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Impact of Modernism on the writings of F.Scott Fitzgerald
"With Reference to the Great Gatsby"

اثر الحدائة على كتابات سكوت فيتسجيرالد بالرجوع لرواية غاتسبي العظيم

*A research Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
M.A Degree in English Literature.*

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Dedication

To my beloved family

Acknowledgments

First of all I would like to say that the whole thanks be to Allah Lord of the World then the peace and bless be upon our prophet Mohammed. I want to express my sincere appreciation to Dr.WigdanYagoub Mohammed Sherifwhose sound criticism and kind encouragement were motivational in the preoperational of this research. My appreciation also goes to Dr.Mahmod Ali Ahmed and Dr.Hillary Marino Pitia who motivated me enough.

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Abstract

This research aimed to show the impact of modernism on the writings of F. Scott Fitzgerald with reference to the Great Gatsby. The novel (Great Gatsby) was written by Fitzgerald and published during the 19th century. The novel tells us about Gatsby who struggled enough to fulfill his hope as a human being where modernism took place, people running after their dreams regardless of moral values. This research focuses on the impact of modernism in the writing of Fitzgerald with reference to the Great Gatsby. USA international identity is represented through setting, the luxurious parties that Gatsby holds for the wealthy West and East Eggs. Death of Gatsby when he was floating dead in his own pool and muses about the world Gatsby many have discovered if he had finally realized that his dream was a hopeless cause. Based on the results of the research, the researcher has found that Fitzgerald's writing is dominated by modernism. Clearly, the Great Gatsby shows through its protagonist, Jay Gatsby, the corruption of the American dream.

المستخلص

يهدف هذه البحث لتقصي على تأثير الحداثة في كتابات سكوت فيسجيرالد بالرجوع للرواية غاتسبي العظيم التي كتبت في القرن التاسع عشر، هذه الرواية تحكي عن غاتسبي العظيم الذي بذل الغالي والنفيس لنيل طموحاته خلال هذه الفترة أي الحداثة، كان الناس ساعين سعياً حثيثاً لنيل المطالب بغض النظر عن مكارم الأخلاق والقيم التي تتمثل في الهوية الامريكية، وحفلات غاتسبي الترفيحية، والثراء الفاحش بين الشرق والغرب، ولقد ركزت هذا البحث على مدى تأثير الحداثة على كتابات فيتسجيرالد بناءً على النتائج. إن الباحث وجد تأثير الحداثة على الرواية غاتسبي العظيم وقد تجلى ذلك في شخصية غاتسبي وفساد الحلم الأمريكي.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Literature refers to compositions that tell stories, dramatize, express emotions, and analyze and advocate ideas.

Literature helps us to grow both personally and intellectually .It provides an objective base for knowledge and understanding. It links us with broader cultural, philosophic and religious world of which we are a part. It enables us to recognize human dreams and struggles in different places and ability and compassion for the condition of all living things _human, animals, vegetable. It encourages us to assist creative, talented people who need recognition and support .It is one of the shaping influences of life. Literature makes us human.

Modernism, in its broadest definition, is modern thought, character, or practice. More specifically, the term describes the modernist movement, its set of cultural tendencies and array of associated cultural movements, originally arising from wide-scale and far-reaching changes to Western society in the late 19th and early 20thcenturies.

Modernism was a revolt against the conservative values of realism.

Arguably the most paradigmatic motive of modernism is the rejection of tradition and its reprise, incorporation; rewriting, recapitulation, revision and parody in new forms. Modernism rejected the lingering certainty of Enlightenment thinking and also rejected the existence of a compassionate, all-powerful Creator God.

In general, the term modernism encompasses the activities and output of those who felt the "traditional" forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization and daily life were becoming outdated in the new economic, social,

and political conditions of an emerging fully industrialized world. The poet Ezra Pound's 1934 injunction to "Make it new!" was paradigmatic of the movement's approach towards the obsolete. Another paradigmatic exhortation was articulated by philosopher and composer Theodor Adorno, who, in the 1940s challenged conventional surface coherence and appearance of harmony typical of the rationality of Enlightenment thinking. A salient characteristic of modernism is self-consciousness. This self-consciousness often led to experiments with form and work that draws attention to the processes and materials used (and to the further tendency of abstraction).

The modernist movement, at the beginning of the 20th century, marked the first time that the term "avant-garde", with which the movement was labeled until the word "modernism" prevailed, was used for the arts (rather than in its original military and political context). Surrealism gained fame among the public as being the most extreme form of modernism, or "the avant-garde of modernism".

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald, now regarded as the spokesman for the "Lost Generation" of the 1920s, was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1896. His childhood and youth seem, in retrospect, as poetic as the works he later wrote. The life he lived became "the stuff of fiction," the characters and the plots a rather thinly-disguised autobiography. Like Jay Gatsby, the title character of his most famous novel, Fitzgerald created a vision which he wanted to become, a "Platonic conception of himself," and "to this conception he was faithful to the bend."

Fitzgerald was educated at parochial prep schools where he received strict Roman Catholic training. The religious instruction never left him. Ironically, he was denied burial in a Catholic cemetery because of his rather uproarious lifestyle which ended in depression and alcoholism. In the fall of 1909, during his second year at St. Paul Academy, Fitzgerald began publishing in the school magazine. Sent east for a disciplined education, he entered The Newman School, whose

student body came from wealthy Catholic families all over the country. At The Newman School he developed a friendship and intense rapport with Father Sigourney Webster Fay, a trustee and later headmaster of the school and the prototype for a character in *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald's first novel, published in 1920.

Fitzgerald left the Victorian era behind, creating a Modernist masterwork that still serves as a model for American fiction.

The gritty realism of William James and his contemporaries, and even the lighthearted tone of Mark Twain's *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, was too limited to allow Fitzgerald to portray the Jazz Age, a period in which dark fantasy reigned. Modernism offered a broad palette, a self-conscious surreal landscape in which life is viewed more metaphorically than meticulously detailed. Only through this lens could a central theme of the novel emerge.

All of Gatsby's characters, human and nonhuman, participate in Modernism's open examination of such American institutions as industry, power and class, and their by-products. Gatsby's open critique, already in use by poets of the time, is the most blatant, yet beginning an almost century-long tradition of social commentary in American literature.

The researcher appreciates the novel *The Great Gatsby* because there are several moral issues to be studied and also we can study some aspects of the history and some features of modernism in the novel *The Great Gatsby*.

1.1 Statement of the Research

During the time of modernism, people emphasize the issues such as identity whether it is individual or national identities, women's rights movement and the animosity between whites and minorities.

Those who attempt to reach their illusionary goals regardless of moral values, which let them to the downfall. The attempt to capture their dreams. This dream is different

from different people, but for Jay Gatsby the dream is that through wealth and power, one can acquire happiness. Men and women are isolated and alone, and they must struggle alone as individuals to survive a hostile world.

1.2 Research Questions:

- 1- What are the affects of the modernism on the characters of the novel?
- 2- What role does setting play in the Great Gatsby?

1.3 Research Hypotheses:

- 1-The modernism affects the characters in different ways.
- 2- There is important geographical location in the Great Gatsby.

1.4 Objectives of the Research:

- 1- To appreciate and evaluate Great Gatsby.
- 2- To conclude critical strategy to the novel.
- 3- To show how to evaluate writings of F.Scott Fitzgerald.
- 4- To know Gatsby's problems.
- 5- To know how Gatsby's sacrifice to solve problems.

1.5 Significance of the Research

Modernism radically difference from traditional, more scientific and embraced changes. Technological innovation in the world factories and machines inspired new attentiveness to technique in the arts.

1.6 Methodology of the Research

The research depends on qualitative method using formalism and

The data will be taken from the novel the Great Gatsby, internet, magazines and other references.

1.7 Limits of the Research

This study is limited to Great Gatsby during 1920's in America. The study will concentrate on the impact of modernism and its impact on the characters of the novel during the 1920s in America.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Previous Studies

Part One:

2.0 Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, which is widely considered to be one of the greatest of all American novels, was written in the 1920's during the period of literary philosophy known as Modernism. Modernism was a philosophical and artistic movement of the early 20th century which portrayed the world of men as a harsh, hostile environment in which life had lost its meaning and men and women were isolated from each other, struggling to survive alone. This world is one in which our dreams are unrealistic and futile.

In 1925, *The Great Gatsby* was published and hailed as an artistic and material success for its young author, F. Scott Fitzgerald. It is considered a vastly more mature and artistically masterful treatment of Fitzgerald's themes than his earlier fiction. These works examine the results of the Jazz Age generation's adherence to false material values.

