



Facultade de Filoloxía

Traballo de
fin de grao

A study of F.S.
Fitzgerald's *This Side of
Paradise* in the context
of the Lost Generation
and the Jazz Age

Sara Vilariño Piñón

Titor: Constante González Groba

Xullo 2019

Traballo de Fin de Grao presentado na Facultade de Filoloxía da Universidade de Santiago de Compostela para a obtención do Grao de Lingua e Literatura Inglesas



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Título:

A STUDY OF F. S. FITZGERALD 'S *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE* IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LOST GENERATION AND THE JAZZ AGE

Resumo

My final degree project will study Scott Fitzgerald's novel *This Side of Paradise*, which was published in 1920. This book is especially important in the author's career because it made him popular in the American literary scene. This project will analyse this novel's crucial impact on the American society and literature at that time and in subsequent periods.




In the project, I will analyse the figure of F.S Fitzgerald as a writer in the history of American literature and the importance of the mood of disillusion that took hold of America after the Great War and that profoundly shaped the outlook of the members of the so-called Lost Generation of writers, which included Fitzgerald.

Attention will also be paid to how Fitzgerald portrayed one of the most important eras in American history, the Roaring Twenties, which he also called "The Jazz Age." I will analyse the figure of the main character, a young man named Amory Blaine and the way Fitzgerald reflects through his life the main events and preoccupations of this era. Another important point in this project will be how this book portrayed the figure of the new woman, who was demanding social, sexual, and intellectual freedom.

Santiago de Compostela, 7 de novembro de 2018.

SRA. DECANA DA FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA (Presidenta da Comisión de Títulos de Grao)

A study of F.S. Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* in the context of the Lost Generation and the Jazz Age

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SRA. DECANA DA FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA (Presidenta da Comisión de Títulos de Grao)

CONTENTS

Introduction

1. Why did I choose Fitzgerald and *This Side of Paradise*?7

2 What was the Lost Generation?8

3 What were the Roaring Twenties? 9

Chapter 1: Francis Scott Fitzgerald

1.1 Life and career

1.1.1 Early years 10

1.1.2 Time of rebellion and the beginning of a new life..... 12

1.1.3 His decline as person and writer 14

1.2. *This Side of Paradise*: The novel 15

Chapter 2: The Roaring Twenties

2.1 The economic boom: A time of glory and fall

2.1.1 An unprecedented economy 16

2.1.2 The end of an era..... 18

2.2 The era of the new woman and new social changes

2.2.1 The Flapper: A new and revolutionary type of woman 19

2.2.2 A new style.21

2.2.3 Women's suffrage and new jobs 23

2.3 Prohibition

2.3.1 What was Prohibition?.....24

2.3.2 The struggle to repeal the 18th Amendment.26

2.4 The rise of a new entertainment

2.4.1 The emergence of the radio and new idols.....27

2.4.2 The film of the decade: *The Jazz Singer*..... 28

2.5 The Harlem Renaissance

2.5.1 What was the Harlem Renaissance?29

Chapter 3: This Side of Paradise: Analysis of the novel

3.1 Why <i>This Side of Paradise</i>? Analysis of the title and the structure	
3.1.1 Why did Fitzgerald entitle his novel <i>This Side of Paradise</i> ?: Analysis of its origin.	31
3.1.2 Tone and structure of the novel	33
3.2 Amory Blaine: The egotist and the mood of disillusionment	
3.2.1 Why did Fitzgerald choose the name of Amory?.....	35
3.2.2 Amory Blaine: His demons and the search for his place in society ...	36
3.2.3 Amory and literature: Poetry as self-expression and as a way of socialization.....	38
3.3 The society in <i>This Side of Paradise</i>: Portrayal of women love and sexuality	
3.3.1 Beatrice and Amory :A harmful kinship.....	39
3.3.2 Amory and sexuality: His first love and his egotism	40
3.3.3 The other women of his life: A portrayal of his failed romances.....	41
3.4 The search for the fundamental Amory Blaine: The role of his male friends at Princeton and Monsignor Darcy	
3.4.1 Amory's friends: Tom, Dick, Burne and Kerry.....	43
3.4.2 Monsignor Darcy: The key character that distinguishes between being a personage and a personality.	45
3.5 “ I know myself, but that it is all”	47
Conclusion.	49
Works cited.....	51

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this final degree project is to delve into the figure of the American writer Francis Scott Fitzgerald and his work, paying special attention to the novel *This Side of Paradise*. This introduction will be composed of three points in which I will briefly explain why I have chosen this theme for this project as well as the content that will be unfolded in the three chapters that will compose it.

1. WHY DID I CHOOSE FRANCIS SCOTT FITZGERALD AND *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE*?

The choice of Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald for this literary essay is not the result of chance. He is one of the most acclaimed American writers and his novels and short stories are widely read and studied by students and academics around the world. Personally, one of the decisive points was that his novels such as *This Side of Paradise* (1920) or *The Great Gatsby* (1925) reflect perfectly through their characters the mood of the 20s and even Fitzgerald's own experiences.

The novel that will be the object of analysis is, as I have already mentioned, *This Side of Paradise* that made the name of Fitzgerald sounded for the first time in American literary history. Despite *The Great Gatsby* is the one that catapulted Fitzgerald to fame, *This Side of Paradise* is a true reflection of the mood of disillusionment and hopelessness that predominated in American population at the end of the decade of 1910, due to the destruction caused by the World War I (a.k.a WWI).

WWI, which also receives the name of the Great War, ended on November 11, 1918, leaving a trail of destruction and death unprecedented up to that time. Although America's position was neutral at the beginning of the war, a series of events against the country's interests led to its entry in 1917. This terrible event left Americans in a state of hopelessness.

Another powerful reason to choose Francis Scott Fitzgerald and *This Side of Paradise* was that the novel is set in the Roaring Twenties a period that, from my point of view, is exciting. The plain fact is that this period is mainly known by the rise of consumerism and materialism, but also by witnessing events such as the approval for women's suffrage or the rejection of old conventions by a society that was in change.

2. WHAT WAS THE LOST GENERATION?

As I pointed out in section 1, WWI left a trail of desolation, which was very difficult to assume for an American society that had unanimously rejected its entry into the war. Because of the war, many Americans lost their loved ones and many soldiers came back home with physical damage for the rest of their lives. Besides this, I would like to highlight that the American economy suffered a strong recession that left an unstable economy. This situation would last until 1921, when the economy began to grow again and gave way to one of the most glorious periods in history.

As I have mentioned in section 1, most of the 20th Century American writers, as well as the rest of the population, were deeply downcast, hopeless and with a very strong rejection of faith and the values of the previous generations, creating "Lost Generation," a term that was coined by the American novelist Gertrude Stein.¹ This generation would include the most important American writers of the 20th century, such as Ernest Hemingway, T.S.Elliot or the writer that takes us in this literary essay. According to the website *Scottandzelda* in its article "Lost Generation Paris 1920s Fitzgerald & Hemingway," Stein considered Fitzgerald to be the "most talented writer of his generation, the one with the brightest flame."

All these writers not only shared this mood of disappointment, but all of them became expatriates in Europe, especially in France. The country, and especially the neighbourhood of Montparnasse in Paris, overcame the horror and consequences of the war faster than other European and American cities. The fact is that Paris became the place to live for many Americans and European writers that found an ideal atmosphere to forget their despair.

At this point, it is important to highlight that Paris offered them new sources of inspiration as well as a much more innovative style that promoted their literary career. During their stay in Paris, they enjoyed an intense social life, especially in Cafes, theatres, and clubs where they used to gather. While it is true that Paris was a very welcoming city, many writers decided to return to their home countries some years after their arrival and, in the case of Fitzgerald and his family, they decided to return to America in 1926.

¹ Stein coined the term Lost Generation after an event in which her car was involved. She took her car to the mechanic and it was not repaired in time. The patron told to his employee: "You are all a lost generation." Later, Hemingway included the sentence in his novel's epigraph *The Sun Also Rises* (1926).

3. WHAT WERE THE ROARING TWENTIES?

The 1920s decade is one of the most noteworthy periods in the history of America. This period is not only known for being one of the wealthiest and revolutionary, but also because we can use several names to refer to it. The most popular name is The Roaring Twenties, although Francis Scott Fitzgerald coined his own term: The Jazz Age. The fact is that Fitzgerald named the period in that way because of the great impact that this musical genre had in this period, since there were many Americans who attended in clubs and theatres to enjoy concerts of this genre.

This decade is also characterized by the intense and revolutionary reform that the American society went through. Young Americans no longer stuck to the traditions and the way of living of the previous generations as started to experience a strong longing for freedom and excesses, mainly aided by an economy that grew back after the war as the American actress Colleen Moore describes in the following quotation that Joshua M. Zeitz collects in his book *Flapper: A Madcap Story of Sex, Style, Celebrity, and the Women Who Made America Modern* :

“They were smart and sophisticated,” she remarked, “with an air of independence about them, and so casual about their looks and clothes and manners as to be almost slapdash. I don’t know if I realized as soon as I began seeing them that they represented the wave of the future, but I do know I was drawn to them. I shared their restlessness, understood their determination to free themselves of the Victorian shackles of the pre–World War I era and find out for themselves what life was all about.” (Zeitz 220).

During this period, America enjoyed a stable, but fragile economy that led them to materialism and consumerism. The fact is that money allowed many Americans to access to new clothing, to a new social life, and even to purchase a car. Another important fact is that money also gave them access to alcohol, which would later lead to Prohibition.

Moreover, this period is also one of the most important periods for women, as the 19th Amendment was approved during this decade. This Amendment is important as it granted women to have access to a right that they had been fighting for decades: the right to vote. In addition, the 20s also witnessed the birth of a new kind of woman, who rejected the traditional American woman that was limited to her housework and her children. This new woman used to drink and smoke, loved to dance and changed her clothing and hair style as the American Historian Joshua M. Zeitz points out in his book:

(...)“Flapper”— the notorious character type who bobbed her hair, smoked cigarettes, drank gin, sported short skirts, and passed her evenings in steamy jazz clubs, where she danced in a shockingly immodest fashion with a revolving cast of male suitors.” (Zeitz 5).

The decade is also characterised by culture and literature as it witnessed a revival of concerts, theatres, cinema and musicals that led to a social living that was more intense than ever. Another remarkable event was the creation of a new literature movement, the Harlem Renaissance. This new movement made more visible the literature and the rights of the Black population, since, until that time, they were completely isolated from the public interest.

CHAPTER 1: FRANCIS SCOTT FITZGERALD

Francis Scott Fitzgerald is one of the most popular American writers and will be, in combination with his novel *This Side of Paradise*, the centre figure of this literary essay. This chapter will consist of two sections: Section 1.1 will deal with Francis Scott Fitzgerald's life as well as the experiences that inspired him to write his most popular novels. The following section, 1.2, will deal with the creation of his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*.

