984r

A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF FORM IN *THE GREAT GATSBY*

A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF FORM

IN

THE GREAT GATSBY

by

DONNA LYNN MODER, B.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts

McMaster University

August 1977

MASTER OF ARTS (1977)
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: A Psychoanalytic Study of Form in The Great Gatsby

AUTHOR: Donna Lynn Moder, B.A. (McMaster)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Norman Rosenblood

NUMBER OF PAGES: v, 102

ABSTRACT

This thesis proposes that a dichotomy exists in the form of *The Great Gatsby* and engages in a psychoanalytic approach to the novel as a parody of interwoven fairy tale and detective story forms to substantiate this proposal. With the application of Freudian theory to support the interpretations contained in this thesis, the form of *The Great Gatsby* emerges as both an unconscious means of wish-fulfillment on the part of the narrator-protagonist, Nick, who unwittingly divulges personal neuroses in reconstructing the titular tale, and as a defence against the anxieties stemming from the gratification of Nick's repressed desires.

In its account of the ironies inherent in the identity, aspirations, and society of the fairy tale hero, in its exposure of the complexities of "detective" Nick's mysterious involvement with and simultaneous detachment from the tale he tells, in its recurrent focus on the Gatsby-Nick symbiosis, and in its consideration of derivative aspects of dichotomy in character and setting to aid in the illumination of ideas set forth, this thesis maintains that form is a topic of investigation essential to an understanding of the psychological dimension that underlies and complements the engrossing verbal intricacies and characterizations in *The Great Gatsby*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Norman Rosenblood, whose sharp criticism and kind encouragement were instrumental in the preparation of this thesis.

I should also like to thank Dr. Carl Ballstadt and Dr. Cyril Levitt for reading the thesis and offering helpful suggestions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I :	Introduction	1
CHAPTER II :	Form	9
CHAPTER III :	The Fairy Tale	29
CHAPTER IV :	The Detective Story	62
CHAPTER V :	Summary and Synthesis	89
	Bibliography	99

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For its lyrical beauty, thematic appeal, and structural intricacy, Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, the best-known and most frequently read of his novels, deserves its position among the fictional masterpieces of twentieth century American literature. According to John Carroll, it is "a novel about the romantic imaginations of the young and about the disillusionment that comes with maturity"[1]; a psychoanalytic interpretation of the novel in terms of its dichotomous form as a modern fairy tale romance revolving around Jay Gatsby, and as a modified detective story probing narrator Nick Carraway's growth from naïveté to cynicism, will demonstrate just how astute Carroll's statement is. The Great Gatsby is clearly a frame story, or the intertwined stories of two men, Gatsby and Nick; however, the fact that the major portion of criticism focuses on the legend of the self-made titular hero results in what I hope to prove is an unfair and costly neglect of Nick's role above and beyond the call of his narratorial duty. Although the title of the novel

---

[1] John Carroll, "F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby", in John Orrell, ed., Studies of Major Works in English (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 281.

does indeed bear Gatsby's name, my analysis intends to argue that the story of Gatsby is, in actuality, the story of Nick. A true conservative and moral hypocrite, Nick chooses to hide, in the account of his own sexual phantasies, behind the mask of a substitute protagonist, Gatsby, rather than to engage in autobiographical self-exploitation. Camouflaged by the title of the story he narrates, Nick's exploration of the mystery that he externalizes in Gatsby becomes a means of safely re-creating, while simultaneously distancing himself from the threatening immediacy of, his own unconscious oedipal wishes. An extensive study of the novel's form has served as the basis for these judgments and is, I feel, essential to an understanding of *The Great Gatsby*.

