



Ústav anglofonních literatur a kultur

B.A. THESIS  
AMERICAN LITERATURE SPECIALISATION  
**Benjamin Franklin and Jay Gatsby: A Comparison of American Literary Self-Made Men**  
**Adéla Korejtková**

After a brief discussion of the American Dream, the thesis succinctly introduces *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* by focusing on its content, style, impact and critical reception. Of particular interest is the emphasis that Ms. Korejtková puts on Franklin's skillful construction of his image as a self-taught, industrious and moral man who nevertheless does not lack humor and self-irony. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is subsequently also introduced, with an identically interesting emphasis on the novel's style. In the second half of the thesis, Ms. Korejtková highlights the differences (rather than the similarities) between the American Dream as represented by Franklin's persona and by Gatsby.

On the whole, I find the thesis exceptionally researched (for a text on the BA level), clearly delivered and deserving an **excellent grade (výborně)**. At the same time, as my above overview indicates, the thesis suffers from a tendency typical of comparative works that juxtapose texts and outline their similarities/differences. In other words, there could have been a more general conclusion that would evaluate and discuss specific observations presented in the main body of the thesis.

Several issues could have been elaborated upon. For example, Franklin-the-narrator is briefly compared with Nick Carraway, but the parallel could have been explored further. If Franklin crafted his image through his autobiographical narrative, could not the same be said about Nick? Does not he create himself through his narrative about Gatsby into a figure that remains temperate, orderly, resolute, sincere (remember Nick's emphasis on sincerity), just, clean, somewhat spiritual and chaste—to mention only a few of Franklin's apparent Virtues? Are not certain aspects of the American Dream, Franklin-style, preserved through Nick?

Further, regarding concrete differences between Franklin and Gatsby, I think the thesis should have discussed the virtual absence of women in Franklin's narrative and their centrality in *The Great Gatsby* which, after all, is a love story. Any speculations Ms. Korejtková could offer regarding the character of, and the reasons for, this "addition" on Fitzgerald's part?

Finally, the thesis argues that Fitzgerald "seems to reinforce the notion of history as unexpected and uneven, consisting of unpredictable discontinuities and ruptures, which anticipates post-structuralism." Where is this exemplified in the novel? Do not Nick's famous last words about boats beating on against the current point to the contrary?

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September 5, 2011