1. LIFE

This section will analyse Francis Scott Fitzgerald's life since it is essential to understand the events that the young Amory Blaine experiences throughout the novel. The first point of this section will deal with Francis Scott Fitzgerald's early years, as well as his love relationships and his decline as a man and a writer. As regards the second point of this section, it will analyse how Fitzgerald wrote the novel that launched his name to fame.

1.1.1 EARLY YEARS

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born on September 24, 1896, in the city of St. Paul (Minnesota). He was the third son of Edward Fitzgerald, who was said to be an unsuccessful trader, and Mollie McQuillan. Once Fitzgerald was born, Edward and Mollie decided to name his son as Francis Scott Key, in honour to the man that created "The Star – Spangled Banner"², whom Edward was convinced of his kinship. A few years later, it was Fitzgerald himself, who fantasized about that ancestor as he was convinced that he granted him pride and prestige.

The truth is that his childhood was typical of an overprotected child, as he survived to the fevers and colds that had killed his siblings. Because of the death of her two children, Mollie turned out to be an overprotective mother, whose health declined every time Fitzgerald or his sister Annabel got sick. Indeed, the pain of both deaths and their memory in Fitzgerald's life was a key element to become a writer, as he would later claim.

Even though Francis Scott was born in St. Paul, he spent much of his childhood in New York, mainly because his father accepted a job in the city. At this point, it is interesting to mention that the figure of his father is very remarkable in his biography, as he is featured as a real failure, although, against all odds, his son describes him as "smart and virtuous." In 1908, Edward lost his job in New York and the family decided to return to St. Paul.

Once back in his hometown, Fitzgerald attended the Saint Paul Academy, which was one of the most popular academies in the city as the richest families sent their children there. In the academy, Fitzgerald felt much less than his classmates since he thought that his economic situation was much lower than them, although this did not

² "The Star – Spangled Banner" is the American national anthem. Its lyrics come from a poem entitled "Defence of Fort M'Henry," which was written by Francis Scott Key in 1814.

prevent him to develop a special interest in writing and culture. Indeed, he joined clubs and, in his spare time, he used to write plays and comics.

The truth is that his life as a writer began to take shape when he was just 13 years old. At that age, the Saint Paul Academy's newspaper, *Now And Then*, published his first short story entitled "The Mystery of Raymond Mortgage," which is encompassed in the detective genre. His stay at the Saint Paul Academy ended in 1911, when he decided to enrol at the Newman Preparatory School.

1.1.2 TIME OF REBELLION AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW LIFE

The Newman Preparatory School was a Catholic school that tried to inculcate in its students traditional values, but the truth is that the school witnessed Fitzgerald's most rebellious years. This school would later inspire him to create St. Regis, where the main character of his first novel attends. During his stay at the school, Fitzgerald started to smoke and drink, which caused his marks (but not his literary production) to plummet. The fact is that he wrote four plays and three stories that were published in the newspaper of the institution. This school also gave him the opportunity to meet who would later be his mentor, Father Sigourney Fay, whose figure inspired Fitzgerald to create Darcy's character in the novel. In 1913, he graduated and finally accepted, not without a huge effort, at the prestigious University of Princeton.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that Francis Scott Fitzgerald was not a great student, as he spent all time for the literary life. It was at this university where he was accepted into the prestigious Triangle Club for which he wrote several plays and stories. Moreover, he also wrote for the *Nassau Literary Magazine* and the *Princeton Tiger*. He left the university due to his inability to graduate and he joined the army. At this point, it is worth mentioning that his period in the army is very interesting, as it was when he met his wife Zelda, although I would like to highlight that she was not his first love.

The truth is that, before meeting Zelda, Francis Scott Fitzgerald had a love affair with Ginevra King, who was a 16-year-old girl from Illinois. Ginevra and Fitzgerald deeply fell in love and maintained a love relationship for a few months, although they did not live in the same city. However, Ginevra decided to break his love relationship off when she decided to engage to with a rich man. Even though this fact left Fitzgerald in a deep sorrow, he would believe in love again when he met Zelda.

Having reached this point, it is worth mentioning that the relationship with Zelda was not easy at the beginning. As it happened in his previous love relationship, the distance tested their love, but money was again a problem as Fitzgerald's economic status made Zelda not to be sure of their love relationship. While it is true to say that Fitzgerald and Zelda were engaged in 1919, Fitzgerald had to move to New York to work in an advertising agency, and, while he was in the city, Zelda decided to remain in Alabama. At this point, it is important to mention that this period is very important since Zelda started to consider if Fitzgerald's finances were strong enough to support her economically. After a time of indecision, she finally decided to break their engagement off.

The rupture of their engagement saddened Fitzgerald, who decided to return to his parents' house in St. Paul. However, Fitzgerald and Zelda finally married in 1920, the same year when his novel *This Side of Paradise* was published. Just one year later, Zelda gives birth to their only daughter, Scottie.

In 1924, the couple and their little Scottie decided to start a new life in Europe. While it is true that they lived between France and Italy during their first year, they finally decided to settle in Paris. During his stay in the city, Fitzgerald saw how his novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925) became a real success and the family (especially Zelda)

enjoyed an intense social life surrounded by great writers, concerts and ballet as Meryl Cates describes in her article "Zelda Fitzgerald's Ballet Years" in *The New Yorker*:

In the summer of 1925, ballet lessons at a studio in Paris became an outlet for her artistry, and swiftly led to an unsustainable fixation. Zelda was twenty-five, a mother and wife—she was five years into her marriage to Scott. Her commitment to dance quickly accelerated, and she decided to become a professional ballerina at the age of twenty-seven. In a few years, Zelda had danced herself into an obsession, and mental illness erupted through the cracks of her physically exhausted body.

However, their “European dream” ended in 1931, when Zelda started to suffer continual nervous breakdowns that forced her to hospitalization. Once they were back in America, they settled in different states because of Fitzgerald's working opportunities. During that period, his literary career progressed as he continued to write and publish novels such as *Tender Is the Night* (1934) or short stories such as “What a Handsome Pair!” (1932).

1.1.3 HIS DECLINE AS PERSON AND WRITER

Fitzgerald's last years were not exactly easy, since the decade of the 1930s witnessed his decline as a writer and as a human being. During this period, he deeply felt disillusioned because he was convinced that he had not succeeded in being the brilliant writer, he always wanted to be. Another important fact is that Fitzgerald was convinced that audience no longer supported him. As we can see in the book *The Sons of Maxwell Perkins: Letters of F.Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolf, and Their Editor*, which was edited in 2004 by Matthew J. Bruccoli and Judith S. Baughman, Francis Scott Fitzgerald sent to Maxwell Perkins a letter in which he expresses the following:

I wish I was in print. It will be odd a year or so from now when Scottie assures her friends I was an author and finds that no book is procurable. Would the 25-cent press keep *Gatsby* in the public eye – or is the book unpopular. Has it had any chance? Would a popular reissue...make it a favourite with classrooms, profs, lovers of English prose – anybody. But to die, so completely and unjustly after having given so much (Bruccoli and Baughma 303).

While it is true that his novels and short stories were very successful, the final period of his life was far from prosperous. As we can see in the previous quotation, Francis Scott Fitzgerald had the feeling that the audience no longer considered him as a great writer. This feeling, along with the sales failure of *Tender Is the Night* and Zelda's health, caused Fitzgerald to fall into alcoholism. During that time, he put aside his literary career, and in fact, his alcoholism made him be unable to finish *The Love of the Last Tycoon* (1941), which was published posthumously thanks to his great friend Edmund Wilson considering that he edited it for publication.

Francis Scott Fitzgerald died on December 21, 1940, in Hollywood because of a heart attack. Zelda would die on March 10, 1948, in a fire in Asheville, North Carolina. Both were buried at the Rockville Union Cemetery and nowadays their gravestones are places of interest in their audience and tourists.

1.2 *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE: HIS FIRST NOVEL*

The novels and short stories written by Fitzgerald are read in and out America and, at the time of their release, were bestsellers (except *Tender Is the Night*). Novels such as *The Beautiful and the Damned* (1922) or the popular *The Great Gatsby* (1925) captured very well the new mood of the American society during the 20s. However, this section will not analyse any of these, but the novel that led to Fitzgerald to appear for the first time in the history of American literature: *This Side of Paradise*.

This Side of Paradise, which was published in 1920, has its origin in the period that Fitzgerald spent in the army. His main job in the army was to train to fight in the war, although it is truth that it ended before he could fight. In his spare time, Fitzgerald wrote a draft entitled *The Romantic Egotist*, which would later be renamed as *This Side of Paradise*.

The path that Fitzgerald had to travel to see his first novel published was not easy. Once it was drafted, Fitzgerald sent it to his publisher, Maxwell Perkins, who worked with Charles Scribner's Sons, but the truth is that the draft was quickly discarded as the editors considered that it was not attractive enough for the audience. Despite this, Perkins promised Fitzgerald that he would help him until the novel was published.

The fact that *The Romantic Egotist* was rejected, and his relationship to Zelda was not at its best moment, caused him to be discouraged from personal and his literary career. The truth is that his main objective was to publish *The Romantic Egotist* and once he was back in St. Paul, he decided to rewrite it under the title of *This Side of Paradise*.

His editor finally accepted the novel, in which Fitzgerald reflects his own life through the figure of a young boy named Amory Blaine, just a year before being published. At the time of its publication, *This Side of Paradise* became one of his best novels as it portrays the post-war mood as well as the power of money and the sexual awakening in society, especially noticeable in youth. As we can see in Len Kasten's article "Critical Reception of *This Side of Paradise*," many literary critics praised the novel and the *Baltimore Evening Sun* stated that the novel "may be a first book, but it is also a first-rate novel."

CHAPTER 2: THE ROARING TWENTIES

The decade of 1920 went down in history as a time of profound changes as well as for an economic boom. In this chapter, I will analyse the events that characterized this period. As regards point 2.1, it will analyse the unprecedented economic boom that improved considerably American's quality of life as well as it allowed them access to new appliances or buy a car. With respect to section 2.2, it will deal with the mood of young Americans, which was characterized by alcohol consumption and an intense social life. This new way of life gave rise to a new type of woman, the flapper, who left behind her religious faith as well as the old traditions.

Moreover, the third section will analyse Prohibition, which was an Amendment that banned the consumption and production of alcohol beverages. This section will also focus on the struggle to repeal this Amendment as it caused an unprecedented wave of violence in the American cities. As regards section 2.4, it will deal with the emergence of the radio, which was a sensation as well as new idols, Moreover, this section will analyse the film *The Jazz Singer*, which was one of the films of the decade. To end up with the Chapter, section 2.5 will focus on the Harlem Renaissance, which finally recognised the works and art from the African - American population.

