

Abstract

The thesis focuses on Benjamin Franklin, as he is portrayed in his *Autobiography*, and Jay Gatsby, the protagonist of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, who are connected not only by being self-made men. Firstly, they are both symbolical figures that made a powerful commentary on a period, on the country and on its core myth - the American Dream. Secondly, they are linked by Fitzgerald himself since his hero creates a schedule and a table of general resolves which clearly imitate Franklin's schedule and the list of thirteen virtues that he intended to master. The aim of this paper is to focus on the *Autobiography* and *The Great Gatsby* and to show that Franklin's views of self-help, virtue, material wealth, social progress or religion may add another dimension to the analysis of the character of Jay Gatsby and his relation to the American Dream. In the second chapter of this thesis, the two texts are examined in terms of the authors' purpose, style and the way the central character is presented to the audience. Furthermore, I compare Franklin's own stylized self-presentation to Nick Carraway's view of Gatsby.

The third chapter aims to determine in what way was Franklin's version of the central American myth transformed or corrupted in *The Great Gatsby*. In this part, I compare the schedules of the protagonists, examine the role of religion in both texts and analyse Franklin's and Gatsby's conception of individualism and the economic aspect of their dream. I also discuss whether Fitzgerald constructs the figure of Gatsby and the image of the 1920s as the repetition of Petronius's character Trimalchio and Neronian Rome or whether he reinforces the notion that history brings always something new and unexpected. The conclusion points out that Gatsby's dream is a product of the early twentieth-century civilization rather than a product of the past and that the theme of it is rather a transformation of the American Dream than its withering or collapse.

