the society by marrying her, rather than a hero who is purely dedicated to love.

Nonetheless, like a Siren, Daisy does not lure the sailor to become his wife. While Gatsby keeps believing in the power of his future plans and Daisy's love, Daisy's destructive Siren power puts a cruel end to it. Although he does not die at the sea, his life fades away in the waves of his garden swimming pool.

9 The Meaning of Life

What if one has "been everywhere and seen everything and done everything," (Fitzgerald: 1993, 13)? If one thinks they have already experienced all that life can provide, then what is the meaning of it? What else should one do? Undoubtedly, Daisy did not experience everything, but she thinks she did and now she feels bored, drained, and stuck in one place. She has no aim in life that would fulfil her being – neither her husband nor her daughter make her feel content. Unable to plan anything or even keep track of time, she seems to exist in stereotypical repetitions without actually living: "Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it," (ibid 10). Not even independent Jordan seems to be ultimately happy but rather constantly bored and dispassionate. Although they have the opportunity to *do* something, they seem incapable of taking advantage of their spare time. Rather than occupying themselves with a meaningful activity, they indulge in senseless enterprises:

"The notion originated with Daisy's suggestion that we hire five bathrooms and take cold baths, and then assumed more tangible form as 'a place to have a mint julep'. Each of us said over and over that it was a 'crazy idea ' – we all talked at once to a baffled clerk and thought, or pretended to think, that we were being very funny…" (ibid., 80)

To cope with their problems and move somewhere in their life, they resort to drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or engaging in high-risk activities (fast and reckless driving). Although it might not be as explicitly described as in *Fiesta*, Daisy and Jordan, together with other male and female characters, hardly-ever appear in the story without being or wanting to be intoxicated. When Jordan refuses to have a drink "her host look[s] at her incredulously," (ibid., 9). This and other passages prove that the alcohol is quite a frequent component in the characters' bloodstream – also, an important and comforting one: "we were all irritable now with the fading ale," (ibid., 78). Perhaps their senseless existence is caused by the sense of exhaustion; the notion that everything has been done leaves them hovering constantly in meaninglessness. In Daisy's case, it is also caused by the marital problems and inner struggles already discussed.

While Daisy and Jordan find nothing new in their glamorous world, Myrtle on the other hand seemed to find purpose in it. Theoretically, it might be said that Myrtle has

more experiences than Daisy and Jordan because she does not limit herself to dwelling in one place. She came to their luxurious world from the valley of ashes. Comparing these two completely different worlds, Myrtle gains a broader viewpoint, while Daisy and Jordan's perspective is quite limited. They seem to be aware of different sorts of people and their life, but they never actually see or care what is going on with them. It seems that Myrtle's outlook on the two worlds helps her to appreciate her life and its opportunities more. However, her sacrifice for such "privilege" is eventually bigger than she intended. Jordan and Daisy, on the other hand, fail to find their meaning of life. Although they are still alive, it seems that Myrtle's short life was more fulfilled than theirs can ever be.

In Hemingway's *Fiesta*, alcohol seems to play an even more important role in the protagonists' lives. Not only does it function as a shield against boredom and personal struggles, but it also helps to tune out the whole world – the social affairs, the war, its aftermath etc. As was mentioned above, in *The Great Gatsby*, Jordan and Daisy are enclosed in their restricted point of view, which means they care only about the problems that are personal to them. But in *Fiesta*, Brett is also affected by the problems that take place outside the range of her personal life.

Brett needs to live and drink fast. Excessive drinking helps her to forget not only about the past but also about the future – she wants to live in the moment and enjoy it without fear or regret. She moves from one place to another but at the same time, she is stuck in meaninglessness like Daisy and Jordan. Whenever she stops anywhere, she feels miserable and needs some physical activity. However, her constant attempts to run away from her problems, either by drinking or by travelling, never seem to work for her. While in *The Great Gatsby* the lack of alcohol causes mood swings, in *Fiesta*, Brett's withdrawal symptoms are more intense and visible. For example, there are moments when she cannot pick up her drink without first sipping from the glass that stays on the table; or when the Count brings the basket of expensive champagne and wants to let it cool down (ibid. 62) – Brett does not want to wait because she does not care about the right temperature nor the taste of the alcohol, but its effect. She is in a constant circle of restless moving, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse only to preserve herself from the outer world as well as her inner self. She does not seem to realize such life only deepens her mental instability and discontent; or perhaps, she does but running from the world, is easier for her than participating in it.

10 Redefining Masculinity

Like the female characters, the male ones also want to be perceived in a certain way to simplify or fulfil their life. Both sides are looking for their identity; something that would define their nature. Some of them, like Daisy, Tom, Gatsby, Romero, or Cohn attempt to follow the old trackway of the traditional gender roles or values, while others – Jordan, Brett, Jake, Mike and Bill – perceive that there is no space for such conventional believes in the newly developing world. To form their identities, they resort to certain classifications of femininity and masculinity wishing to find their comfort zone. However, as already mentioned, the main problem is that "masculinity and femininity are not fixed, static roles that individuals have, but rather, they are dynamic relational processes," (Messner: 1991, 724) and the majority of the characters (both male and female) does not seem to handle the fact. While female characters fight with the struggle internally, the male ones seem to cope with their problems quite differently. In an attempt to become regarded as a stable unit, the male characters tend to criticize one another for the aspects that make them distinctive – especially if this "otherness" makes them seem weak. While female characters are more tolerant and understanding in terms of mixing feminine and masculine qualities, most of the male characters seem to dismiss such an idea. In order to fully grasp the issue, a few words must be said about the notion of masculinity from the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century.