2.1 THE ECONOMIC BOOM: A TIME OF GLORY AND FALL

This section will analyse the economic situation throughout the most glorious and rich period in American history. This unprecedented period caused that many Americans had a purchasing power that allowed them to buy from appliances to cars. However, the "dream" ended in 1924, when the biggest financial crisis occurred and the country returned to a state of hopelessness.

2.1.1 AN UNPRECEDENTED ECONOMY

The 20s is an interesting period because the country had never witnessed such a prosperous period. As I will analyse later, this period allowed Americans to save their money or to spend it on fun. Moreover, many Americans spent their money on the improvement of their homes.

In the first place, it is important to mention that, if we want to know the origin of this unprecedented economy, we must pay attention to the end of WWI, which is one of the bloodiest wars in our recent history. At the time of its end, it was estimated that, at least, 10 million people were killed. This terrible event left the nations in a state of disappointment and even poverty. Even though the United States entered the war almost at the end, the country and its economy were not immune to the misfortune of losing citizens and to the enormous expense that the war generated.

Once the war was over, the American economy was severely affected, although this situation did not last long since, in 1921, the American economy started to grow in an unprecedented way. The truth is that new jobs were created, and the car industry (especially Ford) began to create new models of cars that allowed Americans to travel in more comfort as Henry Ford stated in the following quotation, which was collected by Ethan Wolff- Mann in his article "17 Henry Ford Quotes For An Industrious Week":

A study of F.S. Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* in the context of the Lost Generation and the Jazz Age

I will build a car for the great multitude. It will be large enough for the family, but small enough for the individual to run and care for. It will be constructed of the best materials, by the best men to be hired, after the simplest designs that modern engineering can devise. But it will be so low in price that no man making a good salary will be unable to own one.

Americans enjoyed jobs that allowed them to have a stable economy in their home, which gave them access not only to a car, but they could enjoy the shows, theatre plays, concerts and literature as well as to a higher - quality clothing. The advent of electricity, that until that point was only present in the street, and the great economy led to the American houses to new appliances like the iron, electric refrigerator or the washing machine that made the housekeeping easier and faster.

Consumerism had become an incentive to abandon the horror of war. The advertisements, which started to proliferate, led Americans to be materialistic as the power of money was so great. Another important factor was that they started to feel disappointed in their politicians and religion that, during this period, suffered a great crisis, since many young people did not consider it as a part of their life. The fact is that materialism took the place of God as a solace to their problems.

Despite all the glamour and excess, not all Americans could enjoy them. Those people that lived in rural areas of the country saw how their lives were still the same, without access to materialism or electricity since it was restricted to the main cities, as Fitzgerald. The truth is that Fitzgerald reflected this very well in *The Great Gatsby*, especially in the living conditions of George and Myrtle Wilson. In the following quotation, we can see how Myrtle describes the atmosphere in the city, where she travels to date with Tom. Moreover, we can also see that she claims that the Victorian thinking was beginning to remit in the society:

It was on the two little seats facing each other that are always the last ones left on the train. I was going up to New York to see my sister and spend the night. He had on a dress suit and patent leather shoes, and I couldn't keep my eyes off him, but every time he looked at me I had to pretend to be looking at the advertisement over his head. When we came into the station he was next to me, and his white shirt-front pressed against my arm, and so I told him I'd have to call a policeman, but he knew I lied. I was so excited that when I got into a taxi with him I didn't hardly know I wasn't getting into a subway train. All I kept thinking about, over and over, was 'You can't live forever; you can't live forever.' (*The Great Gatsby* 30).

2.1.2 THE END OF AN ERA

This last point of section 2.1 will deal with one of the biggest economic crises in American history. This crisis left Americans completely desolated since they were aware that economic stability and materialism that they enjoyed themselves during the period would no longer return.

On October 24, 1929, which is also known as "Black Thursday," the American investors witnessed how the economy entered a critical period after a few months of weakness and uncertainty. On that day, 16.4 million of shares were sold and this event led the country to a period of uncertainty that was extended for five more days. The truth is that on October 29, which is commonly known as "Black Tuesday," the economy was definitely down and this gave way to one of the hopeless periods in history, the Great Depression.

During this period, many Americans lost their purchase power and even their jobs, as many companies and banks were forced to close down. As a result, many Americans found themselves in a state of hopelessness as the former President Coolidge stated in 1932, as Fox News reproduces in its article "False Hope: Famous Quotes During the Great Depression":

"In other periods of depression, it has always been possible to see some things which were solid and upon which you could base hope, but as I look about, I now see nothing to give ground to hope-nothing of man."

The Great Depression ended in 1939 and in the first half of the following decade, the World War II (a.k.a WWII) started and led to the so-called "Cold War,"³ in which the country had a strong involvement and the tensions between the American Government and the Soviet Union led them into a political conflict.

³ This war lasted from 1945 until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. The war since both nations wanted to impose their hegemony. Although it was called war, it was actually a political clash that threatened to create a new war known as "cold war."

2.2 THE ERA OF THE NEW WOMAN AND NEW SOCIAL CHANGES

This section will focus on the figure of the flapper, who was the new American woman of the 20s. This new woman is described by being much more liberal, a woman that uses make up, smokes, and leaves behind the stereotypes and her religious faith. In addition, point 2.2.3 will deal with the women's struggle to see their rights recognized, emphasizing the access to suffrage.

2.2.1 THE FLAPPER: A NEW AND REVOLUTIONARY TYPE OF WOMAN

First, I would like to highlight that this decade is not only remembered for being an era of economic stability, but also because of the profound changes that American society experienced after the war. The truth is that this period is also important as it led women to get important rights such as the suffrage. At this point, it is important to mention that this new generation of Americans made history under the name of "Flaming Youth." Moreover, this generation was characterized by the deep rejection of the values of past generations since they were considered old and restrictive, especially for women.

In addition, it is also important to mention that they were distraught by the horror of war, and they needed to enjoy their lives. Indeed, the new economic status allowed them to attend concerts or clubs as they were craving for enjoying their sexuality as they were convinced that the future might be uncertain.

As I have already mentioned, one of the greatest changes occurred in relation to women. Until the arrival of The Jazz Age, the American women followed their ancestors' pattern as they were destined for the care of their home and their children, while their husbands could enjoy an intense social life in bars and taverns without worrying about their public image. The fact is that this period witnessed the birth of a new woman: The flapper.

At this point, it is interesting to highlight that the flapper did not follow the Victorian values, as she was craving for individuality, sexual freedom and a new way of life that was deeply rejected by the elderly people as well as by their own parents. Furthermore, many writers and poets such as Agatha Christie or Dorothy Parker also expressed in their work and statements their rejection of the new type of woman. Francis Scott Fitzgerald also captured in *This Side of Paradise* the vision of society:

None of the Victorian mothers—and most of the mothers were Victorian—had any idea how casually their daughters were accustomed to be kissed. "Servant-girls are that way," says Mrs. Huston-Carmelite to her popular daughter. "They are kissed first and proposed to afterward." (...). Amory saw girls doing things that even in his memory would have been impossible: eating three-o'clock, after-dance suppers in impossible cafes, talking of every side of life with an air half of earnestness, half of mockery, yet with a furtive excitement that Amory considered stood for a real moral let-down. But he never realized how wide-spread it was until he saw the cities between New York and Chicago as one vast juvenile intrigue. (*TSOP* 72).

The flappers were mainly characterized by being modern women, who could choose their way of life and for whom religion ceased to be part of them. During the decade, women used to make up, changed their physical appearance as well as their

clothing style. Indeed, they looked bobbed hair as a sign of modernity as the Opera singer Mary Garden stated in an interview just as Michele Mortlock and Jake Murray include in their book *What Were the Roaring Twenties?:* “Bobbed hair belongs to the age of freedom, frankness and progressiveness” (Mortlock and Murray 18).

2.2.2 A NEW STYLE

As I have mentioned in the previous section, Americans changed their clothing styles as they began to wear short skirts and dresses less long, leaving behind the classic Victorian corset. The plain fact is that this new way of dressing was a sensation as they found new types of clothes to suit their tastes that assure their comfort, especially when they attended social events and concerts as they could dance and move without worries.

Economic stability as well as a great interest in fashion clinched the fashion industry, which led to the creation and use of new garments and prints. Women started to wear floral prints and pastel shades as well as fabrics such as silk or cotton as the article "1920s Tea Party, Afternoon & Wedding Guest Dresses," which was written by Carolyn, et al. on the website *Vintage dancer* describes:

White is very easy to get dirty, especially outside, playing lawn games. Clothing required frequent laundering to keep its pure white color. This was often the task of a house servant in wealthier households. Middle classes might have a white lawn dress if they felt up to the challenge of keeping it clean, otherwise dusty rose, blue, yellow, green, or lilac were better color choices. Fabrics that were very light and sheer such as cotton, silk, organdy, or linen with open weave lace or eyelets allowed even more cool air to flow in. Winter fabrics were crepe, light wool, taffeta, or velvet.



⁴ Victorian VS 20s style dress

During the era, big firms such as Chanel saw their sales and production improved and, in this way, the French firm decided to introduce into America a new masculine style that was a sensation. Moreover, they used to wear pants as well as headbands with evening dresses, which were also very successful.

At this point, it is important to mention that men also changed their style during this decade. The fact is that men used to bet on a classic suit for all their events,

⁴ Source: <https://www.1920s-fashion-and-music.com/1920s-fashion.html>

which was a big deal for all city tailors. However, the mechanization and the creation of new patterns and style encouraged many Americans to buy their suits in the most popular firms, which caused the ruin of the guild of tailors. The truth is that trousers were wider and more comfortable and, in everyday life, they used to bet on colours like white. Having reached this point, it is worth mentioning that the famous football star, Harold Edward Grange, who is better known as "Red" Grange, popularized the so-called "raccoon coat." As regards hair care, men used to use Brilliantine that produced a glowing effect.

2.2.3 WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE AND NEW JOBS

The Roaring Twenties are not only known by the birth of a much more liberated woman, but it is also known as the period in which one of the most fundamental rights for woman, the suffrage, was finally approved. On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment was ratified in the Constitution under the following declaration:

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

The approval put an end to a struggle that had lasted for too long. Finally, women had the possibility to express in the polls their political views as men had been doing for decades. The approval for the feminine suffrage was also a big leap toward individuality, as they could also perform jobs that were only a dream for their ancestors. The fact is that they could be lawyers, teachers or doctors, as they also had access to education that raised the level of literacy.

At this point, it is also worth to mention that, in this period, many women also got jobs as actresses in Hollywood. Furthermore, actresses like Clara Bow became a real idol of the masses as well as the perfect representation of the flapper. In the following quotations, Clara Bow explains how to enjoy the moment as the website *Bizarre Los Angeles* collects in its article "Clara Bow - Photos and Quotes:"

I know I look like I am having a lot of fun to people. I know that's how I come across and I suppose I am sometimes, but I live like each day is going to be the last. If you grew up the way I did, when you didn't know what was going to happen tomorrow and I'm not trying to blame anybody but you took your happiness as you found it day by day.