In nine chapters, Fitzgerald presents the rise and fall of Jay Gatsby, as related in a first-person narrative by Nick Caraway. Caraway reveals the story of a farmer's son-turned racketeer, named Jay Gatz. His ill-gotten wealth is acquired solely to gain acceptance into the sophisticated, moneyed world of the woman he loves, Daisy Fay Buchanan. His romantic illusions about the power of money to buy respectability and the love of Daisy the "golden girl" of his dreams are skillfully and ironically interwoven with episodes that depict what Fitzgerald viewed as the callousness and moral irresponsibility of the affluent American society of the 1920s.

2.1 Modernism

The term modernism refers to the radical shift in aesthetic and cultural sensibilities evident in the art and literature of the post-World War One period.

The ordered, stable and inherently meaningful world view of the nineteenth century could not, wrote T.S. Eliot, accord with "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history."

Modernism thus marks a distinctive break with Victorian bourgeois morality; rejecting nineteenth-century optimism, they presented a profoundly pessimistic picture of a culture in disarray. This despair often results in an apparent apathy and moral relativism.

Modernist writers, in their attempt to throw off the aesthetic burden of the realist novel, these writers introduced a variety of literary tactics and devices.

Modernism is often derided for abandoning the social world in favor of its narcissistic interest in language and its processes.

Recognizing the failure of language to ever fully communicate meaning ("That's not it at all, that's not what I meant at all" laments Eliot's J. Alfred Prufrock), the modernists generally downplayed content in favor of an investigation of form.

The fragmented, non-chronological, poetic forms utilized by Eliot and Pound revolutionized poetic language.

2.2 American Modernism

Known as "The Lost Generation," American writers of the 1920s brought Modernism to the United States. For writers like Hemingway and Fitzgerald, World War I destroyed the illusion that acting virtuously brought about good. Like their British contemporaries, American Modernists rejected traditional institutions and forms. American Modernists include:

- Ernest Hemingway - *The Sun Also Rises* chronicles the meaningless lives of the Lost Generation. *Farewell to Arms* narrates the tale of an ambulance driver searching for meaning in WWI.
- F. Scott Fitzgerald - *The Great Gatsby* shows through its protagonist, Jay Gatsby, the corruption of the American Dream.
- John Dos Passos, Hart Crane, and Sherwood Anderson are other prominent writers of the period.

2.3 Characteristics of Modernism:

1) It was a completely new, original way of looking at life:

a) Modernists believed that the traditional ways of life were no longer valid. They believed that those things in which men had traditionally found meaning (religion, patriotism, and financial success) were no longer meaningful because of

i) The horrors of WWI.

ii) Poverty in the cities

iii) The difficulty of making a living.

iv) Racism and injustice.

v) The rise of new ideas (psychology, technological advances, etc.) that sought to explain away the magic of human existence.

These things had taught that human life is fragile, that violent, horrible loss can happen without warning, and that the plans by which we live our lives cannot protect us from disaster.

b) The loss of meaning in human existence (called by psychologists the “loss of ontological ground”) has made of our world a moral wasteland in which:

i) There is no God, no universal plan, and no real rules for living an upright or successful life.

ii) The world is unfair, and men suffer.

iii) Human life is so complicated that men cannot hope to understand each other and language is ineffective in allowing for real communication or understanding

iv) Men and women are therefore isolated and alone, and they must struggle alone, as individuals, to survive a hostile world.

2) Novels that were written during the modernist period are often characterized by:

a) Stream of Consciousness:

i) A literary technique which seeks to reveal an individual's point-of-view by inserting the character's thought processes in the narrative. Modernists found validity in the internal world of a person's thoughts and feelings. They believed we all have our individual, unique view of seeing the world around us. This means that the narrator is a character in the story (first person perspective), and we have access to his/ her thoughts.

b) A description of city life:

i) The increase over time in the population of cities in relation to the rural population resulted in both positive and negative outcomes; the gathering together of peoples from different backgrounds resulting in the creation and sharing of new ideas, but overcrowding resulted in poverty and crime.

ii) In great populations, individuals become less important, and they become nameless faces in the crowd. It becomes possible, then, for people to become isolated even while they are surrounded by others.

c) Modernist characters who are:

i) On a quest to either understand themselves or to recreate themselves into something different than whom they were born.

ii) Trying to live as meaningfully as possible in a difficult world. They are, in effect, attempting to live in a world that has lost rationality, morality and value.

The new world is characterized by loose morality and transitory pleasures

d) Loose references to time:

i) The chronological order of events in a modernist novel is often vague or confusing. The author is seeking to describe events the way the first person narrator remembers them. We do not remember events that happen at exact times, but, rather, retain hazy impressions of the things that happen to us.

e) The American Dream has become corrupted or unattainable:

i) As those aspects of human existence (religion, patriotism, etc.) lose their meaning, so, too, does the idea that we can achieve our goals. It becomes apparent that the world is so hostile that our dreams have become impossible.

2.4 The Great Gatsby and the Modern Novel:

1) Fitzgerald left the Victorian era behind, creating a Modernist masterwork that still serves as a model for American fiction.

a) The gritty realism of 19th century fiction was too limited to allow Fitzgerald to portray the Jazz Age, a period in which dark fantasy reined. Modernism offered a new style a broad palette with which to describe the recklessness of the 1920's.

b) All of Gatsby's characters are representative of the modern world: wealth, social class, industry, and organized crime. The novel, therefore, becomes a critique of what is wrong with 20th century America.

c) Fitzgerald's protagonist Jay Gatsby is the ultimate modernist hero: He is a man who refuses to accept the life into which he was born, and he undertakes an incredible task: to reinvent himself into something completely different. His faith in himself and his dream is extraordinary, and it sets him apart in his world. It also isolates him, and, in the end, it marks him for destruction.

d) In nine chapters, Fitzgerald presents the rise and fall of Jay Gatsby, as related in a first-person narrative by Nick Caraway. Caraway reveals the story of a farmer's son-turned criminal named Jay Gatz. His ill-gotten wealth is acquired solely to gain acceptance into the sophisticated, moneyed world of the woman he loves, Daisy Fay Buchanan. He has romantic illusions about the power of money to buy respectability and the love of Daisy the "golden girl" of his dreams. Gatsby tragically never realizes that the world of wealth he wants to enter is a corrupt world full of cruel and selfish people.

e) The discrepancy between Gatsby's dream vision and reality is a prominent theme in this book. Other motifs in the book include Gatsby's quest for the American Dream; class conflict ("new money" vs. "old money"); the cultural rift between East and West; and the contrast between innocence and experience in the narrator's life.

f) While the Great Gatsby explores a number of themes, none is more prevalent than that of the corruption of the American dream.

i) Gatsby appears to be the embodiment of this dream – he has risen from being a poor farm boy with no prospects, to being rich, having a big house, servants, and a large social circle attending his numerous parties. He has achieved all this in only a few short years, having returned from the war penniless. However, Gatsby is never truly one of the elite – his dream is just a façade.

ii) However, Fitzgerald explores much more than the failure of the American dream he is more deeply concerned with its total corruption. Gatsby has not achieved his wealth through honest hard work, but through bootlegging and crime. His money is not simply 'new' money it is dirty money, earned through dishonesty and crime. His wealthy lifestyle is little more than a façade, as is the whole person Jay Gatsby.

iii) The society in which the novel takes place is one of moral decadence. Whether their money is inherited or earned, those who live in the society described by Fitzgerald in the novel are morally decadent, and they are living life in quest of cheap thrills and with no seeming moral purpose to their lives. Any person who attempts to move up through the social classes becomes corrupt in the process.

2.5 Modernism in Great Gatsby

The Great Gatsby, written by F. Scott Fitzgerald, deals with the issue of morals and humanity's errors. A lack of moral values and convictions within the characters of The Great Gatsby leads to their own downfall. As examples of humanity's wrongs, Fitzgerald uses the characters of Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan. Gatsby represents the broken heart that cannot let go while Daisy gets caught in a glimpse of greatness and lacks any type of morals. Jay Gatsby exemplifies his peers by his goals in life and his integrity. Gatsby doesn't follow the laws of prohibition and he sells illegal alcohol through his drug store chain. Gatsby came east looking for another type of wealth.

Part Two

2.6 Previous Study

By (Junaidi, Ahmad Noufal 2014) in the research title (psychological analysis of Jay Gatsby's life in Francis Scott Fitzgerald the Great Gatsby "view from Abraham Maslow of needs theory) said:

"The Great Gatsby tell about a young man named Jay Gatsby who tried to fulfill his needs as a human being, in the story there are four kind of things that Gatsby needed and what Gatsby did to fulfill his needs dominated the content of the story like how Gatsby tried to fulfill his physiological needs, the safety need, tried to get a dignity and some friends and also to get his love.

Based on the result, the researcher had found that four needs of Jay Gatsby by using Abraham Maslow's theory, those are physiological need, safety need, and love and belonging need and esteem need. And the researcher also had elaborated the efforts of Jay Gatsby in fulfill his psychological needs".