When talking about raw masculinity in general, it is usually associated with power, privilege, dominance, heterosexuality, self-reliance, aggression, hard-boiled behaviour, and other traits. Nonetheless, in certain eras, it might be perceived in a more narrow sense and connected with rather particular aspects. For example, in earlier centuries, masculinity was mainly associated with adulthood, which meant that a man was considered masculine enough when grown into a tough, independent, and conscientious individual. As Michael Kimmel states "'manhood' had historically been contrasted with 'childhood'" (Kimmel: 2005, 44). While in the first half of the 19th century, masculinity was primarily a matter of economic autonomy, political involvement along with others which proved one's competence to become a self-made man, in the second half of the century, the masculinity was rather identified with the body and physical strength. Also, the utmost opposite of masculinity was no longer seen in

childhood. The attention was drawn to femininity or rather feminization and its effects on manhood (ibid. 44-45).

In the Victorian era, the middle-class women were in charge of the house; they were "domesticators" (ibid. 21). For some men, home became rather a women's territory. As Kimmel describes, it was: "a virtual feminine theme park – where well-mannered and well-dressed children played quietly in heavily draped and carpeted parlors, and adults chatted amiably over tea served from porcelain services," (ibid. 20) – which contrasted to their raw macho world and "spoiled" young boys who were raised and educated predominantly by women.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the feminization of American society did not mean that women were the only problem. Some men even thought that women were not part of the problem at all. In fact, what felt, in a certain way, emasculating was work. Although in earlier years, having a job represented dominance and independence, some men started to realize that spending the whole day at work actually limits them and their freedom. The problem was thus prescribed to the industrialization that "created a class of robotic workers" and "brain workers" (ibid., 44). Another problem was perceived for example in the growing cities that made men overly sophisticated, or migrating communities of different, "lower" races and their interaction with the Americans (ibid.).

Those who felt robbed of their manhood needed to escape from these influences. Some attempted to return to nature where it was felt to be possible to maintain and strengthen masculine identity; young boys were advised to spend as much time outside the city as possible and attend organizations like the Boy Scouts. Others utilised a rather metaphorical escape by reading fictions of the Wild West and adventures in the wilderness that illustrated masculinity. As already mentioned above, in the late 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, men also drew attention to their body and physical strength by practicing various activities such as weightlifting, hiking, boxing, football, baseball, basketball etc. (ibid., 20-54) Because the machismo was "thought to proceed from men's bodies," (Connel: 2005, 45).

By the turn of the century, larger cities also noticed "the emergence of a visible gay male subculture" (Kimmel: 2005, 48) which urged men even more to dwell on masculine activities because they feared they might be associated with them and their effeminate behaviour. They basically followed the rules Robert Brannon identified as "no sissy stuff […] be a big wheel […] be a sturdy oak […] give 'em hell" (ibid. 94) – no effeminate behaviour, be confident, be strong, be tough. As men were furiously trying to

preserve the traditional masculinity with all its privileges, women became more involved in its disruption. They demanded rights such as high education, profession, mobility, independence, and many others – in short, they demanded equality. Such requirements and consequent changes "made [men] perceive that their superior position in the gender order and their supposedly 'natural' male roles and prerogatives were not somehow rooted in the human condition," (ibid. 77).

During these changes, Sigmund Freud was one of the most influential figures. Not only his work had an effect on feminists and other social movements, but he also inspired authors, painters, composers etc. According to Raewyn Connell, Freud did not write a "systematic discussion of masculinity," but he used it as "one of the continuing themes in his writing over thirty years" (Connell: 2005, 8). He recognized that sexuality and gender cannot be considered stable or rooted and suggested that all human beings were bisexual possessing both masculine and feminine qualities. Connell also states that "the point he [Freud] most insistently made about masculinity was that it never exists in a pure state," (ibid., 10) which completely disrupted the idea of the "real man", raw masculinity etc.

Certainly, it is also important to note that The Great War enormously affected men and their approach towards the traditional idea of the real man. As already mentioned in the Chapter 1, the participation at war was wildly promoted and romanticised as a virtuous endeavour, proof of heroism, courage, and honour – qualities rather prescribed to men. While in reality, the soldiers perceived it as a nonsensical murderous madness that had nothing to do with heroism nor any other honourable qualities. The high number of casualties and horrific scenarios of a modern war left men broken, shaken and traumatized (see Chapter 1 and 2) – some of them believed that the war "demolished all definitions of manhood," (Strychacz: 2015, 279). Among other things, soldiers also had to deal with shell shock which was at that time regarded as weakness and the patients were labelled as emasculated "sissies" because the symptoms were "compared to symptoms of hysterical disorders normally attributed to women" (Kimmel and Aronson: 2004, 734). Although psychiatric aid was instituted towards the end of the war, the knowledge about the illness was still insufficient (ibid. 735).