2.3 PROHIBITION

This section will deal with one of the most notable acts in the history of America: Prohibition. This Act caused Americans to have strictly prohibited the consumption and purchase of alcoholic beverages in shops and bars. Nevertheless, Prohibition led to the smuggling of beverages and elevated the criminality, which gave rise to criminals such as Al Capone. In addition, I will also analyse the struggle to repeal it, a fact that would not happen until 1933.

2.3.1 WHAT WAS PROHIBITION?

The decade is known as a time of recognition of fundamental rights, especially for women, but it is also celebrated by the approval of Amendments, which, instead of granting freedom and rights, granted restrictions. If in section 2.2, I have mentioned the approval for the 19th Amendment, in this section I will analyse one of the most popular Amendments in the history of the country: the 18th amendment or better known as Prohibition.

Certainly, Prohibition is considered one of the most famous Acts in the American history. This Act had many supporters, as it was a favourable measure to prevent alcohol consumption, although, as I will analyse in the section, it would finally have many detractors.

As I have mentioned earlier, the 20s brought economic power and freedom that put within the reach of Americans products such as alcohol or tobacco. The consumption of these substances increased among youth, which raised the alarms of the parents and the rest of the population, since they could not understand the new way of life and fun.

A fact is that, at that time, America had two important associations that would lead the struggle for banning the consumption of alcohol: the American Temperance Society (ATS) and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), which were founded in the late 1800s. As a matter of fact, they were convinced that many Americans (especially men since some bars and taverns still banned women from entering) were destined to fall into alcoholism, which would ruin their lives.

Such was the pressure exerted by these associations that they even smashed bars and taverns in their attempt to stop serving and drinking alcohol. In addition, they were also contrary to the publicity of alcoholic beverages in newspapers or radios. Therefore, both associations started to have a strong political presence as they pushed the approval for the 18th Amendment in 1919, which consists of the following:

Section 1—After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

As we can see in the prior quotation, the new Amendment prohibited the production and sale, but it did not prohibit the consumption. Many Americans did abide by the amendment, but others began to buy alcohol, as long as the Amendment did not

enter into force in order to store and consume at home. However, the Amendment was not useful to reduce consumption as a phenomenon known as "bootlegging," which resulted in illegal production and sales. At this point, it is worth mentioning that one of the most famous bootleggers was Alphonse "Al" Capone.

In addition, some Americans that were engaged in illegal production managed to get machines that expedited production, although others chose their own bathtubs to store their productions. The most demanded drink was gin among other beverages to which the different producers added ingredients such as juniper berries to get a more satisfying taste. While it is true that the quality was poor and their health could be at risk, many Americans consumed these beverages on a regular basis.

Most bars and taverns, which were known as "speakeasies,"⁵ had also access to those clandestine drinks, but the truth is that many of them preferred to serve liquors from Canada that arrived in America by boat or planes. One of the most famous American gangsters, Al Capone, possessed thousands of "speakeasies" in America before his arrest.

Criminal gangs made the illegal traffic of alcohol a real business and many conflicts emerged. Many attacks on the integrity occurred in broad daylight and to carry them out the attackers used weapons like the Thompson sub machine gun⁶ or even bombings that caused huge tragedies. The most famous one occurred in Chicago on February 14, 1920, when the North Side Gang suffered a bloody attack that left seven people killed. The responsibility for the attack was attributed to Al Capone.

The truth is that, despite the wave of violence, the demand for alcohol by the speakeasies and the nightclubs were still on the rise. Many Americans were still drinking alcoholic beverages regardless of their origin, although it would decrease in the following years. As the years passed, those associations that promoted Prohibition lost influence on politics and society.

⁵ The speakeasies were bars or taverns where a password was required to enter. In this way, it made sure the sale and privacy.

⁶ This gun is also known as "Tommy Gun" or "Chicago Typewriter". It had an extreme power and it was also used by the police. Nowadays, it is a desired object for the collectors.

2.3.2 THE STRUGGLE TO REPEAL THE 18TH AMENDMENT

One of the groups that had the most influence on the derogation of the Amendment was women. While it is true to say that many of them had previously fought for the approval of the 18th Amendment, but the truth is that their opinion totally changed as they asked to repeal the Amendment. Moreover, this also led to the creation in 1929 of the Women's Organization for National Prohibition reform (a.k.a WONPR). The fact is that they, as the rest of the society, did not accept a law that endangered their lives and increased criminality as we can see in the following excerpt from WONPR Convention, which took place in Ohio in April 1930 as its website collects in the article "WONPR in History":

"We are convinced that National Prohibition, wrong in principle, has been equally disastrous in consequences in the hypocrisy, the corruption, the tragic loss of life and the appalling increase of crime which have attended the abortive attempt to enforce it, in the shocking effect it has had upon the youth of the nation, in the impairment of constitutional guarantees of individual rights, in the weakening of the sense of solidarity between the citizen and the government which is the sole sure basis of a country's strength."

Prohibition ended on December 5, 1933, when the 21st Amendment was officially ratified. The new Amendment allowed the sale and the production of alcohol as well as made it possible to lower the crime rate in the main cities of America, especially in Chicago.

2.4 THE RISE OF A NEW ENTERTAINMENT

This section will focus on the ways of entertaining of Americans during the era. The first point will deal with the emergence of the radio, an appliance that was accessible to thanks to the stable economy and, indeed, it contributed to create a great interest in the latest news, music, or sports. The second point of this section will analyse the successful film *The Jazz Singer* since it is the first sound film in America.

2.4.1 THE EMERGENCE OF THE RADIO AND NEW IDOLS

The 20s moved on history as the period when Americans used to have fun through the many cultural activities that the city offered. Moreover, their lives at home were easier thanks to the arrival of new electronic devices that made their lives more enjoyable. As I have just mentioned, one of the most revolutionary gadgets was the radio, which allowed tuning different stations of different genres, The fact is that the economy was also an incentive to make it a sales business as many Americans could invest their money on these kinds of electronic devices.

The first broadcaster station was KDKA, which had its headquarters in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The fact is that it became a real success, although in its beginnings its broadcast lasted only an hour. However, new and varied stations would emerge, and the most popular were those that was dedicated to news, music and sports, which caused that many Americans became fans of sports like tennis, golf or baseball. The athletes, especially those of the so-called “Big Five⁷,” became in masses idols as they encourage the society to do sport and, as the website we can see it in the following statement by Babe Ruth collected in the article “Babe Ruth: Constructing a legend,” which was written by the webpage *xroads.virginia.edu*: “I won’t be happy until we have every boy in America between the ages of six and sixteen wearing a glove and swinging a bat.”

In this period, the sale of newspapers also increased and, in them, Americans could not only read the news, but also advertisements and advice of all kinds. The most noticeable advertisements were those that promoted the purchase of electronic devices or the consumption of tobacco and drinks such as Coca - Cola.

As I have previously mentioned, this decade was characterized by the great interest that the culture aroused among Americans. The fact is that they enjoyed the cinema from Hollywood⁸ as it helped them forget their lives to witness the lives of others. Furthermore, they used to attend to so-called “movie palaces,” which were located in the main cities and could accommodate many spectators. It is also important to highlight that actors like Charles Chaplin or actresses like Jane Winton caught audience’s attention.

⁷ The term “Big Five” was coined to refer to the most successful athletes of the period: Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, Red Grange, Bill Tinden and Bobby Jones.

⁸ It would soon become a big industry and Los Angeles would turn into a city of reference.

2.4.2 THE FILM OF THE DECADE: *THE JAZZ SINGER*

The cinema also adapted to the technology of the moment and in 1927, the first “talkie” film, which was entitled *The Jazz Singer*, caused a sensation. The film was highly advertised in newspapers and radios as we can see in the following picture:



Even though the cinema was a great source of fun, Americans also enjoyed music and, especially, Jazz music. Such was the impact of this genre that Fitzgerald decided to name the decade as “The Jazz Age.” Furthermore, Americans attended theatres and clubs to dance and enjoy live concerts. As I have just mentioned, Jazz was the most popular genre and singers such as Louis Armstrong or Duke Ellington, as they used to carry out their concerts in prestigious nightclubs such as The Cotton Club.

Having reached this point, it is worth mentioning that Americans loved Jazz music because it had a rhythm that filled them with excitement and emotion. As the website *Brainyquote.com* collects, the American actor and singer Nat Wolff (born in 1994) describes the genre in this way:

Jazz is smooth and cool. Jazz is rage. Jazz flows like water. Jazz never seems to begin or end. Jazz isn't methodical, but jazz isn't messy either. Jazz is a conversation, a give and take. Jazz is the connection and communication between musicians. Jazz is abandon.

⁹ Poster of the premier on December 30, 1927

Source <https://www.pinterest.es/pin/108156828529416367/>

2.5 THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

This section will focus on the Harlem Renaissance, a new literature that gave voice to one of the most marginalized groups in America: African - Americans. As I will analyse in point 2.5.1, with the creation and recognition of this new literary movement, the Black writers and poets saw how the audience started to their poems and novels, which led them to be finally recognised in the artistic and literary field.

2.5.1 WHAT WAS THE HARLEM REINAISSANCE?

If, there is a literary and cultural current during the 20s that I should highlight in this project, that is the Harlem Renaissance¹⁰. This literary current was popular as it finally recognized the talent of the African Americans writers and artists that, until that moment, was not so popular. The truth is that, for this group of writers, the Harlem Renaissance was a definitive way to show the world that their talent was as valid as the other writers were as the writer Nikki Grimes claimed as the website *Azquotes.com* collects:

When I think of the Harlem Renaissance, I think of bright colors, and bold, dynamic art. African American artists of the period were, in large measure, breaking out of the constrictions white society had set for them. They were claiming and remaking their own images, and doing so in bold and striking ways.

The origin of this current goes back to the Great Migration, a period in which many African Americans immigrated to the North¹¹ searching for a new life, since, in the South, they did not have the same opportunities as the white people. At this point, it is interesting to mention that many of those migrants decided to settle in Harlem, which is one of the most famous neighbourhoods in New York. The truth is that during the 20s, Harlem was described as an outstanding place for culture and art and, indeed, many migrants decided to open their own business as well as their schools and even their own police force.

The Harlem Renaissance was decidedly the literary current that recognised the art and works of the African- American population. The fact is that this movement not only made their culture popular, but it also made the rest of the society aware of the great rejection that they were suffering.