By Todd David Onderdonk , PH.D(2005)the university of Texas in title (Modernist male Feminization and the self-construction of Authorship in the modern American novel)he said:

"An unexplored peculiarity of the male modernist novel is the frequency with which we find some version of the author himself in its pages, speaking, thinking and experiencing. Diagnosing this tendency as a symptom of cultural strain, this dissertation analyzes literary self-constructions in the works of Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ralph Ellison. These key modernists, plagued by anxieties about manhood, race and the literary marketplace, used their works as implicit self-portraiture to suggest their own achievement of exclusive forms of masculine authorship. Central to this aim is the use of author surrogates, first-person narrators or protagonists who evoke the author himself in the act of attaining "literary manhood," a form of masculine identity distinguished not by physical or sexual dominance, but by intellectual and emotional superiorities. Yet the surrogate attains these qualities through shocking humiliations and defeats; he is wounded and laid low by mediocrity, by women, "lesser" men, and by modern life itself. Critics have argued that so many feminized protagonists were a sign that modern men felt threatened by the rise of women in the public sphere. But male vii

Woundedness even to the point of castration emerges in this study as the very condition of modern authorship. As Hemingway wrote, the true artist "impersonally" turned his feminization into art: "We are all bitched from the start and you especially have to be hurt like hell before you can write seriously. But when you get the damned hurt use it. Be as faithful to it as a scientist."

Scientifically turning “damned hurts” into difficult new forms of modern knowledge, modernists redressed cultural and professional anxieties by converting trauma into intellectual mastery, agency, and social authority. To privilege certain traits, however, is to reject others. The epistemological victories modernists attained through their defeats rely on a repudiation of the “feminine,” whether portrayed in women, in male homosexuals, or in racial others. This study thus implicates highly influential concepts of modern authorship with broader cultural attitudes toward race, gender and ethnicity, investigating a crucial node of aesthetics, epistemology and identity politics at the heart of the modern novel."

By(TubahSaik Islam 2014)in his research (The failure of American dream)the Great Gatsby.he said:

"Fitzgerald has provided for us a sight of the individuals living in the roaring 1920s, where the people chase the American Dream under the materialistic influence of high society and put stock in piling up riches. Fitzgerald presents the genuine elements of American Dream alongside its advanced face to demonstrate that what individuals really think about this fantasy and which is lost perpetually to the American individuals.

The thesis looks at a particular group of characters who were occupied with perusing written work and all that much mindful of the evolving circumstances around them. So in a manner these individuals were the most acute sufferers; on the grounds that they could understand that how the social structure was changing and the how the greater part of the pure individuals were getting influenced with such progressions. These individuals were lost, on the grounds that they ended up being social oddballs in this new world. Women, who had begun to work outside, did not find it easy to adapt to the new world, as they were confronted with another social environment, new individuals and issues through which they needed to be acknowledged"

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS FROM A CRITICAL POINT OF VIEW

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS FROM A CRITICAL POINT OF VIEW

3.0 About the Author:F. Scott Fitzgerald

Fitzgerald was born in ST.paul.Minnesota in 1896 .He was student of St.Paul Academy ,The Newman school and had attended Princeton for a short while .In 1917 he joined the army and was posted in Montgomery ,Alabama. This is where he would meet his future wife Zelda .Sayre but first he had to make some money to impress her.Having his first novel This side of paradise published and becoming a best seller accomplished .He was published at the age of 23 and was regarded as the speaker for the Jazz Age ,pretty soon though things started to take place a turn for the worse .Zelda's schizophrenia and Fitzgerald's drinking problem let Fitzgerald to rely mostly on his short stories for income .Slowly they started to lose their appeal as well .

3.1About the 1920s

These years were known as the (Roaring Twenties) because the economy at the time was through the roof and people partying all over the place. At the time there was a legal ban on the manufacture and sale of an intoxicating drink called prohibition .Since a lot of people didn't feel like drinking the gin they made in their bathtubs all the time there was a huge market for organized crime. Organized criminals catered to the needs of the drinking public by illegally supplying them with liquor and made a fortune doing it .Even with all the crime in the Jazz Age though ,it will still be remembered for its glittering lights and unbridled romance.

3.2 Chapter One:

3.2.1 Nick Introduce Himself

"The narrator of *The Great Gatsby* is a young man from Minnesota named Nick Caraway. He not only narrates

The story but casts himself as the book's author. He begins by commenting on himself, stating that he

Learned from his father to reserve judgment about other people, because if he holds them up to his own moral

Standards, he will misunderstand them. He characterizes himself as both highly moral and highly tolerant.

He briefly mentions the hero of his story, Gatsby, saying that Gatsby represented everything he scorns, but

That he exempts Gatsby completely from his usual judgments. Gatsby's personality was nothing short of "gorgeous"

The opening sentence introduces the narrator as traditional in respecting his father and as thoughtful in thinking about his father's early advice "ever since." The advice is traditional morality: appreciate what you have been given in life, respect people less fortunate, and avoid passing judgments on others. The first-person narration is confessional prompting our recollection that Fitzgerald wrote this novel as a former Catholic who lost his faith at Princeton. *The Great Gatsby* is a confession of lost faith in social progress. In this novel, for once, Fitzgerald transcended his romantic self (heart) by narrating through his objective self (head), making the novel a psychological allegory of his own individuation, dramatizing a quest for transcendence through pursuit of the American Dream. He encouraged such an interpretation when he declared that "My characters are all Scott Fitzgerald."

That the narrator does not introduce himself by name is evidence of discretion, reserve and modesty characteristics that set up a contrast with the gaudy Gatsby, yet a parallel is also suggested when Gatsby becomes a mysterious figure not introduced except as a figure in the distance stretching out his arms toward the green light, until over a quarter of the way into the novel. The narrator presents himself as “inclined to reserve all judgments,” which would make him objective and hence probably reliable an impression reinforced by his controlled style, self-criticism and chastened tone. He calls himself a “normal person,” that is, with normative moral standards like those of his father. This is his character and his function as narrator to observe, represent and apply the moral norm of “fundamental decency” to the other characters. The story of Gatsby has left him so outraged that “I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever.” The military image recalls his service in World War I, supposedly a great moral cause. His repetition of the word “snobbishly” implies with irony that people with fundamental decency have become so exceptional in the postwar world they are the only true aristocracy, in contrast to the corrupt rich epitomized by Tom and Daisy Buchanan.

Most importantly, though one is objective and the other subjective, Nick and Gatsby share a rare capacity for “infinite hope” the spiritual ideal in the novel.

Nick casts himself in a mythic role as well as Gatsby: “I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler.” He has rediscovered America and will be our guide: “life was beginning over again.” New life is evoked by the major settings two Eggs. Nick is an American Adam in a New World. The action of the novel is set in 1922, the year Willa Cather said that the world “broke in two” traditional and modern. In describing Long Island geography, Nick refers to a traditional anecdote about “the egg in the Columbus story.” In literature a reference to Columbus is a reference to the European discovery of America. The anecdote is older than Columbus but he

has been given credit for being so clever as to stand an egg on one end. Fitzgerald makes East Egg and West Egg metaphors of a divided America, analogous to the East Coast and the Midwest, connoting thematic polarities of modern versus traditional, urban versus rural, fashionable versus common, decadent versus innocent. Comparable thematic polarities were represented figuratively by Henry James as Europe versus America. Unlike the egg in the Columbus story, East Egg and West Egg are “not perfect.” In fact “they are both crushed flat at the contact end,” which is how Columbus allegedly performed the trick of standing an egg on end by cheating, by breaking the egg. Fitzgerald may have gotten this idea from Sherwood Anderson’s “The Egg” (1921), in which an egg becomes a symbol of the American Dream.

Jordan Baker is introduced with an impression that defines her: “...chin rose a little, as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall.” Throughout the story she is preoccupied with maintaining her precarious image of herself “the object she was balancing had obviously tottered a little and given her something of a fright.” In his innocence, Nick misreads Jordan and even “half” falls in love with her, a contrasting parallel to Gatsby’s infatuation with Daisy: “Almost any exhibition of complete self-sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me.” The joke is that Jordan is actually insecure and dependent. Nick has come east to be a “bond man” but he makes a bad investment. He is likewise enamored of his cousin, enchanted by Daisy’s “low, thrilling voice” full of excitement and promise, giving him something further in common with Gatsby. He projects into the sunshine falling with a “romantic affection upon her glowing face; her voice compelled me forward... Then the glow faded...”

Tom puts Nick down by remarking that he has never heard of his employer, and then identifies himself totally with the values of the East: “I’d be a God damned fool to live anywhere else.” As if he is not already a damned fool. Jordan agrees

with Tom “Absolutely!” Though she has been lying on the sofa all afternoon, Jordan now throws her body “backward at the shoulders like a young cadet.” The military image recalls Nick saying that he felt like the world should “be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention.” However, as we are to see, Jordan is not at moral attention, but at social attention, as expressed in her contemptuous reference to unfashionable West Egg.

