

ABSTRACT

The present study proposes the research on the topic “F. Scott Fitzgerald : A Muse of the Jazz Age.” There has been a thorough and comprehensive study and analysis of the novels and some of the short stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, to bring out the elements of Jazz age as reflected in his novels and short stories.

Fitzgerald shows through the characterization of his “Jazz Age” prototypes that the American Dream is selfish and cannot deliver any sort of fulfilment. The present study analyzes the relationship between beauty and American dream and how beauty is a superficial value of this dream. Next the pursuit of fulfilment through money and success is addressed and the idea that money cannot buy happiness is revealed. In his novels, Fitzgerald shows that those who attain the dream often end up unhappy and unfulfilled and still lacking what they really want. Fitzgerald is making a bold critique about his society and is sternly asserting that superficial things like the American Dream are not fulfilling because they lack deep human connection that cannot occur on a superficial level. Instead,

Fitzgerald shows that the things that are fulfilling are deeper and involve honest and vulnerable human relationships.

F. Scott Fitzgerald reveals the futility and disillusionment in his novels through the construction of his characters who face unfortunate outcomes in their lives. Fitzgerald critiques his own society and values. Fitzgerald reveals that the pursuit of this dream is not only selfish and leads to destruction, but it does not deliver what it promises. Fulfillment does not come from money, power or success, but instead through significant and balanced human relationships.

Purpose and Plan:

The purpose of the study was to analyze the novels and some of the short stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald and to bring out or to trace social aspects related to the Jazz age. This analysis has enriched the perception to understand the literary works of F. Scott Fitzgerald in proper perspective. He focuses on various aspects such as social history as well as the life style of the people due to economic, scientific and industrial economic prosperity, scientific inventions and industrial revolution. It helps to examine the changes in the society. He has employed different techniques along with the personal and the public concerns. The aim of the present

thesis was to focus on the various social aspects and complexities within Fitzgerald's characters.

Objectives:

The objectives of this research study are as follows;

- i) To study Fitzgerald's definition of the American Dream as the pursuit of wealth, success and popularity.
- ii) To analyse F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels and short stories and bring out various themes.
- iii) To evaluate the novels thoroughly and comprehensively as a whole and bring out the elements of social history in his novels.
- iv) To study the relationship between beauty and American Dream.
- v) To study the pursuit of money, success and the road to destruction.
- vi) To study shallow, unbalanced relationship based on superficial things lead to destruction.
- vii) To study the effect of economic, scientific and industrial economic prosperity, scientific inventions and industrial revolution.

Scope and Limitation:

The present study proposes to analyze and interpret novels and some of the short stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald. These novels are *This Side of Paradise* (1920), *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922), *The Great Gatsby* (1925), *Tender is The Night* (1934), *Tales of Jazz Age* (1922), *All the sad Young Men* (1926), *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920) and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (1922).

The selected elements as stated in the objectives and their significance have been fully brought out. The present study has been divided into six chapters.

The first chapter is “**Introduction**”, in which several attempts are made to explore the reflection of society through the study of novels. There is also an attempt to study historical and political conditions of America with special reference to themes of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The second chapter focuses on the literary term “**Jazz Age**”. And for its comprehension, it has been referred in several ways: The Gay Twenties, The Day of Boom and Bust. It is considered as the period of meretricious gaiety, of the lost generations, of flappers and philosophers. America was on the roller coaster ride economically too. At the beginning

of the decade, there was absolutely astonishing prosperity. Income was distributed with marked inequality. Output per worker rose steadily but wages remained fairly stable.

The third chapter attempts to find out the **reflection of society in the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald.**

There is an analysis of Fitzgerald's selected short stories in **the fourth chapter.**

Tales of the Jazz Age is the collection of eleven short stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald. *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* tells us about John T. Unger, a teenager from the town of Hades, Mississippi, who was sent to a private boarding school in Boston. During the summer he would visit the homes of his classmates, the vast majority of whom were from wealthy families.

Winter Dreams is a short story about Dexter Green who is a middle-class boy who aspires to be part of the "old money" elite. His father owns one of the most profitable grocery stores in the town. He starts out as a teenage golf caddy at a Golf Club in Lake Erminie, Minnesota, which has been suggested is really Black Bear Lake, where Fitzgerald lived for a short time at the Yacht Club.

Benediction is a short story of a young girl, Lois, who is on her way to a tryst with her lover, Howard, and stops to meet her much older brother, Kieth, who is in a seminary and about to become a priest.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button is a short story begins in 1860, just before the beginning of the American Civil War, with the birth of the protagonist, Benjamin Button. Benjamin Button is born with the physical appearance of a seventy-year-old man, and when his father first visits him mere hours after his birth he is already able to speak. To avoid embarrassment, Benjamin's father forces him to shave his beard and dye his hair in order to look younger.