While it is true that, thanks to this movement, their works are nowadays, read and studied in the different schools and universities. At this point, it is worth mentioning that one of the most popular novels of the movement is Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). This novel is interesting because it has a touch of the African American community, since it was written in a Southern dialect. As we can see in the following quotation from a review that Lucille Tompkins published in the *New York Times Review* in 1937, Zora wrote her novel in that way to show her origin to her audience:

¹⁰ The movement is also known as "The New Negro Movement"

¹¹ In the North, the lives of the African Americans were easier. The intense racism that existed in the South made it impossible for them to access jobs or to express themselves culturally.

A study of F.S. Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* in the context of the Lost Generation and the Jazz Age

This is Zora Hurston's third novel, again about her own people--and it is beautiful. It is about Negroes, and a good deal of it is written in dialect, but really it is about every one, or least every one who isn't so civilized that he has lost the capacity for glory... In case there are readers who have a chronic laziness about dialect, it should be added that the dialect here is very easy to follow, and the images it carries are irresistible.

Moreover, it is also interesting to mention that the Harlem Renaissance also made many African - American actors and singers popular. One of the most famous actors, Paul Robeson, won the applause of the Broadway audience and such was his success that he was the first African- American man to have a role in the play *Othello*.

However, the Harlem Renaissance reached its end in the decade of 1930, when several waves of violence appeared in the neighbourhood. The most famous riot took place on March 19, 1935, in which several people were killed. Moreover, the economic crisis made that many Americans could not spend their money on culture and, although some writers and musicians were still publishing and attending the clubs, their sale and their audience dropped considerably. While it is true that the Harlem Renaissance officially ended in the decade of 1930, nowadays it is still a source of inspiration to many writers.

CHAPTER 3: *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE*. ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

This chapter will analyse in - depth the novel *This Side of Paradise*, which, as I have already mentioned, is Francis Scott Fitzgerald's first novel. This chapter will consist of five points in which I will analyse the different aspects that the novel includes. As regards the first section, it will analyse the structure and tone of the novel as well as the origin of the title and the chief character's name. The second section will focus on Amory's figure and on his egotism that, as we can see in the novel, it is a real torment for him.

As regards the third section, it will deal with a portrayal of a society marked by the excess, an unprecedented sexual awakening, as well as the yearning for freedom that was especially visible on the female figure. Likewise, the section will also analyse the women that leave a mark on Amory's life. The fourth section will deal with the male figures that left a mark on Amory's life as well as with the figure of Monsignor Darcy, who is considered his spiritual mentor. Finally, section 3.5 will analyse the Amory Blaine that we can see at the end of the novel as well as the two possible interpretations of the end.

3.1 WHY *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE*? ANALYSIS OF THE TITLE AND THE STRUCTURE

This section will consist of two points that will analyse the title as well as the structure of the novel. The first point will focus on the origin of the title that, as I will analyse, is related to the protagonist's experiences in the whole novel. The second point will deal with the tone and the structure of the novel that, as I will mention, may be controversial, especially when it is about to understand the end of the novel.

3.1.1 WHY DID FITZGERALD ENTITLE HIS NOVEL *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE*?

The title that Fitzgerald chose for his novel is linked to the mood that the young protagonist shows throughout the novel, a mood that was also shared by the members of the Lost Generation.

According to the website *This Side of Paradise* in its article "Importance of the Title", all the events and experiences that we as well as the characters of the novel cause that we all have "two sides" that are accentuated as we live as the following quotation from the novel highlights:

They were together constantly, for lunch, for dinner, and nearly every evening—always in a sort of breathless hush, as if they feared that any minute the spell would break and drop them out of this paradise of rose and flame. But the spell became a trance, seemed to increase from day to day; they began to talk of marrying in July—in June. All life was transmitted into terms of their love, all experience, all desires, all ambitions, were nullified—their senses of humor crawled into corners to sleep; their former love-affairs seemed faintly laughable and scarcely regretted juvenalia. (*TSOP* 218).

As the website claims in the article, the previous quotation shows the two sides of life. On the one hand, "the first side" would be our youth. This "first side" is full of love

and romanticism and makes us enjoy life. On the other hand, we have the “second side” that is described as typical of adulthood. Indeed, this side makes us perceive the world with a dark and pessimistic mood, as we can see in the novel through Amory's figure.

However, I would like to mention that the choice of the title is also related to the literary world and to the idea of the Christian paradise. The first clue to conclude that the title has a literary origin is found in the quotations that Fitzgerald includes in his novel's epigraph. At this point, I would like to start with the second quotation, written by the Irish poet and writer Oscar Wilde, in which he states the following: “Experience is the name so many people give to their mistakes.”

If we analyse the quotation, it is clear that Fitzgerald uses it to reflect that we live making mistakes that serve us as a help to learn from life, although it is true that we do not always learn from them. Moreover, this quotation can also be applied to the young Amory, as he does not know about life or mistakes. At this point, it is important to highlight that Amory is ignorant of his mistakes and this fact leads him to not to understand life or even himself.

Another potent incentive that led Francis Scott Fitzgerald to choose *This Side of Paradise* as the title of his first novel was the poem “Tiare Tahiti,” which was written by the English poet Rupert Brooke. As we can see in the following quotation, Fitzgerald chose the last two lines of “Tiare Tahiti” to entitle his novel:

....*Well this side of Paradise!...*
There's little comfort in the wise

At this point, it is worth noting that these two lines of Rupert Brooke's poem are related to the Bible as well as to hopelessness. On the one hand, it can be suggested that the first line is linked to the Bible, since it refers to the afterlife in which apparently a paradise exists, a place where there is no pain or suffering. This place is known as one of the major symbols of the Christian faith as it comforts the Catholics towards death. However, Brooke claims that there is not pleasure or comfort in the Christian idealization of Heaven because, in our world, we can only notice disgrace and death that would be especially noticeable during the WWI.

On the other hand, the second line shows a hint of despair. This mood characterizes the post-war generation as well as Amory Blaine himself. This line does not only refer to a world full of disgrace and death, but to the idea that all the human beings lose our youth when we enter into the “dark side” that is adulthood. Another important point that I would like to highlight is that Brooke also loses the guidance of the “Wise.” According to the website, Brooke, and later Fitzgerald, use the term “Wise” to refer to those poets and philosophers that helped them and Amory during their youth, but once they entered into adulthood, those “Wise” ones were considered just “trivial”.

3.1.2 TONE AND STRUCTURE OF THE NOVEL

This point will deal with the tone and the structure of the novel, as it is very important to get to understand the figure of Amory Blaine as well as his behaviour and his view of the world. As I will analyse at the end of the section, the structure of the novel causes that the end can be interpreted in two ways depending on the different critics and editors.

To start with, I would like to mention that *This Side of Paradise* is not only known for being Fitzgerald's first published novel, but also for its tone and structure. Professor Ruth Prigozy edited the book *The Cambridge Companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald* (2002). In the book, we find an article written by James L.W. West III, which was entitled "The question of vocation in *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned*." In the article, West describes the tone and structure of *This Side of Paradise* as we can see in the following quotation:

Stylistically *This Side of Paradise* seems daring; it mixes genres in a fashion that even today looks unconventional, shifting from fictional narrative to rhymed or free verse, then moving to drama dialogue and slipping toward the end into interior monologue. The writing itself is by turns glib and confessional, sophisticated and callow, arrestingly beautiful and disappointingly flat. (Prigozy 48-49).

At this point, it is worth mentioning that Fitzgerald's main purpose is to approach his readers to Amory's vision. At this point, I would like to highlight that this novel is based on the foundations of the *Bildungsroman* genre.¹²

The novel is set in era that, as I have already analysed in Chapter 2 of this project, is characterized by the yearning for freedom and excesses. At this point, it is interesting to highlight that, according to Amory's Puritan mind, society was stuck between two forces: the "Good" and the "Evil." The first force, the "Good," comprehends the morality represented by the previous generations that lived according to old conventions. The second, known as the "Evil," encompasses sexual awakening, passion and freedom, which deeply characterized youth. Moreover, Sy Kahn describes in his essay "*This Side of Paradise: The Pageantry of Disillusion*" the two forces:

As its title suggests, *This Side of Paradise* is something of an allegory in which American Youth is caught between the forces of Good and Evil. Among Americans, and especially among the young, "morality" and "sex" are interchangeable terms. Frequently the judgment of "right" and "wrong" behavior rests almost exclusively on sexual behavior. Evil is identified with sex: there the devil wields his greatest powers (....). On a number of occasions Amory finds himself caught between his Puritan distrust of sex and the body and the relaxed social and sexual rituals of his time (..)

This Side of Paradise recounts, as I have previously mentioned, the experiences of the young Amory Blaine, whose life is narrated by an omniscient narrator. This narrator wants the reader to understand Amory's dilemma about the search for his own identity

¹² The term *Bildungsroman* has its origin in Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* in English). It is used to refer to those novels that narrate the life of the protagonists until they reach adulthood.

as well as his vision of the “devil” in society. As regards the rest of the characters, they may be described as actors and actresses, but the truth is that those characters that are important in the search for “fundamental Amory,” as they were a support and even mentors for the young Amory.

When it comes to analyse the structure, it is important to remark that Fitzgerald divided this novel in two books and an Interlude. The first book, which is entitled *The Romantic Egotist*, consists of four chapters in which Fitzgerald describes Amory's life from childhood to his enrolment in the army. The second book, which is entitled *The Education of a Personage*, consists of five chapters that encompass the experiences that lead Amory to consider that the only thing he can know in this world is himself.

As regards the Interlude, it is important to note that it is found between the two main books. This Interlude contains several letters in which we learn about Amory's feelings during this period as well other events such as Beatrice's death. Indeed, this Interlude also reflects the intense bond between Amory and Monsignor Darcy, a character that is described as Amory's mentor.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that there is another important issue related to the structure of the novel, as we can describe it as both linear and circular. On the one hand, we can consider it linear as we can observe that the novel is written in chronological order. However, it can be also described as circular because, as Amory grows up, his optimism disappears and he turns into a disillusioned man that is forced to search for his own identity as Linda Pelzer highlights in her book *Student Companion to Scott Fitzgerald* (2000):

The plot of *This Side of Paradise* is, then both and circular, it moves in a straight line from childhood to adulthood. On the other, the two halves of Amory's life move from optimism through disappointment and disillusionment to a reassertion of self that leads to or anticipates further movement forward. This circularity suggests both the preservation of Amory's essential self and the pattern of his future experiences. (Pelzer 39).

Nevertheless, the end turned out to be controversial, as it generates a debate among the different editors and critics. As I will analyse in section 3.3.6, the end is a source of controversy since, depending on the edition we read, we can understand it in two different ways.

3.2 AMORY BLAINE: THE EGOTISM AND THE MOOD OF DISILLUSIONMENT

This second section of Chapter 3 will consist of three points, in which I will analyse the figure of the protagonist as well as his passion for poetry. As regards the first point, it will delve into the question of why Fitzgerald chose the name Amory that, as I will explain, it is related to the "passion" that Fitzgerald felt for Europe.