One of the most effective similes in the book is an *objective correlative* for Nick’s feelings: “Tom Buchanan compelled me from the room as though he were moving a checker to another square.” As if for Tom, life is a game he always wins because he owns the board. Nick is “compelled” to be on Tom’s side. Looking toward the sunset, the Buchanan represents the spiritual decline of the West. Daisy snuffs out the light of candles and “looked at us all radiantly.” Her personality is bright but her mind is dim, her conversation with Jordan repetitive and vacuous: “We ought to plan something,” yawned Miss Baker, sitting down at the table as if she were getting into bed. “All right,” said Daisy. “What’ll we plan?” She turned to me helplessly: “What do people plan?”

As if she has never had an original thought let alone a plan in her entire life. Daisy sees Nick as one of the “people” and confesses that she knows nothing about them or him, her cousin. The impersonal relations of the rich are just as superficial as their conversation: “Sometimes she and Miss Baker talked at once, unobtrusively and with a bantering inconsequence that was never quite chatter that was as cool as their white dresses and their impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire.” Being rich is cool but boring. Cool becomes another motif in the novel, contrasted to the hot poor who cannot afford air conditioning. The rich are disengaged from other people. Having everything they could want except more money, they are too jaded to enjoy life in the moment and can only be disappointed: The “evening was hurried from phase to phase toward its close, in a continually disappointed

anticipation or else in sheer nervous dread of the moment itself.” Gatsby has lost what he wants and has been giving his extravagant parties in continual disappointed anticipation that Daisy would happen to drop by sometime.

Tom’s tirade against “other races” expresses an intense preoccupation with maintaining power that was not limited to the very rich during the 1920s. Since Fitzgerald was stationed in Alabama during the war and married a southern belle, he may have been influenced in particular by the rise of the Ku Klux Klan during that period. Daisy is satirized for conforming to her husband without independent thought: “‘We’ve got to beat them down,’ whispered Daisy.” Fitzgerald ridicules the education Tom received at Yale. “‘Tom’s getting very profound,’ said Daisy, with an expression of un thoughtful sadness.” Tom goes on, “‘this idea is that we’re Nordics. I am, and you are, and you are, and’ after an infinitesimal hesitation he included Daisy with a slight nod...” Tom suddenly realizes that, he has paid so little attention to her; he does not know whether his own wife is a Nordic. “There was something pathetic in his...complacency.” While agreeing with her husband, Daisy is winking in this scene, but only because the sun is in her eyes, whereas Fitzgerald is winking at the reader.

When the butler calls Tom from the dinner table to the telephone, Jordan comes to social attention: “Miss Baker leaned forward unashamed, trying to hear.” Eavesdropping on your host shows a lack of “fundamental decency.” Jordan gets worse, gossiping to Nick: “Tom’s got some woman in New York.” Then she has the ironic gall to say, “She might have the decency not to telephone him at dinner time.” To Jordan, it is not the affair that is indecent but the timing of a phone call. Nick has to restrain himself from expressing his disapproval. “To a certain temperament the situation might have seemed intriguing my own instinct was to telephone immediately for the police.”

Nick keeps his mouth discretely shut about the situation when alone with Daisy. She is so petty as to hold it against him that he did not attend her wedding, even though he was away in the war at the time she had never even noticed let alone appreciated his service. She is feeling sorry for herself. Nick changes the subject to her little daughter, but Daisy changes it right back to her to what she said when the child was born. The importance of their daughter to the Buchanan may be measured by her brief appearance in the novel. Implicitly, Tom wanted a boy. What Daisy said paraphrases what Zelda said when her daughter was born: "I hope she'll be a fool that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool." Daisy is unhappily resigned to subordination, whereas Zelda bitterly rebelled.

3.3 Chapter Two:

3.3.1 Halfway between West Egg and New York City

"Halfway between West Egg and New York City sprawls a desolate plain, a gray valley where New York's Ashes are dumped. The men who live here work at shoveling up the ashes. Overhead, two huge, blue, spectacles- Rimmed eyes—the last vestige of advertising gimmick by a long-vanished eye doctor stare down From an enormous sign. These unblinking eyes, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Ecklebu".

The commuter train that runs between West Egg and New York passes through the valley, making several

The valley of ashes is "about half way between West Egg and New York." In the geographic middle, this setting becomes central to the story, with its "foul dust" floating all around onto everything. This place becomes a vortex of themes and events. Tom Buchanan's mistress Myrtle Wilson lives here in a garage, like a vehicle for his use "on the edge of the waste land," and this is where she is killed by Daisy driving Gatsby's car, determining the rest of the plot. The poor must live

here in squalor created by the rich. Gatsby's killer is first seen "wiping his hands on a piece of waste," a man who fuels the vehicles passing through the valley of ashes to and from the City. He is covered with ash, an incarnation of the waste land "mingling immediately with the cement color of the walls."

Eliot had established the waste land as a symbol of the modern soul in his influential poem affirming faith. Fitzgerald expresses his lost religious faith by adding the gigantic blind eyes of Dr. T.J. Mecklenburg as a faceless commercial presiding over the waste land in place of God. Beyond his personal tragedy, he saw human life as essentially tragic because he thought there is no God and yet the survival of our humanity in modern civilization depended on belief in something higher, transcending the self, a collective faith traditionally provided by religion. Otherwise most people lose "fundamental decency" and become selfish hedonists like the guests at Gatsby's parties. The billboard Dr. Mecklenburg is Fitzgerald's image of what has replaced God commerce in a materialistic spiritual waste land where idealism is as dead as Gatsby at the end. Mecklenburg is a mock deity representing what is worshipped by secularists, aptly for irony an oculist. Both the waste land vortex at the middle of the novel and the "current" Nick is trying unsuccessfully to overcome at the end of the novel represent the forces of Postmodernism.

Tom compels Nick off the commuter train and forces him to meet his mistress showing off. Myrtle is in many ways the opposite of Daisy. She is poor, stocky, and not pretty, but she is sensuous especially when pumping gas. Daisy is cool, Myrtle is hot, with a "perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smoldering." Daisy is refined and submissive, Myrtle coarse and assertive. Tom is so lacking in fundamental decency that as soon as her husband exits momentarily, he orders Myrtle to leave immediately and meet him in the City

at a subway station “on the lower level.” He treats Wilson “coldly” and ridicules him as “so dumb he doesn’t know he’s alive.”

Myrtle displays her bad taste first in having an affair with Tom Buchanan, then in buying gossip and movie magazines, and most conspicuously in her decoration of the apartment in New York. The lower-class Myrtle proves to be just as acquisitive and pretentious as any rich person, overcrowding the little apartment with furniture now that Tom has given her the green light to pursue her American Dream: “to move about was to stumble continually over scenes of ladies swinging in the gardens of Versailles.” Clinging to Tom like a vine on her way up, Myrtle now aspires to be a queen like Marie Antoinette who got her head chopped off. Myrtle loses her head, gets her nose broken, and is crushed by Daisy.

Under the influence of Tom, whiskey and a new dress, the personality of Mrs. Wilson as Nick calls her, not allowing us to forget her adultery had “undergone a change.” She puts on airs with her new elaborate cream-colored chiffon dress, a vehicle parallel to Gatsby’s elaborate cream-colored automobile, and then she pretends that “I just slip it on sometimes when I don’t care what I look like.” She becomes “more violently affected moment by moment,” transformed by “hauteur.” And “as she expanded the room grew smaller around her.” The more she tries to act like a queen, the more she exposes herself as uneducated, vulgar and ridiculous, as when she talks about her foot problems and having her “appendicitis out.” Tom is as indifferent to Myrtle except as a mistress that while the McKee fawn over her, he yawns audibly. “‘My dear,’ she told her sister in a high, mincing shout, ‘most of these fell as will cheat you every time. All they think of is money’.” Without realizing it, she has described Tom Buchanan and herself, since she is cheating on her husband with Tom mainly for his money.

Mr. McKee is there hoping to leverage his career as a photographer. He and his wife flatter Myrtle with lies hoping she will influence Tom on his behalf, but

Myrtle is distracted by the incompetence of her servants: “I told that boy about the ice.” Myrtle raised her eyebrows in despair at the shiftlessness of the lower orders.” Then she kisses her little dog with “ecstasy.” Catherine contributes to false gossip about Gatsby and claims falsely that Tom can’t stand Daisy any more than Myrtle can stand her failure of a husband. Tom makes a joke of McKee’s appeal for help in his career and mocks both him and Wilson as unimportant checkers on his game board. The “worldly” Catherine is such a naïve romantic she believes Tom’s lies that he cannot get a divorce because Daisy is a Catholic and that eventually somehow he will marry Myrtle: “Tom’s the first sweetie she ever had.” Myrtle tells Nick how she first met Tom, how romantic it was when he picked her up on a commuter train: “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.”