All the mentioned developments would have been a clear sign that the perception of raw masculinity needs to change, however, the old, traditional notions did not disappear after the war, and the society still inclined to them (ibid. 216). This problem might be perceived in Fitzgerald and especially in Hemingway's fiction with its

(seemingly) hard-boiled characters. But the authors did not only deal with the traditional notion of manhood, they also centred the attention on its failures and difficulties.

10.1 (In)vincible

In *The Great Gatsby*, masculinity seems to primarily revolve around money, class, strength, and mobility. However, the following analysis also concentrates on the fact that these aspects might not be enough and that the male characters define their or someone else's manliness according to their relationships with women and other marginalized groups; or also, according to their power over them.

Tom Buchanan functions as a representation of the raw machismo; he is strong, domineering and he feels that he must have everything under control at all cost. Coming from a prominent family, possessing physical strength, and applying an intimidating attitude, he seems invincible – not only to the external world but also to himself. As Nick states: "Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 6) as if suggesting that his raw masculinity is stable and inviolable. Sometimes it seems that he acts like a "brute of a man" (ibid., 10) only to entertain himself by presenting his powers. However, there might be another reason behind his behaviour – fear. In the story, Tom reveals his concerns about the Nordic race being in danger due to other cultures, and perhaps, not only them but also the emerging image of the new woman and lower-class people making money and placing themselves on the pedestal of "his sort". The same pedestal that holds his pride and enables him to feel powerful. As was already mentioned, he likes having things under control. If women, people of a different race or the poor – in other words, people who were overlooked or marginalized by him – could have the same privileges as he does, his dominance would lose its strength and his masculinity would be damped. Feeling privileged to possess anything he wants, Tom refuses to share with the "outcasts".

Throughout the story, one might perceive that Tom does everything he can to keep his golden throne. In addition to his elitist statements, he wards his fears off either by making demands without compromise or empathy – as Nick once describes: "his determination to have my company bordered on violence. The supercilious assumption was that on Sunday afternoon I had nothing better to do" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 17); or "shifting heavily in his chair" (ibid., 11) to interrupt Jordan's statements when they

disrupt his opinions; having unconcealed (or poorly concealed) affairs; or using explicitly brutish behaviour towards women. However, although he does all this, he is not able to prevent his wife from mocking him. For example, in the scene where they attend one of Gatsby's parties and Tom tells Daisy, he wants to join some people for supper. Knowing that Tom wants to leave their table only to meet with a "common but pretty" girl from the other group, Daisy kindly offers him her "gold pencil" so he can "take down any addresses" (Fitzgerald 68). In that moment, she is the one who takes control, makes clear that she knows about his intentions and rises above him. In other situations, she ridicules his profundity and interest in books by calling them "deep books with long words in them" (ibid. 10); or later, she emasculates him by having an affair herself.

At the same time, Tom cannot stop the low-class men, Gatsby and George, from taking his "property" from him and degrading his position. He loses control and balances on the border of collapse due to the dreaded "outcasts". Although he eventually gets his powers back, his dominance, which was so eagerly defended, is wounded. He mortifies his pride and raw masculinity even more by almost urging Daisy to stay with him. What is worse, Tom must do so in front of other people and repeatedly. According to Frances Kerr, for a mighty man, exposing the "emotional interior" means losing invincibility (1996, 420) but in this case, it actually does the opposite – Daisy clings to him even more. In this scene where he fights for his wife, it might appear that Tom reveals his gentle, "feminine" side for a while, however, it is more likely he only wants to protect his "belongings" along with his dominance. But he is aware of the fact that he must sacrifice something to keep the stability.

Paradoxically, Tom also complains about the decline of family life and values, suggesting that the "outcasts" and their attempts to rearrange the society are the major problems causing the damage, while at the same time, he indulges in series of extra-marital affairs. His arguments are therefore a mere proof of him being greedy for keeping the privileges of a white male only to people like himself. His concern is not centred on the happiness of traditional family life, but rather a hierarchical way of life.