As regards the second point, it will focus on Amory's struggle to overcome his deep egotism and his demons that stop him from finding the "Fundamental Amory" that he always wanted to become. Finally, point 3.2.3 will deal with Amory's passion for poetry, as he feels free to express his vision of the world in it without fear of being criticized.

3.2.1 WHY DID FITZGERALD CHOOSE THE NAME OF AMORY?

The question of why Francis Scott Fitzgerald chose the name Amory for the main character of *This Side of Paradise* is interesting since the meaning of the name can contribute to create the figure of a hero.

To start with, I would like to highlight the meaning of Amory, which in English means "brave man." At this point, "brave" can be applied to the figure of the main character since, as we can see along the novel, has to go through many difficulties throughout his life. However, I would like to highlight that there is another theory that would also be consistent.

According to the website *Sparknotes* in its article "Book I: Chapter 1: Amory, Son of Beatrice", the name would derive from the Latin word "Amorium" that is also the basis of the Spanish "Amor." Indeed, it is important to highlight that Francis Scott Fitzgerald was a passionate about European literature, which he claimed to be the perfect narrative, as well as its history. *This Side of Paradise* contains many references to many European myths and European writers that fascinated Fitzgerald. Moreover, the website also claims that the name Beatrice also has its origin in Europe, as we can see in the following quotation from the website:

The names that Fitzgerald chooses for the chief character and his mother are important: both evoke romantic love in the European tradition. The unusual name Amory brings strongly to mind the word for love in all romance languages ("amor" in Spanish, "amour" in French," etc.), and Beatrice is the divine ideal of Dante throughout *the Divine Comedy*. The choice of names places the work firmly in the European tradition of love narrative, suggests the perfection that Fitzgerald accords to the mother figure in the novel, and perhaps hints at the importance of Amory's love affairs in his own spiritual growth.

As we can see in the previous quotation, the figure of Dante has been a notable influence on Fitzgerald as well as on other European poets and writers. One of the most famous references to Dante is the William Butler Yeats' poem "Ego Dominus Tuus," since the title refers to Dante's *La Vita Nuova*, in which we can perceive the figure of an Italian woman named Beatrice.

3.2.2 AMORY BLAINE: HIS DEMONS AND THE SEARCH FOR HIS PLACE IN SOCIETY

The figure of Amory Blaine is very interesting since he is a young boy that is limited by his distorted mind. To start with, I would like to place us at the beginning of the novel because it would help us to understand the torment that the young boy experiences in his life. In the first book, which is, as I have already mentioned, entitled *The Romantic Egotist*, Fitzgerald includes a portrait of Amory when he was only 5 years old. In the book, the narrator also describes how important is Amory for Beatrice as we can see in the following quotation:

Her only child was carried through a tiresome season and brought into the world on a spring day in ninety-six. When Amory was five he was already a delightful companion for her. He was an auburn-haired boy, with great, handsome eyes which he would grow up to in time, a facile imaginative mind and a taste for fancy dress. (*TSOP* 8).

In addition, it is worth mentioning that *This Side of Paradise* is described as a semi-autobiography of Fitzgerald himself because, if we analyse the novel we will find that Amory and Fitzgerald share many similarities in their lives. First, it is interesting to mention that both come from wealthy families, which allowed them to study at the most renowned schools and universities. Another important similarity is that both had an overprotective mother that, in the case of Amory, turns out to be a bad influence considering that Beatrice makes him an egotist.

As we can see in the novel, Amory Blaine strives to vanquish his Puritan thought as well as his own demons to find his true self. One of the most notable features of the beginning of the novel is that Amory feels superior to the rest of his classmates, as Linda Pelzer highlights: "Amory is filled with a sense of his own potential and convinced that he will achieve it" (Pelzer 41).

At this point, it is important to mention that, as we can see in the novel, Amory distinguishes between two different kinds of people: "Big man" and "The Slicker." On the one hand, Amory describes himself as a "Big man" since this term includes those people who, like him, do not worry about appearances or are afraid of the world. On the other hand, Amory describes "The Slicker" as a person that enjoys life and has a place in society. The plain fact is that during his period in St. Regis and Princeton, Amory starts to play sports that bring him closer to the university atmosphere. During this period, Amory also tries to focus on his studies, although his marks are not good because of his indifference to subjects.

Furthermore, *This Side of Paradise* is also described as a good portrayal of the Jazz Age, which is, according to Amory's Puritan thought, full of sin. Francis Scott Fitzgerald also highlights the presence of the "devil" as he also describes the presence of the ghost, which is seen in certain moments of madness as we can see in the following quotation:

"I want someone stupid. Oh, send some one stupid!" This to the black fence opposite him, in whose shadows the footsteps shuffled ... shuffled. He supposed "stupid" and "good" had become somehow intermingled through previous association. When he called thus it was not an act of will at all—will had turned him away from the moving figure in the street; it was almost instinct that called, just the pile on pile of inherent tradition or some wild prayer from way over

A study of F.S. Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* in the context of the Lost Generation and the Jazz Age

the night. Then something clanged like a low gong struck at a distance, and before his eyes a face flashed over the two feet, a face pale and distorted with a sort of infinite evil that twisted it like flame in the wind; *but he knew, for the half instant that the gong tanged and hummed, that it was the face of Dick Humbird. (TSOP 139).*

In his essay, Sy Kahn claims, “the image of the devil is the symbol of shock, born of the impact of sensuality upon Puritan morality, conscience, and Catholic sense of sin.” As it is mentioned in the quotation, Amory is escaping from the “devil” and in a moment of madness, he sees a ghost with his dead friend’s face. At this point, the figure of the ghost is important because, through it, Fitzgerald combines the two forces of the society as well as a hope for Amory’s future as Linda Pelzer mentions in her book:

Dick Humbird’s ghost, as it turns out, is a curious combination of good and evil. On the one hand, it represents the excess of youth, the sedative power of pleasure, and the rejection of conformity. (..) On the other hand, it functions in an odd way as a sort of conscience. (...) As much guardian angel as evil demon, then, Dick Humbird’s ghost evokes a fundamental morality that connects Amory to the past and thereby saves him from self-destruction. (Pelzer 47).

3.2.3 AMORY AND LITERATURE: POETRY AS SELF-EXPRESSION AND AS A WAY OF SOCIALIZATION

This section will focus on the importance that literature and poetry have in Amory's life because when reading and writing the different poems and books Amory feels free to express his vision of the world without fear of criticism. The truth is that his passion for literature and poetry leads him to socialize and share his literary criticism with people like his friend Tom or his lover Eleanor.

As I have already had mentioned, Amory is limited by his Puritan mind and, for this reason, he is unable to find his place in society. As he grows up, he finds that literature and poetry are the perfect way to express his feelings, fears and hopes, which help him cope with his egotism. While it is true that he is described as an egotist, he also claims that he feels very insecure at the time of writing his own poems as we can see in the following quotation:

"I'll never be a poet," said Amory as he finished. "I'm not enough of a sensualist really; there are only a few obvious things that I notice as primarily beautiful: women, spring evenings, music at night, the sea; I don't catch the subtle things like 'silver-snarling trumpets.' I may turn out an intellectual, but I'll never write anything but mediocre poetry." (*TSOP* 102).

Even though poetry and literature are a balm for his egotism, the plain fact is that the literary world brings him closer to people that, besides sharing their passion for literature, also help him leave behind his insecurities as they encourage him to be himself. At this point, it is important to remark that during his stay at Princeton, he mingles with people that show to the world their true personality, without fear of being criticized. One of those characters is Dick Humbird, whom I will analyse in point 3.4.1.

At this point, it is also important to mention that the education received in his childhood leads him to be passionate about literature and art. In his childhood, he used to listen to Beethoven or Mozart, which made him more cultured.

3.3 THE SOCIETY IN *THIS SIDE OF PARADISE*: PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN, LOVE AND SEXUALITY

This section will analyse the American society that is described in *This Side of Paradise*, a society that was full of fun and passion. As regards the first section, it will focus on Beatrice's figure that seems to be a perfect mother to him but the truth is that is a harmful influence. Moreover, this section will also analyse the figure of those women that leave a mark on his life, from his first romance to his affair with the "wild" Eleanor.

3.3.1 BEATRICE AND AMORY: A HARMFUL KINSHIP

The figure of Beatrice is fundamental to understand Amory's egotism and his obsession with the figure of the "devil." If we want to get an accurate description of Beatrice's figure, it is essential to go back to Chapter I (Book I):

But Beatrice Blaine! There was a woman! Early pictures taken on her father's estate at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, or in Rome at the Sacred Heart Convent—an educational extravagance that in her youth was only for the daughters of the exceptionally wealthy—showed the exquisite delicacy of her features, the consummate art and simplicity of her clothes. A brilliant education she had—(...) (*TSOP* 7-8).

First, it is interesting to note that the narrator describes the wealthy Beatrice as a dedicated mother that educates her child, according to her ideal. If we compare Beatrice to Mollie, we find that both are very similar. Both overprotect their children and are described as extremely proud of their sons. At this point, it is interesting to note that in the novel, Beatrice describes Amory as "This son of mine" (*TSOP* 10). Furthermore, Fitzgerald and Amory were educated according to the old conventions as we can see in the following quotation, in which he addresses his mother with courtesy:

"Amory."

"Yes, Beatrice." (Such a quaint name for his mother; she encouraged it.)
(*TSOP* 9).

While it is true to say that she educates her child in the best way, she also passes her insecurities and fears onto him, which would torment Amory along his life. Those insecurities and her pride cost Beatrice her health, especially when she becomes an alcoholic. In spite of the fact that she defines herself as a delicate woman, she also claims that she is also a strong woman as we see in the following quotation:

"The doctors told me"—her voice sang on a confidential note—"that if any man alive had done the consistent drinking that I have, he would have been physically *shattered*, my dear, and in his *grave*—long in his grave." (*TSOP* 27).

As time goes by, Amory leaves behind the figure of his mother, as it is very harmful for his mind and personality. So much so, as we can see in the Interlude, we see that he speaks indifferently of Beatrice's death.

3.3.2 AMORY AND SEXUALITY: HIS FIRST LOVE AND HIS EGOTISM

To start with, it is important to mention that, once Amory reaches adolescence, he begins to have sexual concerns that lead him to his first love affairs. As I will analyse in the section, his first love is the representation of the new American woman. However, this first love is not only known by that, but also for being the first that showed him that his egotism is a problem.

The truth is that his limited vision of the world and society makes Amory's sexual awakening a torment, since he is unable to express his love or to establish a loving relationship. At this point, it is also important to mention that women are an object of desire and, in fact, he uses his personality and his wealth to attract girls. However, when his love relationships seem to prosper, his egotism appears to ruin it. This fact leads him to a depressed mood as we can see in the following quotation:

"Kiss me again." Her voice came out of a great void.
"I don't want to," he heard himself saying. There was another pause.
"I don't want to!" he repeated passionately.
Myra sprang up, her cheeks pink with bruised vanity, the great bow on the back of her head trembling sympathetically.
"I hate you!" she cried. "Don't you ever dare to speak to me again!"