Myrtle proceeds directly from meeting Tom to buying things and plans to buy a lot more things, her materialistic version of the American Dream: “I’m going to make a list of all the things I’ve got to get. A massage and a wave, and a collar for the dog, and one of those cute little ash trays where you touch a spring, and a wreath with a black silk bow for mother’s grave that’ll last all summer. I got to write down a list so I won’t forget all the things I got to do.”

Nick displays his generous and fastidious nature when he wipes the spot of dried shaving lather from the cheek of McKee, who has fallen asleep a particularly effective realistic detail because it is incidental, enhancing the “illusion of real life” as put by Henry James. Another such detail much admired by Edith Wharton and others, is Myrtle’s little dog observing the strange behavior of the humans like a Greek chorus and “groaning faintly.” The climax of the chapter comes when Myrtle asserts her right to shout the name of Daisy any time she wants to and, “Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand.” In one quick blow he shatters her dream and the illusion of his lies.

3.4 Chapter Three:

3.4.1 Jazz Age

Gatsby's party represents the Jazz Age of the 1920s as Fitzgerald saw it, lived it, and to some extent created it in his many stories in popular magazines and in his first two novels by far his most popular at that time *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned*. This chapter is a classic of literary Impressionism vivid sensory details, movement, fluidity, glimpsed colors, fragments of conversations opening with music from Gatsby's mansion playing "through the summer nights" as if every night, all night. "People were not invited they went there." They come and go "like moths" attracted to bright lights. This simile and others reducing humans to lower animals is a characteristic of Naturalism, the undertow to tragedy below Fitzgerald's high glittering wave of Romanticism. Gatsby's station wagon "scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all trains." Yellow becomes a motif in this West Egg chapter, whereas Nick is wearing white, the normal color of an egg, consistent with his innocence. East Egg would be a golden egg for McKee, and might be for Nick, who takes Jordan's "golden arm." Yellow is not quite gold and Gatsby is not quite up to the social gold standard.

Nick is differentiated as normal, polite and traditional by coming only in response to an invitation. He encounters Jordan and two girls in twin yellow dresses who come to Gatsby's parties because, as one says, "I never care what I do, so I always have a good time." That seems to be her philosophy of life. The girls in yellow spread more gossip, like yellow journalists for the tabloids, one saying Gatsby served in the American army during the war and the other that he was a German spy. "It was testimony to the romantic speculation he inspired." Fitzgerald is as droll as Henry James when he describes "Jordan's escort, a persistent undergraduate given to violent innuendo, and obviously under the impression that sooner or later Jordan was going to yield him up her person to a greater or lesser

degree.” Under the formality, many such drunken male guests are lusting for a fulfillment of their dreams.

The techniques of Impressionism leave a lot to the imagination. Nick is sitting at a table with Jordan drinking champagne when he strikes up a conversation with a man about his age and admits that he has not met Gatsby the host of this party. “‘I’m Gatsby,’ he said suddenly.” After all the buildup to the great Gatsby, not recognizing him when he is right beside you is an ironic anti-climax that emphasizes the inflation of his romantic legend. After all, as we are to learn, he is really only a roughneck named Jim Gets.

Looking at him more closely in the next paragraph, though, he is an exceptional man at that. He is incredibly likeable. He has “one of those smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it” and he pays attention to you “with an irresistible prejudice in your favor.” He takes people at face value “understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself.” Then, looking again, Nick sees merely “an elegant young roughneck whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd.” Fitzgerald himself uses elaborate formality of speech to ridicule the absurd, as when describing the expectations of Jordan’s escort. Gatsby is one of those people who create a persona to get ahead in the world that becomes his whole self, and because he never looks within he never attains self-knowledge. Hence he cannot read himself or others any more than he reads the books in his library with their uncut pages. This explains how he could fall in love with such a shallow girl as Daisy. She is the girl he fell in love with in his youth, the girl he lost, and the girl who rejected him. No other girl will do. It is not what she is that matters to him; it is what she represents redemption and the fulfillment of his dream.

Though a gangster, Gatsby behaves like a gentleman and is devoted to the woman he loves, unlike the cheating Tom Buchanan implying ironically that the crook has

a better character: “He excused himself with a small bow that included each of us in turn.” Jordan increases the ambiguity of Gatsby when she does not believe his claim to be “an Oxford man.” The orchestra plays the *Jazz History of the World* and in another room a drunken lady from a famous chorus is sobbing in the throes of a song, with mascara running down her cheeks in inky rivulets. The indifference of onlookers is expressed by the “humorous suggestion that she sing the notes on her face.” She had a fight with a man said to be her husband. “I looked around. Most of the remaining women were now having fights with men said to be their husbands.” Nick blames the husbands for being “wayward men.” Some of the wives are selfish for not wanting to leave, but their husbands lift and carry them out kicking.

Jordan returns from an “amazing” confidential talk with Gatsby in the library and leaves Nick in more suspense. The butler tells Gatsby he is wanted again, this time to answer a call from Philadelphia, where the nation was founded, now and another metropolis of crime. On his way out Nick comes upon a car wrecked in the ditch with a missing wheel, one of the episodes most discussed by critics. He chastises the apparent driver, Owl Eyes from the library, until the actual driver emerges so drunk he wants to back up the car with a missing wheel: “Put her in reverse.” Like Gatsby in relation to Daisy, he says, “No harm in trying.” Only a drunk or a romantic would think so. The mistake about who was driving this car prefigures the mistake about who was driving Gatsby’s car when it killed Myrtle, leading to his death. This scene ends with an image of Gatsby holding up his hand in farewell.

For the present he merely calls her a “rotten driver” after she “passed so close to some workmen that our fender flicked a button on one’s man’s coat.” Jordan is so selfish that she expects other drivers to “keep out my way.” An unapologetic hypocrite, she says “I hate careless people. That’s why I like you.” Nick has begun

to feel like the car she is driving, for “she had deliberately shifted our relations.” He then branches the metaphor: “for a moment I thought I loved her. But I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires, and I knew that first I had to get myself definitely out of that tangle back home.” His fundamental decency in this situation once again confirms his claim that he is honest. In fact, “I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.”

3.5 Chapter Four:

3.5.1 Nick set up Meeting between Gatsby and Daisy

Nick lists all of the people who attended Gatsby’s parties that summer, a roll call of the nation's most wealthy and powerful people. He then describes a trip that he took to New York with Gatsby to eat lunch. As they

Drive to the city, Gatsby tells Nick about his past, but his story seems highly improbable. He claims, for instance, to be the son of wealthy, deceased parents from the Midwest. When Nick asks which Midwestern city he is from, Gatsby replies, “San Francisco.” Gatsby then lists a long and preposterously detailed set of Accomplishments: he claims to have been educated at Oxford, to have collected jewels in the capitals of Europe, to have hunted big game, and to have been awarded medals in World War I by multiple European Countries. Seeing Nick’s skepticism, Gatsby produces a medal from Montenegro and a picture of himself playing cricket at Oxford"

The guests are reduced to their names and to Nick’s scant impressions. The tone further reduces all events to the same level of insignificance in the spiritual waste land: hair turning white “for no good reason”; driving a car over somebody’s right hand (does it really matter which hand it was?); jumping in front of a subway train in Times Square; or getting one’s nose shot off in the war. The import of it all is that in the secular modern world people are living meaningless lives without higher

purpose “for no good reason.” In this valley of ashes, the only one with a flame is Gatsby.

Just when Nick grows disappointed with Gatsby because he “had little to say,” Gatsby tells him “God’s truth” a succession of lies. In the secular modern world Man is his own God. When asked what part of the Middle West he comes from, Gatsby answers San Francisco, an indication of his poor education contrary to his claim to be an Oxford man of his unreliability, and of his grandiose extravagance, as if the country were so much larger than it actually is that San Francisco could be in the middle instead of at the end of it. At first his outrageous boasting makes it difficult for Nick to restrain incredulous laughter, but eventually Gatsby persuades him with mementos that “it was all true.”

When Gatsby drives them through the valley of ashes, Nick “had a glimpse of Mrs. Wilson straining at the garage pump with panting vitality as we went by.” They are pulled over by a motorcycle policeman and Gatsby waves away his infractions with a “white card.” The policeman even apologizes. “I was able to do the commissioner a favor once,” Gatsby explains to Nick, “and he sends me a Christmas card every year.” Like the call from Chicago, this incident is intended to evoke the corruption prevailing in society, an example of synecdoche--a part standing for the whole.