The fifth chapter attempts to find out **social milieu** as reflected in Fitzgerald's works.

The sixth chapter is a resume of findings. These findings prove Fitzgerald as the muse of the Jazz Age. It deals with how acutely he has recorded the society during the period.

These findings are as follows;

- 1) *This Side of Paradise* is the debut novel of F. Scott Fitzgerald published in the year 1920. It examines the lives and morality of the youth

of Post-World War I. It has the theme of love warped by greed and status-seeking. The book is written in three parts.

2) *The Beautiful and Damned* is Fitzgerald's second novel published in the year 1922. It tells the story of Anthony Patch, the relationship with his wife Gloria, his service in the army and alcoholism. The novel provides an excellent portrait of the Eastern elite as the Jazz Age begins its ascent.

The novel is at once a gripping morality tale. It is a rueful meditation on love, money and decadence and an acute social document. There exists a rare balance between Anthony's poetic commentary and immediate circumstance. The sheer breadth of depravity is exposed in the novel. It concerns the lurches of a lethargic society, trying desperately to find a cause for progress. Indeed, it is significant that the only diligent reformer of the novel is Anthony's grandfather who belongs to the previous generation. But he has been replaced by the present directionless one. On a more personal level the novel is about the ephemerality of life. It concerns characters disproportionate appreciation of their past.

3) *The Great Gatsby* is considered a novel about American Society at a particular moment. Fitzgerald once wrote, 'I am interested in the individual only in his relation to society'. Various socio-historical approaches to *The Great Gatsby* are possible. Critics have examined it as a novel about the

1920s, about the American character or about the American past. The American dream is the ideal of opportunity for all, of advancement in a career or society without regard to one's origin.

4) *Tender Is the Night* is a novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald published in the year 1934. It is a story of the rise and fall of Dick Diver, a promising young psychoanalyst and his wife, Nicole, who is also one of his patients.

5) Dick and Nicole Diver are very glamorous who take a villa in the South of France and surround themselves with a circle of friends, mainly Americans. Rosemary Hoyt, who is a young actress, is also staying at the resort with her mother. Rosemary gets sucked into the circle of the Divers, and falls in love with Dick and also becomes adopted as a close friend by Nicole. Dick first toys with the idea of an affair with Rosemary at this point, which finally acts upon years later.

6) *The Last Tycoon* centred on the film executive Monroe Stahr in Hollywood in the 1930s. Stahr is modeled on the life of film executive Irving Thalberg, though only in ideas and ambitions, not in actual life events.

During the last years of his life Fitzgerald wrote *The Last Tycoon*. It had the mark of the thirties on it. The subject was Hollywood not only as

an industry and a Society, but also as an American microcosm. He recorded a deft impression of American society in it. Executive offices in Hollywood and studios are described here.

7) *Tales of the Jazz Age* his collection of eleven short stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald. *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz* is a short story from *Tales of the Jazz Age* published in year 1922. The story tells us about John T. Unger, a teenager from the town of Hades, Mississippi, who was sent to a private boarding school in Boston. During the summer he would visit the homes of his classmates, the vast majority of whom were from wealthy families.

8) *Winter Dreams* is a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald that first appeared in the *Metropolitan Magazine* in December 1922, and was collected in *All The Sad Young Men* in 1926.

Dexter Green is a middle-class boy who aspires to be part of the “old money” elite. His father owns one of the most profitable grocery stores in the town. He starts out as a teenage golf caddy at a Golf Club in Lake Erminie, Minnesota, which has been suggested is really Black Bear Lake, where Fitzgerald lived for a short time at the Yacht Club.

9) *Benediction* is a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, first published in 1920 in Fitzgerald's short story collection *Flappers and Philosophers*. It tells the story of a young girl, Lois, who is on her way to a tryst with her lover, Howard, and stops to meet her much older brother, Kieth, who is in a seminary and about to become a priest.

10) *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* is a short story by F. Scott Fitzgerald published in the year 1922. The story begins in 1860, just before the beginning of the American Civil War, with the birth of the protagonist, Benjamin Button. Benjamin Button is born with the physical appearance of a seventy-year-old man, and when his father first visits him mere hours after his birth he is already able to speak. To avoid embarrassment, Benjamin's father forces him to shave his beard and dye his hair in order to look younger.

Lastly Bibliography of the sources referred will be given.