The second chapter of my thesis is subdivided into two sections: the first involves a comparative study of traditional and psychoanalytic concepts of form, and will aid in the justification of my decision to take a psychoanalytic approach to the split form of *The Great Gatsby*; the second section centres around a discussion of the characteristic construction and aesthetic purpose of the fairy tale and detective story as literary forms. Both forms portray in their separate ways the metaphorical fall from innocence to experience, an externalization in the protagonist of the reader's guilt, punishment, and reward, and, as focal point, the oedipal crises their respective protagonists undergo. It must be understood at the outset that the psychoanalytic

approach to literature is designed to complement, not exclude, the traditional approach; however, while the traditional approach will stop at a determination of only the surface, or "apparent" form of a literary work through the analysis of characters, plot, setting, diction, imagery, symbolism, and their contributions to theme, the psychoanalytic approach will probe beneath the surface for a derivative, unapparent, "unconscious" form, shaped by the gratification therein of repressed wishes and phantasies, as well as by the defence mechanisms utilized to dispel the anxieties that would normally accompany the manifestation of these latent desires. The obvious benefit of the psychoanalytic approach, then, rests in the capacity it affords the critic to explore and discover a literary work in terms of an additional psychological dimension to its form.

In the years spanning the time of publication of Fitzgerald's early novels until just a few years ago, this spokesman for the glamorous Jazz Age era that fed the materialistic phantasies of a broad public had been subordinated as a prose artist to his contemporaries, Hemingway and Faulkner. Fitzgerald's comparatively limited output, coupled with the absence of an innovative technique (Hemingway was notorious for his mastery of understatement and sparse diction, while Faulkner's trademark was the stream-of-consciousness technique) were perhaps responsible for making Fitzgerald a less successful literary figure. His philosophies about the

rich and neurotic, or the "beautiful" and "damned", are too often buried in the verbal density of his elaborate prose, obliging the critical reader to plough through abstractions to reach the core of what is being communicated. Moreover, his style often exhibits an antithetical extreme as multiple levels of meaning behind thematic statements such as "'Her voice is full of money.'"[2] undergo condensation into a deceptively simple prose exterior. In any case, Fitzgerald is currently in vogue and interest in his artistry has been revived amid the nostalgic trend of this decade. The Great Gatsby, in particular, provides not only a consolatory entertainment for readers who, caught up in rich characters, rich scenery, and rich diction, passively seek to escape reality, but an engaging storyline for scholarly critics who can actively participate in the exposition of the multiple ironies in the literary experience portrayed. Because the novel germinates from an embryonic dream based upon the illusions of romantic youth, it is highly suitable as the object of psychoanalytic criticism.

The various dichotomies in setting, mood, and character in The Great Gatsby are naturally conducive to a topic that will explore conflict of some sort and the synthesis of

---

[2] F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925), p. 120. All subsequent references are to this edition.

opposing forces. My predilection for an examination of conflict within the virtually all-encompassing form, in its demand for a consideration of image patterns, contributions made by symbols, and psychological motivation behind the characters, is rooted in a personal belief that by analyzing form, the critic not only determines what constitutes the substance of the work, but why the work exists as it does. Perhaps each phrase has something to say about its narrator, for his unconscious wishes, motives, and achievements testify to the intimacy of the fictional process. The analysis of form concerns itself not only with the beauty of the finished product, but with the art of writing itself. On a surface iceberg level, the reader is entertained by a story; beneath the surface he is challenged by an art form. The dichotomous fairy tale-detective story form of The Great Gatsby embodies this distinction. The perennial appeal of the fairy tale may be attributed to its concern with the process of growth from childhood to adulthood, a tender subject with which every reader can identify. The seductive mystery of the unknown and the rhetorical devices of suspense and surprise in the detective story, however, compel the reader-participant to exercise his wits in order that he may, by witnessing the resolution of disorder in the narrative, satisfy the curiosity that has been aroused in him. Fitzgerald himself seemed to be cognizant of the detective story aura about his masterwork, for in a letter to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, he was

determined that Perkins should not reveal the details of the storyline on the inside flap of the novel's cover: "Be sure not to give away any of my plot in the blurb. Don't give away that Gatsby dies or is a parvenu or crook or anything. It's a part of the suspense of the book that all these things are in doubt until the end."[3]

In the third chapter of my thesis, I offer an interpretation of The Great Gatsby as a parody of the traditional fairy tale form for its failure to provide any lasting consolation in a world that has redefined happiness and the successful growth to maturity in materialistic terms rather than in terms of meaningful adult relationships. Examined are: Gatsby's wish for material potency and the narcissism he exhibits in his pretensions to self-creation; the irony of his masochistic pursuit of and ultimate victimization by an unattainable, illusory dream that seduces, nourishes, then destroys him; the oedipal entanglements that underlie character dichotomies and relationships; and Gatsby's "death-journey" to emotional maturity as he paradoxically awakens to a nightmare in resisting awareness of the fall from innocence to experience and in becoming infected by the materialistic pollution of his dream. The moral is a sombre one: the attempt to change reality is justly portrayed in the novel

---

[3] Andrew Turnbull, ed., The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 176.

as being ultimately futile, promising due defeat to neurotic men like Gatsby. Moreover, the fairy tale concludes with the disillusioned Nick's submissive retreat to the "grace" of financial security.