Jordan takes over the narration to tell the story of Gatsby falling in love with the most popular girl in Louisville, as if *because* she was the most popular girl the prize Daisy Fay, who “dressed in white, and had a little white roadster.” Then he went away to war and Daisy married the wealthy Tom Buchanan, who gave her a string of pearls worth a fortune. Before the bridal dinner she got drunk and changed her mind, implicitly in love with Gatsby but she married Tom anyway. One night Tom got drunk and “ran into a wagon on the Ventura road...and ripped a front wheel off his car.” He was with a chambermaid from his hotel and the

incident got into the papers, disillusioning Daisy. The loss of a wheel echoes the accident after Gatsby's party and continues the motif of careless driving. Tom gets away unscathed and returns to Chicago and settles there with Daisy, where they "moved with a fast crowd.

3.6 Chapter Five:

3.6.1 Gatsby and Daisy Reunited

"That night, Nick comes home from the city after a date with Jordan. He is surprised to see Gatsby's mansion lit up brightly, but it seems to be unoccupied, as the house is totally silent. As Nick walks home, Gatsby startles him by approaching him from across the lawn. Gatsby seems agitated and almost desperate to make Nick happy he invites him to Coney Island, then for a swim in his pool. Nick realizes that Gatsby is nervous because he wants Nick to agree to his plan of inviting Daisy over for tea. Nick tells Gatsby that he will help him with the plan. Overjoyed, Gatsby immediately offers to have someone cut Nick's grass. He also offers him the chance to make some money by joining him in some business he does on the side—business that does not involve Meyer Wolfshiem. Nick is slightly offended that Gatsby wants to pay him for arranging the meeting with Daisy and refuses Gatsby's offers, but he still agrees to call Daisy and invite her to his house."

Nick agrees to Gatsby's request but turns down his offer to give Nick some "confidential" work for easy money. He invites Daisy to tea and Gatsby is so eager he arrives an hour early, in a white suit with a "gold-colored tie." Nick plans to serve lemon cakes. Gatsby has prepared for this for five years and yet, with only two minutes to go, he is so impatient he acts like he has another appointment: "I can't wait all day." When she arrives on time Gatsby quickly sneaks outside and around the house and knocks on the front door so it will appear he just got there

himself. Nick is in the awkward position of introducing them to each other. “‘We’ve met before,’ muttered Gatsby” is a comical understatement.

The intensity of Gatsby’s romantic passion is dramatized in his nervous clumsiness while trying to act at perfect ease, even bored, leaning back against the mantelpiece and knocking off the clock “whereupon he turned and caught it with trembling fingers and set it back in place.” Setting back the clock is what he hopes to accomplish with Daisy. “‘I’m sorry about the clock,’ he said.” Embarrassed for him, Nick makes an absurd yet apt response: “‘It’s an old clock,’ I told them idiotically.”

Nick calls attention to the immaturity of Gatsby, the arrested development of the American male: “‘You’re acting like a little boy,’ I broke out impatiently.” In relation to this romantic neighbor, Nick compares himself to the philosopher Kant, a reserved and objective recluse who provided the conceptual foundation for the Romantic Movement. Romanticism has taken many forms. Gatsby’s mansion, with its “feudal silhouette against the sky,” was built by a romantic brewer who dreamed of reducing his neighbors to peasantry by paying them to thatch their roofs and lording over them like a nobleman in a castle. Gatsby’s affectation of a British accent and his claim to have attended Oxford are evidence of the traditional American inferiority complex and veneration of titles and aristocracy contradicting democratic American values. This was a major theme of Henry James and a subject of intense satire by Mark Twain.

Gatsby’s pile of expensive shirts brings Daisy to tears. As he throws them one after another onto the pile, their abundance and his casual extravagance imply unlimited wealth. The prose turns increasingly rich, opulent and lush with colors and textures, musical with alliteration and assonance. “Suddenly, with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily.” Both her head and her heart are into the shirts. Her emotion over shirts is both pathetic and comic.

“‘They’re such beautiful shirts,’ she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. ‘It makes me sad because I’ve never seen such such beautiful shirts before’.” Daisy makes love to his shirts before she makes love to him, confirming that Gatsby was right all along, that to move her he had to get rich enough to “wear the gold hat.” In *Babbitt* (1922) Sinclair Lewis satirized Americans for making a religion of business. In *Gatsby* Fitzgerald satirizes them for making a religion of materialism mansions, cars, yachts, dresses, shirts.

Daisy’s materialism is contrasted to Gatsby’s romantic idealism at the moment that she puts her arm through his. He seems to sense that, paradoxically, in attaining his goal he has lost the meaning of his life: “Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever... Now it was again a green light on a dock.” This prefigures his depression just before he gets shot, and the possibility of his awareness encourages us to see Gatsby as tragic rather than merely a romantic fool. Gatsby is immature in having invested all his hope in pursuing a finite goal in the material world merely plucking a shallow Daisy rather than pursuing a spiritual goal, an unattainable ideal such as moral perfection in the tradition of Christ or Ben Franklin. “Man’s reach should exceed his grasp, or what’s a heaven for,” as the poet Robert Browning said.

3.7 Chapter Six:

3.7.1 Tom and Gatsby have a confrontation

The rumors about Gatsby continue to circulate in New York a reporter even travels to Gatsby’s mansion hoping to interview him. Having learned the truth about Gatsby’s early life sometime before writing his Account, Nick now interrupts the story to relate Gatsby’s personal history not as it is rumored to have Occurred, nor as Gatsby claimed it occurred, but as it really happened."

Finally the background of Gatsby is revealed, though not in as much detail as Edith Wharton would have preferred. The teenager James Gatz, wearing a torn green

jersey, swam out to the white yacht of a rich man “a pioneer debauchee” anchored “in the shallows [of] Little Girl Bay.” He “invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.” His dedication to a shallow adolescent dream arrested his development. Gatsby is a self-made man in more than the practical sense of Franklin, and in more than the modern Existentialist sense. “He sprang from his Platonic conception of himself.” The word “Platonic” verifies the idealism of Gatsby that he believes in a spiritual dimension but he is also limited in growth by “overwhelming self-absorption.” He is Modernist in his idealism, Postmodernist in his egocentricity. “He was a son of God” that is to say, a son of himself a mock Christ. “His Father’s business” is his criminal activity in the service of his romantic dream. He knows no other God.

Ironically when a Buchanan just happens to drop by Gatsby’s mansion, it is Tom, in a party of three on horseback. Tom takes a dislike to Gatsby when he learns that he knows Daisy and applies a double standard: “By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas [Medieval actually], but women run around too many these days to suit me.” Later when he brings Daisy to one of Gatsby’s parties, she jokes with Nick that all he has to do if he wants to kiss her is mention her name or “present a green card.” Like a traditional dance card at a ball, except that as a modern woman Daisy is willing to skip the dance and go straight to the kiss or more. Her acceptance of a green card from anyone who asks contrasts with the faithfulness of Gatsby to the green light at the end of her dock. Hollywood has been a major influence in the loosening of morals as suggested by the presence at the party of producers, a movie actress and her director. Tom wants to eat with someone else and Daisy, with genial cynicism, offers him her gold pencil “to take down any addresses.” Her heart is inclining to Gatsby: “After all, in the very casualness of Gatsby’s party there were romantic possibilities totally absent from her world.”

After the Buchanan has gone home, Nick sees that Gatsby wants “nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: ‘I never loved you’.” Nick says reasonably, “You can’t repeat the past,” but Gatsby cries “incredulously. ‘Why of course you can!’” He wants Daisy to divorce Tom, go back to her “white girlhood” in Louisville and marry him “just as if it were five years ago.” As if Tom had never existed. He wants to “Put her in reverse,” like the drunk with the wheel off his car. Nick realizes that Gatsby “wanted to recover something, some idea of him perhaps that had gone into loving Daisy.” He tells Nick about the night in Louisville five years before; about a romantic stroll he took with her where “the sidewalk was white with moonlight.” Her “white face came up to his own” and when he kissed her Daisy “blossomed for him like a flower and the incarnation was complete.”

3.8 Chapter Seven:

3.8.1 Daisy Asks Gatsby If He Wants to Go into the City

"On the hottest day of the summer, Nick drives to East Egg for lunch at the house of Tom and Daisy. He Finds Gatsby and Jordan Baker there as well. When the nurse brings in Daisy’s baby girl, Gatsby is stunned and can hardly believe that the child is real. For her part, Daisy seems almost uninterested in her child. During the awkward afternoon, Gatsby and Daisy cannot hide their love for one another. Complaining of her boredom, Daisy asks Gatsby if he wants to go into the city. Gatsby stares at her passionately, and Tom becomes certain of their feelings for each other."

On a broiling hot day Nick takes the train past hot factory whistles, sweating among hot commuters says the conductor. “Is it hot enough for you? Is it hot? Is it?” out to the cool mansion of the Buchanan on Long Island. Nick enters the hall of the mansion in a faint wind. “The room, shadowed well with awnings, was dark and cool. Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans.” Cool,

sheltered, and too comfortable to move, the women seem frozen in place, whereas Tom Buchanan is on the move showing off his place to Gatsby.