As already implied, Gatsby is one of the "outcasts". He does not rely on intimidating people to get what he wants. Unlike Tom, Gatsby attempts to make changes by following his dreams and working hard. He does not appear to be dominant, his masculinity seems to have different qualities, distinctive from Tom's – romantic determination, chivalry, generosity etc. Although he seems more likeable and preferable to Tom, Gatsby, in his early life, lacks one thing that undermines his masculinity and

makes him a less desirable choice – money and status, which in many cases represents power. In order to be perceived as a real, powerful man, and gain back his true love, Gatsby resorts to lies and illegal business. Once he obtains the reputation of a wealthy man, he feels revitalised and ready to step further towards his dreams. As already mentioned above, Gatsby dethrones Tom by wooing his wife and assuming control. When Tom breaks Daisy's affair with him, Gatsby feels confident and powerful enough to stand up against him, thinking that he has already won. Nonetheless, fighting for his ideal image of hierarchy, Tom emasculates his rival in return by calling him "Mr Nobody from Nowhere" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 83) and revealing his secrets along with his original social standing. His illicit business and lies that at first functioned as a facilitator, eventually became his condemnation. Not only is Gatsby degraded but his imagined past and illegal activities also help Tom to gain Daisy back easily. Moreover, Gatsby's "emotional interior" (Kerr: 1996, 420) meaning his anger and wild eagerness, which he has never exposed before, are too forceful and oppressive for Daisy to handle. While Tom degrades himself by uncovering his subtle side, Gatsby, feverishly trying to keep his position, loses his powers with a furious attitude. Both emasculate themselves by revealing their emotions, however, in Gatsby's case, it only makes the situation worse. It seems that he has gotten overwhelmed by the newly gained position and behaves as if he did not realize he became a violent and manipulative egoist like Tom. Daisy would probably not stay with Gatsby even if he were honest and kept his noble mores. Nonetheless, he does not seem to realize the fact and tries to take over again. But he is too far below Tom at that moment and falls even lower when Tom lets Daisy go home with him – Tom as a mighty king rules again and prescribes what Gatsby can and cannot do with his wife:

"'You two start on home, Daisy,' said Tom. 'In Mr Gatsby's car.'
She looked at Tom, alarmed now, but he insisted with magnanimous scorn.
'Go on. He won't annoy you. I think he realises that his presumptuous little flirtation is over.'
They were gone, without a word, snapped out, made accidental, isolated, like ghosts, even from our pity."

Gatsby's audacious step fails, but he attempts to impress Daisy with his chivalric character again – when they get to the car, Gatsby lets Daisy drive it, because he thinks it might help her to calm down. Passing the Wilson's garage, Daisy accidentally hits Myrtle; filled with fear she drives away unable to stop. When Gatsby pulls on the emergency

brake, she nearly collapses and lets him drive. To preserve her innocence, Gatsby is ready to take the blame and ascribe her crime on himself. But Daisy never tells Tom that she is responsible for the murder of his mistress and lets him think that Gatsby did it. Due to her inability to take the full responsibility, Tom basically sends Myrtle's husband George to take revenge on the guiltless man. The only thing Gatsby gets for his love and devotion is a post of a mere vassal – a subordinate that serves his queen when needed the outcast sentenced to death by his king.

Looking at Nick, it seems as if he lacked the typical masculine qualities promoted by Tom. He deprecates himself right from the beginning, declaring Tom to be "stronger and more of a man than [he is]" (Fitzgerald: 1993, 7); although he comes from a wealthy family, he does not possess powers of Tom's sort; when having a conversation, he lets others to speak and express their thoughts instead of centring the attention on himself or interrupting them; he does not mind being led by a woman (Jordan) and letting *her* decide when the relationship moves further. He does not worry about being perceived as weak or feminine because he has other qualities that prove his manliness: he takes pride in high morals (unlike Tom), cuts loose from his family, attempts to stand on his own feet and become a confident self-made man (like Gatsby). Despite the fact he cannot resist Tom's compressing vulgarity, he still keeps his common sense – in other words, although Tom can easily turn him "around by one arm" (ibid., 7), he does not fear nor admires his strength blindly. He might be easily manipulated physically but does not let his nerves to be shaken by that. In fact, it almost seems as if he also wished Tom to be dethroned – not to replace him, but to open the door for equality. Early in the story, he thinks it would be better for Daisy to "rush out of the house, child in arms" and probably get a divorce; and later, he actually helps her to accomplish the emancipation – but in both cases "there were no such intentions in her head" (ibid.,15). When his plans fail and Gatsby gets killed, he decides to move away from Daisy and Tom's golden world.

George is another "outcast", but unlike Gatsby, he remains at the bottom of the hierarchy ladder for almost the whole story. His powers are practically non-existent as his wife scorns him for being poor and unable to change their social status. Moreover, he does not possess any physical strength and the conditions he lives in do not seem to improve his looks. His priorities are not centred on the traditional principles of masculinity at first, which is probably the result of long-lasting indigence in his family. Neither does he question the hierarchy nor the offensiveness of his wife, as it is the way of life he got used to. Perhaps, the years of Myrtle's complaining made him feel guilty