(*TSOP* 20-21).

The event that we can see in the previous quotation occurs during his period in Minnesota, when he is just 13 years old. This scene is clearly a representation of Amory's egotism as well as an attempt to avoid the "Evil force" that sex represents for him. In the city, he meets a young girl named Myra St. Claire, who is experiencing a strong interest in love and sex. The plain fact is that through her figure, Fitzgerald wants to introduce his readers to the figure of new American woman that wants to leave behind old social conventions and enjoy her freedom.

However, Myra is not his only love during his life, although we can consider her as the first woman that brings Amory's egotism out. In the next section of this project, I will analyse the figure of those women that leave a mark on Amory's life.

3.3.3: THE OTHER WOMEN OF HIS LIFE: PORTRAYAL OF HIS FAILED ROMANCES

As we can see in the novel, four women play an important role in Amory's life, as he deeply falls in love with them. These women are also important because they show Amory that he must change his mind to fit into society. At this point, it is worth mentioning that three of them fit in the image of new American woman, whereas the fourth one, a woman known as Clara Page, represents the opposite.

First, I would like to start the analysis of this section focusing on the figure of a young girl named Isabelle Borgé, who is an old acquaintance of Amory. As we can see in the novel, it is clear that both are in love, but Isabelle realizes that Amory's egotism is a real problem as it prevents their love relationship from having a future. In addition, as the months pass, Amory realizes that his love for her is not true at all, so both decide to split up.

The second woman that I would like to analyse is Rosalind, who Amory meets in New York and desperately falls in love with. Even though we can think that Rosalind is a rich and a spoiled woman, the narrator swiftly wants us to change our opinion:

If ROSALIND could be spoiled the process would have been complete by this time, and as a matter of fact, her disposition is not all it should be; she wants what she wants when she wants it and she is prone to make every one around her pretty miserable when she doesn't get it—but in the true sense she is not spoiled. Her fresh enthusiasm, her will to grow and learn, her endless faith in the inexhaustibility of romance, her courage and fundamental honesty—these things are not spoiled (...). (*TSOP* 201).

Rosalind is an interesting character since she may be seen as an image of the new American woman, as well as the image of Ginevra King. The fact is that Amory really loves Rosalind, but the truth is that, as soon as she meets a wealthy man named Dawson, she quickly breaks their love relationship off to Amory to engage with Dawson. The rupture leaves Amory into pieces and this fact increases his egotism and cynicism. At this point, we can infer that, by including Rosalind's character, Fitzgerald wants his readers to question if we can find hope in the world and society while money is dominating our society and romances.

The third important woman that leaves a mark on Amory's life is Clara Page, whom he meets thanks to Darcy. Clara is a woman that is in sorrow because of the recent death of her husband. Amory deeply falls in love with her because she is, as the narrator describes, a beautiful woman as we can see in the following quotation:

She was immemorial.... Amory wasn't good enough for Clara, Clara of ripply golden hair, but then no man was. Her goodness was above the prosy morals of the husband-seeker, apart from the dull literature of female virtue. (*TSOP* 164).

Amory is convinced that, although she is in mourning, their love relationship may have a future. Indeed, Amory becomes obsessed with everything related to Clara and even with her past, as we can see in the following quotation:

He began to be frightfully jealous of everything about Clara: of her past, of her babies, of the men and women who flocked to drink deep of her cool kindness and rest their tired minds as at an absorbing play. (*TSOP* 167-168)

While it is true that they have affection for each other, Clara hinders their relationship. When her husband passed away, Clara promised that she will not fall in love again as she will be fully dedicated to her children. This fact disappoints Amory, since he is convinced that their affair is plausible and can have a great future.

Finally, but no less important, we find the figure of a young and wild girl named Eleanor Savage, whom Amory meets when he moves to Maryland to live for a time with an uncle. In the following quotation, the narrator describes Amory's first impression of her:

(..) Oh, she was magnificent—pale skin, the color of marble in starlight, slender brows, and eyes that glittered green as emeralds in the blinding glare. She was a witch, of perhaps nineteen, he judged, alert and dreamy and with the tell-tale white line over her upper lip that was a weakness and a delight (...). (*TSOP* 265).

Eleanor is an interesting character as she is described as a “free spirit” and, as Rosalind or Myra, she is also the image of the new American woman. Indeed, Francis Scott Fitzgerald also remarks her vivid personality by including the surname “Savage.” While it is true that Eleanor comes from a wealthy family, she does not care about money and she rejects the life that money offers. The fact is that her way of life deeply bothers her family, who is constantly encouraging her to have a good behaviour while she is in public.

The fact is that Amory feels very attracted to her because she is an unconventional woman that helps him forget his true love, Rosalind. Another important point to highlight is that they share a love for literature, which unites them even more, but their love relationship ends because of a cruel act. Eleanor decides to ride her horse at the edge of a cliff and all of a sudden, the horse falls and dies without Eleanor taking actions to prevent it. This event disturbs his mind and shows him that Eleanor is cruel and this convinces him that the best thing that both can do is to break their romance off. Notwithstanding the rupture, their love for literature will keep them in touch.

3.4 THE SEARCH FOR THE FUNDAMENTAL AMORY BLAINE: THE ROLE OF HIS MALE FRIENDS AND MONSIGNOR DARCY

In this section, I will analyse the figure of those male figures that encourage Amory to search for his true self and find his place in society. First, I will analyse the figure of four men that Amory meet during his stay at Princeton. These four men are also interesting, as they are seen as role models. Moreover, section 3.3.5 will deal with the most important figure of Amory: Monsignor Darcy. Darcy is, as I will analyse, a spiritual father and a mentor, since Amory always follows his advice.

3.4.1 AMORY'S FRIENDS AT PRINCETON: TOM, DICK, BURNE AND KERRY

As I have just mentioned, in *This Side of Paradise* we can see four main figures that are a role model for Amory. These men are known as Thomas Park D'Invillers, Dick Humbird, and Burne and Kerry Holiday.

As regards Thomas's figure (also known just as Tom D'Invillers), he is described as an avid man that is passionate about literature, which leads Amory to get along with him as we can see in the following quotation:

Tom D'Invillers became at first an occasion rather than a friend. Amory saw him about once a week, and together they gilded the ceiling of Tom's room and decorated the walls with imitation tapestry, bought at an auction, tall candlesticks and figured curtains. Amory liked him for being clever and literary without effeminacy or affectation. (*TSOP* 64).

The plain fact is that Amory is obsessed with achieving a good position in society as well as finding his true personality, whereas he is afraid of being conventional. The truth is that Tom seems not to be afraid of conventions, and as soon as he gets used to Princeton, he quickly changes his dressing codes and behaviour to fit in the university atmosphere. This fact encourages Amory to do it too, and this leads him to earn his admission to the prestigious "Triangle Club," which also helps him leave behind Beatrice's influence.

The second character that is important to Amory is the young Dick Humbird, a character that even haunts Amory even after his death as we can see in section 3.2.2. This young man, who comes from "the new money," is described as Amory's hero since he is not inclined to social conventions, and he acts as he pleases without considering society's opinion. He comprehends all that Amory wants to become as we can see in the following quotation:

Dick Humbird had, ever since freshman year, seemed to Amory a perfect type of aristocrat. He was slender but well-built—black curly hair, straight features, and rather a dark skin. Everything he said sounded intangibly appropriate. He possessed infinite courage, an averagely good mind, and a sense of honor with a clear charm and *noblesse oblige* that varied it from righteousness. He could dissipate without going to pieces, and even his most bohemian adventures never seemed "running it out." People dressed like him, tried to talk as he did... Amory decided that he probably held the world back, but he wouldn't have changed him.... (*TSOP* 94).

However, when Dick dies in a car crash, the narrator initially wants us to believe that Amory is not sad about it, but, as the novel moves forward, we see that Dick's ghost is a real torment for him, especially in his moments of madness. Dick's death seems to hide a message to Amory: life is fragile, and we should live being ourselves. At this point, it is interesting to mention that, although seems to be clear, Amory does not understand it clearly until Monsignor Darcy dies.

The third male figure that is influential in Amory is the young Burne Holiday, whom Darcy considers the best "personage." Burne is described as a real source of inspiration, but he is especially characterised as a man that is clear about his ideas and opinions. As we can see in the novel, he deeply rejects going to WWI because from his point of view, the war is just "ridiculous" since it causes destruction and death. Moreover, Burne, who is known as Kerry Holiday's brother, is the first person that Amory meets at the university. In the following quotation, we see how the narrator describes Kerry:

The Holidays were rumoured twins, but really the dark-haired one, Kerry, was a year older than his blond brother, Burne. Kerry was tall, with humorous gray eyes, and a sudden, attractive smile; he became at once the mentor of the house, reaper of ears that grew too high, censor of conceit, vendor of rare, satirical humour. Amory spread the table of their future friendship with all his ideas of what college should and did mean. Kerry, not inclined as yet to take things seriously, chided him gently for being curious at this inopportune time about the intricacies of the social system, but liked him and was both interested and amused. (*TSOP* 55).

Kerry is, as we can see in the previous quotation, an easy-going boy that does not care too much about daily life's problems and he lives a "full and happy life." As the storyline advances, we see that Kerry is more than a friend since we can consider him as a mentor that tells Amory to take life with humour. As the novel moves forward, we learn that he is killed in the war.

3.4.2 MONSIGNOR DARCY: THE KEY CHARACTER THAT DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN BEING A PERSONAGE AND A PERSONALITY.

This section will deal with the figure of a man that is described as one of the most important characters in the whole novel: Monsignor Darcy. This man is important since he is seen as a solace as well as a mentor and a spiritual father to Amory. At this point, I would like to highlight that Monsignor Darcy is based on the figure of Father Sigourney Fay, whom Fitzgerald dedicates *This Side of Paradise*, considering that he supported him during his difficult times as I have explained in Chapter 1.

The figure of Darcy is significant from the beginning of the novel as he is described as Beatrice's old friend, so we can describe him as an old acquaintance of Amory. As I have already explained, as Amory matures, he starts to feel tormented by his egotism. Amory is clearly lost because he is unable to fit in the society and this leads him to drink and smoke, habits that are deeply rejected by his mother. The truth is that during his downfall, Darcy's figure is as a glimmer of hope that will guide him into the right path:

Monsignor was forty-four then, and bustling—a trifle too stout for symmetry, with hair the colour of spun gold, and a brilliant, enveloping personality. When he came into a room clad in his full purple regalia from thack to toe, he resembled a Turner sunset, and attracted both admiration and attention (...). Children adored him because he was like a child; youth revelled in his company because he was still a youth, and couldn't be shocked (...). (TSOP 31).