Gatsby looks glamorous to Daisy, like a man in an advertisement. Tom is “astounded” by the way she looks at Gatsby. He tries to break the spell by demanding that they all go into the City, losing his cool. “His temper cracked a little” and his hand is “trembling with his effort at self-control.” In one of the most celebrated lines in the novel, Gatsby says of Daisy, “Her voice is full of money.” That is her charm. Nick too hears “the jingle of it” and sees her now as an American princess of wealth living a fairy tale.

At his car outside, trying to remain cool, Gatsby feels “the hot, green leather of the seat.” Trying to take control of the situation, Tom insists on driving Gatsby’s car, whereupon Daisy chooses to ride with Gatsby in Tom’s coupe. On the way to the City, they stop for gas at Wilson’s garage under the faded eyes of Dr. T. J. Mecklenburg, the mock secular deity blind to evil. Wilson suspects his wife Myrtle of having an affair with someone he has not yet identified and he appeals to Tom because he needs money “pretty bad” to take her away out West. His dream is buying Tom’s coupe for resale. Bending over the gas tank, “In the sunlight his face was green.” Myrtle peers out a window and “her eyes, wide with jealous terror, were fixed not on Tom, but on Jordan Baker, whom she took to be his wife.” The ironies multiply as almost every character gets a wrong impression and acts upon it, emphasizing the Naturalist theme of chance. All the misperceptions and accidents in the novel prepare for the coincidences in which a man fearing his wife has a lover without knowing who begs the lover to help him make enough money to take her away from him, a wife kills the mistress of her husband without knowing it or meaning to, and the mistress is killed by reaching out to the wife she thinks is the husband.

In a suite at the Plaza Hotel, they drink mint juleps and Tom confronts Gatsby like a southern overseer: "I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife." As if it would be acceptable if Gatsby were a somebody from Somewhere. Nick says, "Angry as I was, as we all were, I was tempted to laugh whenever he opened his mouth. The transition from libertine to prig was so complete." Tom the cheater is suddenly a defender of traditional values: "'Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next thing they'll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white.' Flushed with his impassioned gibberish, he saw himself standing alone on the last barrier of civilization." Fitzgerald responds to Tom's racism with a quip from Jordan that is no compliment to their race: "We're all whites here." Gatsby faces Tom with his great truth: "Your wife doesn't love you She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake, but in her heart she never loved anyone except me!" Daisy, however, cannot confirm his illusion: "'Oh, you want too much!' she cried to Gatsby. 'I love you now isn't that enough? I did love him once but I loved you too'." Tom then exposes Gatsby as a bootlegger, a gangster and a partner of Wolfsheim. Gatsby denies everything but Daisy is terrified and withdraws into herself. Suddenly, after all his effort, his dream is dead. Nick likewise must face the fact that Gatsby is truly a crook like Wolfsheim. Tom is so convinced of his triumph over his adversary that, to rub their faces in it, he insists "with magnanimous scorn" that Daisy and Gatsby drive home together in Gatsby's yellow car: "Go on. He won't annoy you." Daisy is distraught yet wants to steady herself by driving. In the valley of ashes, a distraught Myrtle trying to escape her husband and wave down the big yellow car she had seen was being driven by Tom when he stopped for gas runs out into the road and gets hit by Daisy, who keeps on going.

The garage is “lit only by a yellow light.” The witness Michaelis tells the police he is unsure but he thinks the “death car” might have been light green. Myrtle ran from the yellow light into the road like she had a green light. Then a “well-dressed Negro stepped near. ‘It was a yellow car,’ he said.” Tom assures Wilson the yellow car is not his. He assumes that Gatsby was driving it, but does not yet reveal that to Wilson. Later, when leaving the Buchanan’ mansion, Nick encounters Gatsby still playing the romantic hero, watching over Daisy from the shadows. Gatsby thinks his big yellow car was not observed at the accident and intends to claim that he was driving. Nick says, “I disliked him so much by this time I didn’t find it necessary to tell him he was wrong.” Gatsby confirms that Myrtle “wanted to speak to us, thought we were somebody she knew

There is a pink glow from Daisy’s room upstairs in the mansion and Gatsby is wearing a pink suit in the moonlight. Nick leaves him there maintaining his “sacred” vigil “watching over nothing.” Nick knows it is nothing because he has peeped in a window and seen that Daisy is not up in her pink room but down in the kitchen with Tom and a plate of cold chicken. Implicitly the two of them are back together again and cooking up a coldhearted scheme to escape accountability. Daisy could have turned away from Myrtle toward an oncoming car but “lost her nerve” she chickened out. She has confessed to Tom “and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together.”

3.9 Chapter Eight:

3.9.1 Willson Kills Gatsby and Commit Suicide

"After the day’s traumatic events, Nick passes a sleepless night. Before dawn, he rises restlessly and goes to visit Gatsby at his mansion. Gatsby tells him that he waited at Daisy’s until four o’clock in the morning and that nothing happened Tom did not try to hurt her and Daisy did not come outside. Nick suggests that Gatsby Forget about Daisy and leave Long Island, but Gatsby refuses to consider leaving

Daisy behind. Gatsby, melancholy, Tells Nick about courting Daisy in Louisville in 1917. "

Nick has a tactile experience of Gatsby's mansion when the two feel their way through the dark already dusty rooms searching for cigarettes and find only two gone stale. The "long secret extravaganza was played out." The vacancy of his enormous place makes his parties seem already remote in the past, yet Gatsby still "was clutching at some lost hope."

Gatsby reveals more about his courtship of Daisy, that he was amazed by her home in Louisville, that he had imagined her bedroom as "more beautiful and cool than other bedrooms," that her popularity, "that many men had already loved Daisy it increased her value in his eyes." He approached Daisy as he would later approach the world: "He took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously eventually he took Daisy one still night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand." He lied to her about himself. Then "he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail." Daisy caught a cold," hinting at a cold heart, while she remained "safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor."

Unable still to accept defeat, sounding like a lovesick teenager, a pathetic Gatsby tries to rationalize that Daisy "'might have loved him just for a minute, when they were first married and loved me more even then do you see?' 'In any case,' he said, 'it was just personal'." What is love of another person if not personal? This remark is Romanticism dissociated from Reality. Gatsby imagines that her love for him, supposedly like his for her, had gone beyond this world "beyond everything" it was transcendent. By investing such love in a person, especially a Daisy, he was bound to lose it eventually. In Jungian terms, Jay Gatsby fell in love with a projection of his anima his ideal love. In truth the shallow Daisy is too narcissistic ever to have felt much love for anyone, not even her daughter.

3.10 Chapter Nine:

3.10.1 Gatsby's Funeral

"Writing two years after Gatsby's death, Nick describes the events that surrounded the funeral. Swarms reporters, journalists, and gossipmongers descend on the mansion in the aftermath of the murder. Wild, untrue stories, more exaggerated than the rumors about Gatsby when he was throwing his parties, circulate about the nature of Gatsby's relationship to Myrtle and Wilson. Feeling that Gatsby would not want to go through a funeral alone, Nick tries to hold a large funeral for him, but all of Gatsby's former friends and acquaintances have either disappeared Tom and Daisy, for instance, move away with no forwarding address or refuse to come, like Meyer Wolfsheimer and Klipspringer. The latter claims that he has a social engagement in Westport and asks Nick to send along his tennis shoes. Outraged, Nick hangs up on him.

After the death of Myrtle, the neighbor and witness Michaels stay up until dawn with her distraught husband, George Wilson. Michaels tells Wilson, "You ought to go to church, George, for times like this." Wilson mistakenly thinks his wife was having an affair with the driver of the yellow car that killed her: "She ran out to speak to him and he wouldn't stop." Michaels "believed that Mrs. Wilson had been running away from her husband, rather than trying to stop any particular car." Wilson says he does not belong to any church but he blurts out to Michaels, "I told her she might fool me but she couldn't fool God. I took her to the window... Standing behind him, Michaels saw with a shock that he was looking at the eyes of Doctor T. J. Mecklenburg... 'God sees everything,' repeated Wilson. 'That's an advertisement,' Michaels assured him." The strongest implication here is that Wilson's belief that "God sees everything" is a false dogma, that if a deity exists at all, He is as blind as Dr. Mecklenburg. Fitzgerald's plot confirms this belief. Wilson is not a religious man. He invokes God only in desperation. His outburst is

comparable to swearing. If he truly believed what he declares that “God sees everything” he would not commit murder. A victim himself, he lives in the secular wasteland covered with ash. He is in effect a blind disciple and agent of Mecklenburg, embodying the wasteland the death of religious faith, morality, hope, and truth in the modern world. That is the allegorical meaning of his killing Gatsby.