about their subsistence so much that he gave in to her and the demands she made to comfort her: "he was his wife's man and not his own," (ibid., 87). But once he is *betrayed* by her, he comes to realize that not only she crippled his masculinity, but also degraded his position as a husband. Although he tries to reclaim control by locking her and planning to start a new life, he cannot change the way Myrtle perceives him. George's attempts are too weak to reach the target. To make her feel guilty and more obedient, he does not try to step up and revive his lost respect – instead, he hides behind the "objects" (physical and abstract) and hopes for *their* strength to manage her iniquities. He uses the door to restrict her, and God as an omnipotent power to make her feel guilty because he is incapable of doing that on his own. But Myrtle, acquainted with a different type of masculine power, stays fearless. That is why she cannot take him seriously and encourages him to beat her – clearly, she knows he would not do that: "throw me down and beat me, you dirty little coward!" (ibid., 87). But her encouragement functions as another degradation and mockery of the efforts he puts into proving his manliness. When Myrtle dies, he probably reproaches his previous interventions and blames himself for her death as much as he blames the driver - Daisy. Thinking about her taunting notes, George attempts to take revenge for her death in order to regain the masculinity Myrtle was referring to. There might be many reasons why he also shoots himself in the end. The first one is that the violent act is not what he could fully identify with and thus living with the idea of killing someone would be unbearable for him; another reason might be the fact that despite his fights with Myrtle, he cannot live without her; or because he thinks of himself as being guilty of her death, he probably sees the suicide as some kind of compensation for causing Myrtle's death.

A completely different approach towards masculinity might be perceived in *Fiesta*. The male characters do not seem to care about reaching the peak of the hierarchy. For them, the most important aspect defining their masculinity is a certain macho, "hard-boiled" behaviour. To make it clear, here is an example of the difference: both Cohn and Gatsby carry romantic and idealistic notions. However, in *The Great Gatsby*, Jay is perceived as masculine although he believes in chivalry and nobility, because the main thing that matters and demonstrates his masculinity in the novel is how far he could get. And he always strives for more, to some extent, successfully. But in Hemingway's novel, the dreamlike ideals and old-fashioned chivalry are identified as unmanly by other male characters. Therefore, it does not matter where Cohn goes or what he does to belong to

the "manly society", he is not accepted because of the conceptions he believes in. He might travel to Paris or Spain, watch bullfights, or he might be a middleweight boxing champion, but his behaviour, ideas, and the fact he does not take any of that seriously makes him unmanly to other characters.

Right at the beginning of the novel, Jake states that Cohn "care[s] nothing for boxing, in fact he dislike[s] it" (Hemingway: 2019, 15). Boxing helps him feel superior and strong, but it never erases the fact he did not experience the "real" fight of war and, furthermore, that he is a Jew – part of a "low" community that was accused, among other things, of spoiling (feminizing) the society just like other minor ethnic groups in America. When he comes to Paris, he does not care about the city either and feels sick of it. Unlike other characters that came to Paris disillusioned after the war, looking for a new way of life, Cohn moved to the City of Lights only on account of his wife, and is clearly incapable of appreciating its opportunities because his mind is still fixed on the pre-war era and its concepts. When in Spain to see the bullfights, he declares that he might be bored during the performance, as if to prove his manliness, but his statement causes the absolute opposite. Eventually, he regrets his words and ends up calling Brett a "sadist" because she managed to stay relatively calm during the disturbing scenes. The fascination with bullfights that expose violence and symbolise fluctuating sexualities, seductiveness and, destructiveness of love, is for someone who believes in traditional gender roles, chivalry, and thinks that fragile femininity needs to be protected incomprehensible. These and many more incidents demonstrate his "otherness" that arises primarily from the fact he did not join the Army. Thus, it might be said that in *Fiesta*, it is the lack of the dreadful, lifechanging experiences from World War I that makes one an "outsider".

Unlike Cohn, the other male characters – Jake, Mike, and Bill – experienced the war. Their involvement in it made them disillusioned, apathetic, and tough. It made them disregard Cohn's beliefs because, after the war, it seemed pathetic to follow such conceptions. Dismissing the romantic notions and engaging in fast living and wild drinking became part of a "new masculinity" for them. Those who think and live otherwise are automatically considered less manly by Jake and his peers. However, it seems likely that they "created" the new definition of masculinity to cover *their* insecurities and weaknesses (among other reasons). Apparently, the war corrupted their lives and crippled them. Thus, to protect themselves from the anxieties of the emasculation, Jake, Mike and Bill occupy themselves with activities that fill the empty space that the war has left behind. For example, Jake plays tennis – the physical activity

that he performs during the game apparently compensates for his sexual disability. In other words, he concentrates on those parts of his body he can still work with, in order to regain his masculinity. Jake and Bill also spend time in nature, fishing, hiking, strengthening their friendship, and enjoying their time outside civilisation that would remind them of their problems. One might notice that the part where Jake, Bill and their new friend Harris remain alone is one of the most tranquil, untroubled moments in the novel. There is thus no wonder they describe their days at Burguete as "jolly time" (ibid. 120). Another thing that helps Jake to evade his troubles is reading. During their trip he reads "a wonderful story about a man who had been frozen in the Alps and then fallen into a glacier and disappeared" (Hemingway: 2019, 114) – a story of nature and its dangers that fulfils his masculinist fantasies. Together with Mike and Bill, they also degrade other men who are not like them, especially Cohn, to feel superior and "normal". These and other behaviours like excessive drinking or watching bullfights protect and cover the wounded, "bitched" (Onderdonk: 2006, 61) side of them. They do not want anybody to know about it, so they are not labelled as "sissies" or cowards broken by war.