At this point, it is interesting to note that if, Darcy is important to Amory, Amory is important to Darcy. This character sees Amory as the son that he always wanted to have as well as a representation of himself. For all these reasons, he supports Amory during his whole life as we can see in the following quotation:

Amory, I've discovered suddenly that I'm an old man. Like all old men, I've had dreams sometimes and I'm going to tell you of them. I've enjoyed imagining that you were my son, that perhaps when I was young I went into a state of coma and begat you, and when I came to, had no recollection of it... it's the paternal instinct, Amory—celibacy goes deeper than the flesh.... (TSOP 188).

As we can see in the novel, Amory follows Darcy's advice and suggestions, even when he leaves the university. As we can see in the previous quotation, during his period in the army, Amory keeps in contact with his inner circle through letters. Those letters are also important as we can read Darcy's advice or learn about Beatrice's death within them. In addition, I would like to highlight that Darcy is not only known by being a mentor, but also by distinguishing between being a "personage" and a "personality":

"A personality is what you thought you were, what this Kerry and Sloane you tell me of evidently are. Personality is a physical matter almost entirely; it lowers the people it acts on—I've seen it vanish in a long sickness. But while a personality is active, it overrides 'the next thing.' Now a personage, on the other hand, gathers. He is never thought of apart from what he's done. He's a bar on which a thousand things have been hung—glittering things sometimes, as ours are; but he uses those things with a cold mentality back of them." (TSOP 125).

Throughout the novel, we see that Darcy encourages Amory to become a "personage" rather than a "personality" to find himself and beat his fears. The fact that

Darcy eagerly encourages Amory can be interpreted that he is advising Amory to think about his future, although Darcy is aware that it will be hard while Amory is limited by the egotism.

To end this point, I would like to focus on the impact that Darcy's death has on Amory. While it is true that Amory witnesses other's deaths during his life, we can consider that Darcy's death shows Amory that he has to mature. It is clear that, before the death of Darcy, Amory does not understand what death means as the narrator states in the following quotation, which also shows Amory's deep egotism:

"You're not sorry to go, of course. With people like us our home is where we are not," said Monsignor.

"I *am* sorry—"

"No, you're not. No one person in the world is necessary to you or to me."

(*TSOP* 34).

However, when the figure of Darcy disappears from his life, Amory realizes that his mind and behaviour have to change. The plain fact is that another motivation to change is that Amory considers that Darcy's advice must be shared with the rest of the society and the only way to do it is to fit into society.

3.5 “I KNOW MYSELF, BUT THAT IS ALL”

This last section will analyse the Amory that appears at the end of the novel. As we have seen all along this final degree project, Amory is continually searching for the “fundamental man” that he always wants to be. To discover if he becomes the “fundamental man,” we must analyse the last quotation from the novel that opens up with two possible interpretations. In addition, this section will also focus on one of the major symbols of self-destruction along the novel: alcohol, which causes misfortune and death as we can see in Beatrice.

I would like to start precisely by analysing the role of alcohol in the different characters' lives and, of course, in Amory's life. As I have previously mentioned, Fitzgerald conceived *This Side of Paradise* as a portrait of his own life as well as a portrayal of American society. As we can see along the novel, this substance destroyed many characters as well as Fitzgerald himself.

As far as Amory is concerned, we see that he starts to consume alcohol and tobacco during his stay at Princeton, although his consumption of this substance would be more evident later. At this point, it is also worth noting that after leaving Princeton and the army, Amory accepts a job in New York, where he moves with his Princeton's friend Tom.

Moreover, it is important to remark that New York is a city that reflects all that Amory's mind deeply rejects since it is cosmopolitan, full of excess and sin. However, this city also offers a successful life, although in the case of Amory, his life in New York would soon be a failure of his job does not turn out to be durable and his love relationship was not feasible.

The result of these events is that Amory is alone in a city that corners him, without a partner or a job. Even though Beatrice leaves him inheritance money, it is not enough to live in the city since the amount is minimal. However, Amory does not end up consumed by alcohol because of Prohibition was approved, which saves him from ending up in disgrace like Fitzgerald.

Having reached this point, I would like to focus on the end of the novel, in which we can see an Amory that has reached adulthood. In the following quotation, we see how Amory claims that now he has known himself, but he regrets that his youth is now behind and he did not enjoy it, as he should do:

There was no God in his heart, he knew; his ideas were still in riot; there was ever the pain of memory; the regret for his lost youth—yet the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirring of old ambitions and unrealized dreams. But—oh, Rosalind! Rosalind!...

“It's all a poor substitute at best,” he said sadly.
And he could not tell why the struggle was worthwhile, why he had determined to use to the utmost himself and his heritage from the personalities he had passed....
He stretched out his arms to the crystalline, radiant sky.
“I know myself,” he cried, “but that is all.”

(*TSOP* 330).

In the quotation, we see an Amory that no longer finds comfort in God or in faith, an Amory that regrets not being lucky in love, having a special memory of the love of his life, Rosalind. Moreover, this quotation shows that Amory is now aware of himself and his vision of the world. However, he is aware that his thought limits him to understand the world, which makes him to feel misunderstood. At this point, it is clear that he has a lot to learn about life, although knowing himself is a huge step to control his demons and find his place in society, although it is clear that this only depends on himself.

However, the end is a subject of discussion because it can be understood in two different ways. As I have analysed earlier, it is true that many editions of the novel have been published and, although it is obvious that the content is the same, this last quotation is edited differently depending on the publisher. As the website *Sparknotes* claims in its article "Book II, Chapter 5: The Egotist Becomes a Personage", some editors opt to choose to finish their editions of *This Side of Paradise* with a full stop while others use a dash. Because of this difference, we have two possible interpretations as we can see in the following quotation from the website:

The final punctuation mark of the novel has been a great source of debate among editors; some have opted for a period, others for a dash. The latest definitive edition, looking at manuscripts and marked copies of the book, chooses the dashes. Depending on the edition you have, the ending can be more or less definitive. A period would imply that Amory does know himself and that is the end. A dash, on the other hand, leaves the ending hanging, suggesting that he knows himself just at that moment, but that there is no definitive end. He will continue to grow and change, and changing self-knowledge must accompany any change. Though a period provides a more conclusive end to the book, it would indicate that Amory does not know that he will still change, implying a more limited self-knowledge than knowing that he will continue to change. In either case, the words themselves have become famous in American literature.

The plain fact is that, whatever our interpretation of the end is, it seems clear that Amory realizes that he has to be himself and has to learn about the world as well as overcome all difficulties of life. At the end of the novel, we can interpret that, even for a little while, Amory is craving to orient his life and think about his future that may be promising, even though his demons will always be with him, as it happens to all human beings.

CONCLUSION

After analysing *This Side of Paradise*, I firmly believe that this is very interesting for its argument and the moral that Fitzgerald hides in it. While it is true that *The Great Gatsby* catches the audience's attention, *This Side of Paradise* is, under my point of view, a masterpiece that we should take into account. At this point, I would like to mention that the main goal of this final degree project is to approach to Francis Scott Fitzgerald's figure as well as to his novel *This Side of Paradise*.

First, this novel is a perfect portrayal of one of the most glorious periods in the history of America. The Roaring Twenties changed American Society as it brought freedom and fun to a society that was deeply disillusioned by the war. As I have mentioned, the so-called "Lost Generation" also shared this mood. The new society was also characterized by rejecting the old conventions that deeply limited them. Indeed, it is interesting to see how Fitzgerald contrasts the two kinds of mentality that existed in American society at that time. On the one hand, Fitzgerald includes characters such as Beatrice or Clara Page that would be part of "Good side" as they are two women that follow the traditional conventions and are fully dedicated to their children.

On the other hand, Fitzgerald also includes in his novel female characters like Eleanor Savage or Rosalind that represent the new American woman. This new woman is included in the "Evil side" as uses make up, smokes and enjoys her freedom. As we can see in the novel, Amory deeply rejects this new woman since, from his Puritan mind, he is convinced that this kind of woman is deeply controlled by sin. In *This Side of Paradise*, Francis Scott Fitzgerald emphasises the strong presence of sexuality among American youth, which would be a torment for Amory since his distorted mind does not let him enjoy it.

Moreover, Fitzgerald also shows his audience that not everything was fun during this era as we can see in the novel. In *This Side of Paradise*, we can see how one of the most famous Amendments in the history of America, the so-called Prohibition, saved Amory's life. However, it is true that many people ended up in disgrace because of the consumption of alcohol as they used to consume it in so-called "Speakeasies." Moreover, the smuggling of alcohol and the crime rates in the American cities were on the rise and many Americans asked to repeal Prohibition. As I have analysed in the project, Prohibition was finally abolished when the 21st Amendment was ratified in 1933.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the most important character in the novel is the young Amory. As I have analysed in the project, Amory is a boy that is different from people his age, mainly because of his distorted mind. As we can see in the novel and in this project, Amory is a sensitive boy that is deeply influenced by his mother's ideals, which leads him to despair. As far as I am concerned, I truly believe that Amory can be described as a "hero," as he is continually struggling to defeat his demons and become the man that he always wanted to be.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that all writers usually hide in their works some moral or some advice to the readers and, *This Side of Paradise* is not an exception. As far as I am concerned, I am convinced that any of us can identify with Amory as, in certain periods of our life, we can go through difficulties like him. Besides

this, I would like to highlight that, from my point of view, Fitzgerald shows that all of us live with our own demons and, if we do not know how to control them, they can ruin our life.

In addition, it is also important to mention that it is essential to know and accept ourselves as we are. As we can learn in the novel, to behave as we are and as we think is the only way to enjoy our life to the fullest. At this point, it is also worthy to note that, under my point of view, *This Side of Paradise* shows us that, although our thoughts and acts are sometimes wrong, we should not be worried as they help us to learn from life. As we can see at the end of the novel, Amory is determined to change his mind and overcome his fears, although, as I have analysed in the project, we do not know if it is temporal or not as the end is open to interpretation.

Having reached this point, Fitzgerald also shows his readers that money can corrupt our life and our relationships. As Fitzgerald shows in the novel, Amory uses his money to attract girls and characters like Rosalind give a lot of importance to money in their love relationships. As far as I am concerned, I truly believe that Fitzgerald is advising us is that, in love and society, we should be led by our own feelings and not by the power of money.

To end up, after studying the life of Francis Scott Fitzgerald as well as his novel *This Side of Paradise*, I firmly believe that we must read Francis Scott Fitzgerald's novels and short stories attentively, since we can easily identify with their characters and their life situations. As far as I am concerned, I truly believe that we all, as Amory, are "heroes," since we are always struggling against the difficulties that appear in our life and struggling against our "demons" that, on some occasions, take over us and ruin our life.

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