Michaels is only partly reliable as a witness, having told police that the yellow car was “light green” and lacking knowledge of why Myrtle ran into the road. On the other hand he is implicitly right that going to church might have helped Wilson. He calls attention to the fact that Wilson has replaced God with Mecklenburg without realizing it. As a consequence, also without realizing it, in his blindness Wilson will take revenge on an innocent man.

Gatsby is still hoping for a phone call from Daisy, though Nick thinks he “didn’t believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared.” The style becomes Expressionistic as Nick imagines Gatsby’s depression and how it must have changed his perceptions: “He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass.” The secular world is “material without being real” because reality transcends the material in the human spirit in love and hope and fundamental decency for example. The idealist never sees the end coming, in the form of “that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees.” For all he got, a gat got Gatsby. In a sense he was dead already and killed himself and might have literally as Wilson does. His blood forms a “thin red circle in the water.”

Nick is decent enough to look after the body of Gatsby, and even appeals to people to attend his funeral: “I was responsible, because no one else was interested interested, I mean, with that intense personal interest to which everyone has some

vague right at the end.” His personal interest contrasts with the impersonal behavior of the guests at Gatsby’s parties and with Gatsby’s impersonal dream. The call from Chicago might be Daisy but turns out to be a gangster, equating the two morally. Then Gatsby’s father arrives and “his grief began to be mixed with an awed pride.” He does not really care how his son made his money, implicitly in contrast to Nick’s father.

Nick tries so hard to get people to come to the funeral that his generosity makes it sad when “Nobody came.” If Mecklenburg is a mock God then Gatsby, though self-sacrificial, is a mock Christ with no disciples who cannot even save one Daisy. Only the owl-eyed man found looking at books in the library is decent enough to come. Owl Eyes was modeled on the writer Ring Lardner, who was also the model for Abe North in *Tender Is the Night*. The connotations of owl, glasses, and books leads to an expectation that he will be articulate, perhaps even profound, making his blunt assertion of how we should feel about Gatsby ironic: “‘The poor son-of-a-bitch,’ he said.” Born to the bitch goddess Success, the rich man died poor in spirit. Owl Eyes makes a moral judgment against Gatsby in appropriately vulgar language that is also respectful and warmly sympathetic. That is how Nick feels too.

As a hopeful young student Nick used to return home with friends, going beyond Chicago in “yellow” train cars with “green tickets clasped tight in our gloved hands.” The geographical symbolism of West and East is enlarged to include all western civilization: “I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadoptable to Eastern life.” The ironic tone is also modest, since Nick is the only one to reject the East. He sees it as a “night scene by El Greco,” the Expressionist religious painter. The cold moon over the waste land of ashes is “lusterless.” Romance died with

Gatsby. A drunken woman in a white dress, her limp hand sparkling “cold with jewels,” is carried on a stretcher into the wrong house and “no one cares.”

In his break-up scene with Jordan, Nick is honest and straightforward, whereas she lies by claiming to be engaged to another man, saying, “Well, I met another bad driver, didn’t I? I mean it was rather careless of me to make such a wrong guess. I thought you were a rather honest, straightforward person.” He does not deny it: “‘I’m thirty,’ I said. ‘I’m five years too old to lie to myself and call it honor’.” This differentiates him from the immature Gatsby. Nick was careless enough to get involved with Jordan in the first place, but he has come to “moral attention.” He is going back West, rejecting the corruption in civilization like Huckleberry Finn. In the *Bible* the Hebrew people cross over Jordan River from the wilderness into the Promised Land. That event became symbolic of dying and crossing over into Heaven, as in gospel hymns: “I looked over Jordan and what did I see, coming for to carry me home.” *The Great Gatsby* dramatizes the successful individuation of Nick as well as the tragedy of Gatsby, concluding with his own spiritual death and rebirth. Crossing beyond Jordan, he implicitly attains a maturity of vision expressed in the last pages of the novel, in which he realizes that life is essentially tragic in that our idealism will never prevail “against the current” of all that is personified in Jordan.

One afternoon Nick encounters Tom Buchanan in New York looking into the windows of a jewelry store. He objects to shaking hands with Tom. Then he asks him what he said to Wilson that day he shot Gatsby. “‘I told him the truth,’ he said.” Tom has been so consistently wrong, we expect him to be wrong again. Wilson came to his front door and “I sent down word that we weren’t in.” Tom lied as usual. Wilson then “tried to force his way upstairs” with a revolver. Wilson is depicted as weak, whereas Tom is large and athletic, with “a body capable of enormous leverage.” Nothing “could hide the enormous power of that body.” Since

he prevented Wilson from forcing his way upstairs, Tom must have overpowered him, yet he let him go. “He was crazy enough to kill me if I hadn’t told him who owned the car.” For once Tom tells the truth, when he should have told a lie to save Gatsby. Instead he took advantage of the opportunity to take revenge and get rid of Gatsby. “What if I did tell him? That fellow had it coming to him.” Tom is just as guilty of murder as Wolfsheim sending out a hit man.

Tom’s final statements are a climax to the pattern of ironies in the book: “He threw dust into your eyes just like he did into Daisy’s.” At the outset of the novel Nick states that the “foul dust” of the spiritual waste land “is what preyed on Gatsby.” Tom is the one who spreads that foul dust around wherever he goes. Now he is throwing the dust into other people’s eyes by spreading the lie that Gatsby “ran over Myrtle like you’d run over a dog and never stopped his car.” Tom is the one who broke her nose and treated her like a dog. Tom’s intensity and the pattern of irony indicate that he does not know that Daisy was the one driving the car. She lied to him. She threw foul dust into *his* eyes. Daisy shifted the blame to Gatsby. In effect, she condemned her lover to death. She crucified him.

Now instead of being seen as a self-sacrificing romantic hero, Gatsby is being portrayed as nothing but a lying son-of-a-bitch. In case the reader has not followed the implications and the irony of Tom’s claim to know the truth, Nick is straightforward: “There was nothing I could say, except the one unutterable fact that it wasn’t true.” The fact is “unutterable” because if Nick told him the truth, Tom would use it as leverage against Daisy for the rest of her life. Nick shows his fundamental decency and his respect for Gatsby by protecting Daisy, as Gatsby wanted to do, even though she does not deserve it.

The careless driving motif culminates in the “vast carelessness” of Tom and Daisy the irresponsible rich. “I felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child. Then he went into the jewelry store to buy a pearl necklace—or perhaps only a pair of cuff

buttons.” The reference to a pearl necklace recalls that Tom bought Daisy a pearl necklace before their marriage and implies that he is continuing to buy her off, probably because he is continuing to have affairs. The reference to cuff buttons equates the inhumanity of Tom with that of Wolfsheim, who wears cuff buttons made of human molars.

On his last visit to the deserted mansion of Gatsby, aptly by moonlight, Nick erases an obscenity scrawled on the white steps. In telling the true story, he does the same for Gatsby. The moon, romantic imagination, melts away the material world and the spirit revives, affirming the reality of the ideal. “And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors’ eyes a fresh, green breast of a new world.” The unspoiled land that once “flowered” is contrasted to Daisy. Reviving the original vision revives hope and America is reborn as “the last and greatest of all human dreams.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION, FINDING, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTION

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CONCLUSION, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY

4.1 Conclusion

Fitzgerald is one of the late 19th century modernist writer, tried to photo the divers manner, class and the way of life in America and modernism appeared on his writing he created picture by combing a wide variety of details .he directed the modernist renaissance by his new technique and he considered as a romantic writer.

Modernism affected on Fitzgerald on writing .he wrote about the rich his perception of the influence of money on character was complex. Also the youth, bodily attractiveness, wealth and positional romantic willingness dominated his novel the Great Gatsby. He is undoubtedly a master of modernism is often identified him with great writing.

4.2 Findings

Based on the analysis of the novel the Great Gatsby the following finding can be stated.

- 1- The Great Gatsby was written by Fitzgerald during 19th century with main character Jay Gatsby running after his dream.
- 2- Modernism affected on Fitzgerald writing the novel the Great Gatsby.
- 3-The novel pictured the life during the 19th century.
- 4-US international is represented through setting.
- 5-The Eggs are suburban communities comfort and wealth.
- 6-The lack of social heritage drove characters to reinvent their identities and pasts.

4.3 Recommendations

The researcher recommends that:

1-To the students of English literature who enjoy literature focus on literature not only from literary side but from different approaches.

2-the researcher recommends this research can enable readers appreciate modernism in literary work.

3-For teachers, the researcher recommends that the novel "Great Gatsby" should be adopted as material in literary learning.

4.4 Suggestion for further study

The researcher suggests the following topics:

1- Impact of Modernism in writings of Hemingway.

2- American dream.

3- Fitzgerald's unique style in writing.

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