The fourth chapter of my thesis focuses on Nick, who in my opinion is the real protagonist of The Great Gatsby, as both the source of mystery and the instrument of its externalized detection in Gatsby. Examined in this chapter are: Nick's own wish for self-sufficiency; his wish to be delivered from the displaced womb of a sheltered lifestyle and reborn in Gatsby's image; the projection onto Gatsby of Nick's oedipal phantasy and his growth to disillusionment with the adult world; the conflict between Nick's search for voyeuristic gratification of sexual wishes and the punishment inflicted by his overbearing conscience; the parallels The Great Gatsby exhibits to the Grail quest in its depiction of the probe for self-knowledge; and finally the irony manifest in the apparent need for moral failure to precede material success and compatibility with the modern world, for the fall from innocence to experience is synthesized in disillusionment and guilt.

The chapter that concludes my study comprises a brief summary of how the fairy tale and detective story forms complement one another in The Great Gatsby. An attempt is made to determine wherein their common aspects

lie to ensure the emergence of the novel, subsequent to separate investigations of its divided form, as a unified structural whole.

CHAPTER II

FORM

(i)

In "The Novel as a Genre", Maurice Z. Shroder describes the fictional process as "one of 'demythification', the formal or generic equivalent to the experiential disillusionment of the novel's protagonist."[1] The novel, whether depicting physical (spatial) or metaphorical (temporal) progression, "records the passage from a state of innocence to a state of experience"[2]; its very existence as an expression of literary realism functions toward the exposure of romantic illusion. In Shroder's words, "the novel is an 'anti-romance'"[3], intensely ironic and often didactic. In his early review of "The Great Gatsby: An Admirable Novel", William Rose Benét applauds the achievement of Fitzgerald's "anti-romance":

---

1 Maurice Z. Shroder, "The Novel as a Genre", in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 46.

2 Ibid., p. 44.

3 Ibid., p. 47.

> The Great Gatsby reveals thoroughly matured craftsmanship. It has structure. It has high occasions of felicitous, almost magic phrase. And most of all, it is out of the mirage. For the first time Fitzgerald surveys the Babylonian captivity of this era unblinded by the bright lights. He gives you the bright lights in full measure, the affluence, the waste, but also the nakedness of the scaffolding that scrawls skeletons upon the sky when the gold and blue and red and green have faded, the ugly passion, the spiritual meagreness, the empty shell of luxury, the old irony of 'fair-weather friends'.[4]

Similarly, William Troy notes that the antagonism that exists between romance and realism in The Great Gatsby is deliberately left unresolved:

> . . . in Gatsby is achieved a dissociation, by which Fitzgerald was able to isolate one part of himself, the spectatorial or aesthetic, and also the more intelligent and responsible, in the person of the ordinary but quite sensible narrator, from another part of himself, the dream-ridden romantic adolescent from St. Paul and Princeton, in the person of the legendary Jay Gatsby. It is this which makes the latter one of the few truly mythological creations in our recent literature - for what is mythology but this same process of projected wish-fulfillment carried out on a larger scale and by the whole consciousness of a race?[5]

---

[4] William Rose Benét, "The Great Gatsby: An Admirable Novel" (1925), in Matthew J. Bruccoli and Jackson R. Bryer, eds., F. Scott Fitzgerald: In His Own Time. A Miscellany (Toronto: Popular Library Edition, 1971), pp. 353-4.

[5] William Troy, "Scott Fitzgerald - the Authority of Failure", in Alfred Kazin, ed., F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work (New York: Collier Books, 1967), pp. 189-90.