Jake, Mike, and Bill's intentions would not be so obvious if it had not been for Jake. As a narrator, he relates the story from his point of view which means he cannot avoid expressing his feelings and opinions while unravelling the story. Thanks to his emotional involvement, one might see the reason for the way he and his peers behave quite easily. His viewpoint also reveals that he is not that distinctive from Cohn as it might seem at first. Although he hides his emotions in front of others, he cannot escape them at night when alone:

"This was Brett, that I had felt like crying about. Then I though of her walking up the street and stepping into the car, as I had last seen her, and of course in a little while I felt like hell again. It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night in is another thing." (ibid. 41)

When everything gets quiet, Jake lets the feelings embrace his mind and acts exactly like Cohn – he feels betrayed and jealous, cries over Brett, and desperately yearns for her affection. Later in the story, he also confesses to Brett that: "[he]'d be as big an ass as Cohn," (Hemingway: 2019, 142) suggesting that if he were not damaged, he would have acted like Cohn even by day. Therefore, the difference between the characters might not be the only thing that infuriates Jake about Cohn, but paradoxically, it seems that his

irritation also derives from the notion of some resemblance between them. This may also apply to other male characters as well. It can also be an explanation for Jake's antipathy towards homosexuals. Unlike other characters, Jake is emasculated not only mentally but also physically. His bodily wound probably makes him question his masculinity the most. Being forced to give up on the sexual desires along with his true love makes him feel weak and incapable of taking control of his life to the fullest. He probably fears that people might associate him with homosexuals and their effeminate nature because of his handicap. Thus, he rather insults them to thwart the possibility of being compared to them.

Although Mike does not explicitly reveal his fragile side, one might conclude it exists due to his regular outbursts of anger or mockery towards Cohn and Romero. Both men degrade Mike's machismo by stealing his fiancée. Mike's aggresive behaviour clearly functions as protection from revealing his fears and weakness. Paradoxically, sometimes, his temperament betrays him and rather highlights his vulnerability. For example, in the scene where Mike loses his temper and furiously sends Cohn away: "'Jake,' Mike said. He was almost *crying*. 'You know I'm right. Listen, you!' He turned to Cohn: 'Go away! Go away now!'" (ibid. 163; emphasis added). Although he tries to be as harsh as possible, his demands sound rather desperate. The fact that he almost starts crying in front of his peers demonstrates his anxieties and fragility.

Before Cohn and Romero show up in the story, Brett "belongs" only to him although she has some lovers. Unlike Cohn and Romero, Brett's other affairs ended the way they started – quickly and with no influence on her. That is why Mike is so concerned about both men and attempts to attack them by making inappropriate comments – especially about Cohn because he uses his affair with Brett as a determination of his supremacy over others:

"'Mark you. Brett's had affairs with men before. She tells me all about everything. She gave me this chap Cohn's letters to read. I wouldn't read them,'

'Damned noble of you.'

'No, listen Jake. Brett's gone off with men. But they weren't ever Jews, and they didn't come and hang about afterward.'

'Damned good champs,' Brett said. 'It's all rot to talk about it. Michael and I understand each other.'" (ibid. 134)

Although Romero holds onto the traditional values and notions, nobody disregards him because of that. It seems that all the characters (despite the behaviour of some of them) are well aware of the fact he is the true representation of masculinity and respect him. Hemingway depicted Romero as a Code hero – a true masculine hero who possesses qualities such as "honour and courage which in a life of tension and pain make a man a man" which enables him to "behave with grace under pressure in a violent and chaotic world and distinguish him from the people who follow random impulses, […] and are generally messy perhaps cowardly, and without inviolable rules for how to live holding tight" (Larson: 2015, 102). Even though Cohn might believe in the same ideas, he does not *embody* them like Romero. Unlike Cohn, Romero does not have to say or do anything special to make everybody believe his qualities and manliness. His behaviour is pure, natural, and unobtrusive.

Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was the analysis of the characters from Francis Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby and Ernest Hemingway's Fiesta with a focus on the female protagonists. At first, the thesis worked with the historical background that not only formed the authors but also became a crucial influence on the characters in both novels. The chapters especially explored the life of the American society in the 1920s and highlighted the main issues of the era and the artists who experienced it.