A division occurs in the novel's apparent form, the quest for identity, as Fitzgerald presents the dreamy essence of fairy tale romance superimposed against the psychological mechanics of the underlying detective story. In other words, it would appear that the mythic illusion of the fairy tale is created to undergo a simultaneous penetration and destruction at the hand of its probing creator. For this purpose, Fitzgerald has elected to split his persona; with Gatsby as romantic protagonist and Nick Carraway as detective, the result is a tonal dichotomy of sentimentality and cynical disillusionment that pervades the novel.

Ralph Freedman, in his "Nature and Forms of the Lyrical Novel", focuses on the role of objectivity as the distinguishing concept of poetic and dramatic narration.[6] The Great Gatsby is a lyrical novel in which progression occurs through images that set and modify the "liquid" landscape, while perception by the conscious mind is distorted through the subjectivity of the author's surrealistic depiction of forms, silhouettes, and colours. In counterbalance to this subjectivity, however, Fitzgerald maintains a degree of detachment from his personae; while Gatsby exists as the object of Nick's "dramatic narration", Nick is most certainly the object of Fitzgerald's artistic scrutiny. From the autho-

---

[6] Ralph Freedman, "Nature and Forms of the Lyrical Novel", in Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism, p. 59.

rial point of view masked in Gatsby, the world exists as a projection of poetic visions centred about the narcissistic wish for an eternal present that will freeze youth and love: Nick reveals that "Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves" (GG, 150), and suggests that his preoccupation with repeating the past is because "he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy" (GG, 111). Gatsby's happy fusion with such a dreamlike environment, though, presupposes a romantic naïveté; the illusions he fails to overcome are exposed by the focusing of his alter-ego, Nick, on what the latter perceives as a drama tinged with the criminality of adultery, hit-and-run, murder, and suicide. In any case, literary experience is endowed with a sense of immediacy as the conscious mental processes of the twin protagonists are dramatized for the reader. Norman Friedman praises the tale that tells itself through its characters, who create thereby an illusion of reality.[7] Prior to attempting an analysis of the "tale" at hand in terms of its dichotomous form, a brief comparative examination of traditional and psychoanalytic concepts of form is required.

In "Technique as Discovery", Mark Schorer asserts the indivisibility of literary form and content in modern

---

[7] Norman Friedman, "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept", in Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism, p. 147.

art and proclaims technique both the source and the ultimate means of defining subject matter:

> When we speak of technique, then, we speak of nearly everything. For technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it; technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and, finally, of evaluating it.[8]

He goes on to define technique as "any selection, structure, or distortion, any form or rhythm imposed upon the world of action; by means of which - it should be added - our apprehension of the world of action is enriched or renewed. In this sense, everything is technique which is not the lump of experience itself."[9] Breaking new ground for an upcoming generation of formalist critics, Schorer attributes to modern technique the power to penetrate, shape - to _recreate_ human experience in an elevation of form:

> The technique of modern fiction . . . achieves as its subject matter not some singleness, some topic or thesis, but the whole of the modern consciousness. It discovers the complexity of the modern spirit, the difficulty of personal morality, and the fact of evil - all the untractable elements under the surface which a technique of the surface alone can not approach.[10]

---

[8] Mark Schorer, "Technique as Discovery", in Davis, ed., _The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism_, p. 75.

[9] _Ibid_., p. 77.

[10] _Ibid_., p. 91.

William Handy, who subscribes to Schorer's perception of form as the primary embodiment of meaning[11], stresses the symbolic structure and imagistic texture of particular narratives in which "a technique of the surface alone" is transcended in the interrelation of form and theme. Freedman's "lyrical novel", by comparison, "absorbs action altogether and refashions it as a pattern of imagery"[12], promoting a totality of experience. Even Philip Rahv, who de-emphasizes the significance of technique in the modern novel, nonetheless declares that symbols, being "organic" in character, are "a part of [the novel's] fictive reality"[13], and deserve to be considered in conjunction with the literary world they illuminate.

The subjective mesh of images and symbols to which the poetic structure of the modern novel is accredited is a product of phantasies and repressed wishes which seek gratification and which, although outside the limits of authorial consciousness, nonetheless determine the form the work will assume. As Freud notes in "The Relation of the Poet to

---

11 William Handy, "Toward a Formalist Criticism of Fiction", in Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism, pp. 94-102.