The first chapter of the practical part introduced the reader to the female characters and described their "place in the world" in relation to the social status, money, and the motto "money cannot buy happiness". The thesis also tried to connect this chapter with the knowledge from chapter 3 that dealt with the term New Woman. It was discovered that Daisy's character is trapped between the old and the new worlds. On one hand, she resembles the modern woman, but on the other hand, she still believes in conventional notions. Although she is a wealthy woman who clearly has various options in her life, she remains rather a passive figure with no interest in self-realization. It was assumed that Daisy's remaining in such an unfulfilling state is probably her own choice. The chapter also concluded that for Daisy, the social status and money assured by her marriage with Tom do not bring happiness, but they represent the stability which she apparently needs the most. In comparison to Daisy, Jordan's standing was found more stable and self-sufficient. She needs to be in constant control of her life, and she undoubtedly is – to such an extent, that she uses cheating to get where she wants. She might have functioned as a clear representation of a New Woman, but her dishonesty makes her rather fall short of the term. In relation to Myrtle's character, it was discovered that although Myrtle belongs to the lower-class society, there is some resemblance between her and Daisy – they are both concerned with social status and money, both are getting it from Daisy's husband Tom, and both experience his abusive behaviour. The thesis also discussed the fact that Myrtle believes Tom's money assure her happiness, but in reality, it only creates a mere illusion of it and results in her becoming mean towards people from the same class. The subsequent discussion on Brett only confirmed what has already been mentioned about living in high society and possessing money. Unlike the characters from The Great Gatsby who are obsessed with keeping or maintaining high status, Brett decided to become an uprooted, expatriate. However, although she can be considered a modern

woman, the chapter suggested that her dependence on other characters, her incapability of taking responsibility for herself, and her unwillingness to participate in social spheres makes her, like Daisy, stuck between the traditional and the new world.

The next chapter dealt with the character's appearance and how it might contradict their inner side. It was discovered that all the female characters are obscuring something in order to maintain a certain, perhaps desired image – either by hiding their weak, inner side, their inadequacy, or flaws. In Daisy's case, the difference between her inner and outer side was the most intense. The chapter worked with the idea that in her earlier life, Daisy actually was a beautiful fool that believed in an ideal fairy-tale-like world, but as time passed, she became disillusioned, cynical, and eventually spoiled by the events she went through. Because she recognized the convenience of being perceived as a beautiful fool, she started to pretend she is one, in order to make her life easier – which however resulted in the inner struggles she has been constantly confronted with. Such findings suggested a certain development of Daisy's character, which could not be perceived in other female characters. It was also assumed that this double identity of hers is represented by the changes in her hair colour – once, it is fair which might symbolise her purity and innocence, and the other time, it becomes dark which might reflect her unconventional, spoiled behaviour. Although Jordan seems quite unlike Daisy, the thesis pointed out the fact that one cannot say she is completely content with herself. The chapter explained her cheating as a result of her anxiety about losing the position she worked for. Since Jordan does not seem to care about other character's opinion, it was assumed that her cheating is just her way of acquiring and preserving the desired image of a self-sufficient woman. In comparison with Daisy and Jordan, Myrtle's attempts to hide her "imperfections" based on her origin were found quite unsuccessful. The chapter discussed how Myrtle pretends to belong among Tom and Daisy's sort of people, but her mindset fails her efforts. She mainly concentrates on changing the aspects that surround her according to her beliefs and notions on the life of the wealthy. Nonetheless, since Tom makes her dwell in the illusion of such life, she does not truly understand how the high society "works" and reveals her imperfections instantly without realizing it. When analysing Brett, the thesis explored another resemblance between Daisy and Brett – they both "paralyze" their inner personality in order to acquire a certain external image that would enable them to live easily. However, while Daisy resorts to the image of an innocent, fragile girl, Brett does the utter opposite. She does not want to seem weak and so she develops a certain manly persona which helps her to hide her concerns. The thesis also discussed how Brett's

behaviour is perceived by certain critics and attempted to elaborate on the idea of Brett being pretty on the outside but rotten on the inside, and thus connected to the prostitute Georgette. It was concluded, that although Brett has her flaws, she is not spoiled, mischievous, or simply bad but rather affected by the difficult experiences she went through during and after the war.

In chapter 7, the thesis discussed the complexity of the relationships in both novels and explored their genuineness. Dealing with Daisy's relationship with Gatsby, it was suggested that Daisy's affection towards him has changed due to Daisy's personal transformation. The chapter discussed the fact that Daisy might have been truly in love with Gatsby at first, but once her personality changed, it could not be genuine anymore – she has lost her romantic ideals. It was suggested, that later in the story, she might be drawn to Gatsby for three reasons. The first one was that Gatsby reminds her of her old, breezy lifestyle and she might want to relive it again with him, the second one was that she probably perceived Gatsby as an object for her revenge against her husband, and the third reason regarded the satisfaction she probably felt when she realized her newly gained power over both men. Her relationship with Tom was then labelled as a coexistence agreement that is maintained primarily for its convenience. However, as mentioned in chapter 5, one cannot forget that both Daisy and Tom have almost the same qualities in the end – in other words, although their relationship is rather toxic and unhappy, they still share some similarities that hold them together. Jordan's approach towards relationships is quite different – the thesis played with the idea that Jordan perceives her love affairs like a game. In the chapter, it was suggested that she wants to make a "team" with her partner – a team where she is the leader – but first, she needs to observe her potential "playmate" in order to choose someone reliable and someone who would not overshadow her leadership. If the individual fails to meet her criteria, she spurns the person coldly with no compromise. Unlike Jordan, Myrtle does not look for such qualities as reliability. Since her husband seems like a good-natured man, and the only problem is that he lacks money and physical vitality, the thesis assumed that Myrtle's affection towards Tom is primarily based on the desires she cannot fulfil with George. It was argued that if Myrtle chose her lover in terms of his character, she would probably run away from Tom and his manipulative powers. The chapter also examined Judith Saunders' belief that Myrtle attempts to get pregnant and is testing her fertility with Tom. However, such theory was found unconvincing since Myrtle never talks of such a subject. In terms of Brett's characters, the relationships seemed the most complicated. It was

observed that in some parts, Brett is capable of love, but her broken, traumatized personality along with her sexual desires make it impossible for her to stay with one partner. However, the chapter also concluded that it is not only about Brett, but also about the men who revolve around her – an alcoholic, impotent, "child" and others. She simply does not seem to have many favourable options. That is why she uses every one of them for something she needs at that moment: Mike becomes her refuge, Jake is her loyal friend, Cohn perhaps stimulates her curiosity about a calmer way of life – but when he fails, she uses him for pleasure, and Romero eventually represents a "bridge" to her better self.

The subsequent chapter then focused only on Brett and Daisy and examined their resemblance with the concept of Femme fatale. The analysis of Brett's character implied that Brett is not a mischievous Femme fatale in a sense. Although her approach towards men is not always right, she does not lead them straight into destruction, she only affects their life – just like the attractive, unattainable women usually do. Also, her lovers know what "risk" it is to get involved with her, she does not hide her lust; it was thus concluded that she cannot be blamed for their decisions. Moreover, she even acknowledges her mistakes and feels miserable for the people she hurts. The label Femme fatale seems to fit Daisy more than Brett. The discussion about Daisy demonstrated this finding with two facts: not only Daisy that can be fully related to the Siren – which is a figure that is closely connected to the Femme fatale – but she also destroys two lives and never takes responsibility for that. Her Siren powers were then discussed in detail and in relation to Gatsby. It was concluded that Gatsby gets drawn to her mostly because of his romantic ideals as well as his wish to gain Daisy's status since it is something he cannot acquire on his own.

The last chapter concerning female characters discussed how they deal with their life and their willingness to give it meaning. Surprisingly, Myrtle was found to be the only female figure in The Great Gatsby who is the most involved in actual living. She does not restrict herself by staying in one place like Daisy and Jordan but attempts to improve her standing, to suck the fresh juice of life when she has the opportunity. Daisy and Jordan, on the other hand, limit themselves and remain in senselessness despite the fact they, as wealthy women, could have many opportunities to enjoy their life more. The thesis assumed that it is the false sense of accomplishment that drags them down and makes them feel there is nothing more to do or live for. Dealing with Brett's character, it was concluded that her constant fleeing from her problems, either physical or

metaphorical (with the help of alcohol), restricts her from participating in her life and finding meaning in them.

The thesis then turned its focus to the male characters and attempted to show how manliness is portrayed in the novels. At first, the historical background about the changes in perception of masculinity was discussed in order to provide the starting point for the analysis. In terms of the characters from The Great Gatsby, the work elaborated on the fact that masculinity does not only revolve around physical strength, money, or status but that it is also closely connected with the female characters. All the male characters were connected to the different types and approaches towards masculinity. Because of Tom's bodily strength, hatred towards the "outcasts" that participate in "feminizing" society, dominant, and aggressive behaviour, the chapter referred to him as a king of all the protagonists – a king whose position is, more or less, dependent on his wife. The thesis then described how Tom's supremacy is challenged by Gatsby and his attempts to steal Daisy from him, Nick who tries to help Gatsby, George attempting to hide Myrtle from her lover, and even Daisy herself who indulges in the affair and degrades Tom by mocking him. The chapter found that although all of them are "outcasts" in Tom's eyes, they managed to weaken him and made him suppress his manliness in front of them. In relation to this situation, Frances Kerr's theory that men exposing their emotions lose their invincibility was examined, and it was discovered, that in Tom's case, such thought cannot be applied because it actually helped him to keep his position, foil Gatsby's attempts to gain the kingship, and Nick's attempts to overthrow the tyrannous hierarchy. In terms of Fiesta, it was discovered that manliness is defined in a completely different way. The novel does not focus on hierarchy, but rather on a "hard-boiled" personality connected with the dreadful experiences from the war. The thesis discussed the main reasons why Cohn cannot be accepted by his peers (his absence during the war and ethnicity) and at the same time discovered that there are actually some similarities between them and him, such as strong emotionality. It was also argued that such similarities would not be so apparent if it were not for Jake, who lets the reader know of his anxieties, or if Mike's hasty behaviour did not betray him from time to time. The analysis also utilised the knowledge from the theoretical background on how men preserved their manliness and attempted to apply it to some situations – Jake for example maintains his masculinity by spending time in nature, fishing, reading stories of danger, practising sports, degrading men who are not like him etc. Finally, the chapter examined Romero and the difference between him and Cohn, and why he gets to be accepted by the

group. The discussion found that although Romero holds onto traditional notions like Cohn, he represents Hemingway's "code hero" – an admirable steady man – whose behaviour and qualities are, unlike Cohn's, effortless, non-violent, and pure.

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