12 Freedman, p. 60.

13 Philip Rahv, "Fiction and the Criticism of Fiction", in Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism, p. 113.

Day-Dreaming", "the writer softens the egotistical character of the day-dream by changes and disguises, and he bribes us by the offer of a purely formal, that is, aesthetic, pleasure in the presentation of his phantasies."[14] In later chapters devoted exclusively to The Great Gatsby, I shall explore the connection of the author's preoccupation with the water imagery of a displaced womb and of Gatsby's projected fusion with the "fresh, green breast of the new world" (GG, 182) with the oedipal phantasies that both shape and find gratification in the fairy tale-detective story forms of the novel. For the time being, Norman Holland provides a concise application of the Freudian concept of form to literature in The Dynamics of Literary Response:

> The psychoanalytic theory of literature holds that the writer expresses and disguises childhood fantasies. The reader unconsciously elaborates the fantasy content of the literary work with his own versions of these fantasies . . . And it is the management of these fantasies, both his own and the work's, that permits their partial gratification and gives literary pleasure.[15]

In other words, the psychoanalytic approach to form demands a study of disguised authorial phantasies which unconsciously

---

[14] Sigmund Freud, "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming" (1908), in Philip Rieff, ed., Character and Culture (New York: Collier Books, 1972), p. 43.

[15] Norman N. Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1975), p. 52.

appeal to the reader who can identify with them, exercise an aesthetic creativity in determining the nature of the repressed wishes they comprise, and experience a pleasurable release in the process. Complex symbolic structures are elevated to the status of meaning in both the traditional and psychoanalytic approaches to form; however, when creative analysis is intimidated by an idealization of the apparent form, which imposes acceptance of a predetermined surface interpretation of the work upon the reader, reader involvement turns to reader detachment. The reader must not be deprived of the opportunity to be in control, through his originality, and to offer, without reservation, a unique literary reading. The psychoanalytic study of a work is conducive to this element of scholarly creativity.

Holland's argument exposes the ambivalence of form. Although form is the medium of unconscious wish-gratification, it is also a psychic defence against the threats or anxieties such a fulfillment would pose: form is the embodiment of the unconscious phantasy content it presents, modifies, defends against, and ultimately regulates. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the tenets of psychoanalytic form may be inferred from Freud's extensive study of the dream processes whereby the unconscious wishes of the latent dream content are translated to their conscious, gratified state in the manifest dream content. The dream itself is represented in disguised form as a series of distorted images and symbols

made acceptable to the waking conscious. In short, Freud identifies the four factors of dreamwork as condensation, whereby one dream image may invite multiple interpretations; censorship, to defend against too accurate a wish-fulfillment, which would produce a nightmare; representation of wishes via symbolic displacements; and secondary revision, to ensure the ego a logical exterior to the dream.[16] Not even what appear to be anxiety-dreams are exempt from Freud's classification of the dream as a form of wish-fulfillment. The following dream, for example, occurred repeatedly to one of Freud's patients when the patient was only six years old:

> He went to the hairdresser's to have his hair cut. A big, severe-looking woman came up to him and cut his head off. He recognized the woman as his mother.[17]

Freud calls this a "dream of castration"[18], and significant to note is that it occurred during the oedipal phase of the boy's development, the product undoubtedly of a twofold source: the boy's guilt in directing a death-wish toward the father, which manifests itself as the boy competes with the father for the affections of the mother, and the boy's

---

[16] Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, ed. James Strachey (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976), p. 641.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 485.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 485.

fear of the menacing consequences of the father's anger. In this dream, however, displacements occur as the father is represented by the severe-looking mother, who cuts off the boy's head instead of his hair, both head and hair being symbolic representations of the penis, in a censored version of the act of castration. Finally, as a form of wish-fulfillment, the dream affords the dreamer an opportunity to temporarily relieve his oedipal guilt; he experiences a "substitute" punishment appropriate to the "crime" of incestuous phantasy in which he engages.

If a parallel may be drawn between the process of a dream and the form of a work of art as a similarly disguised wish-fulfillment of revived childhood phantasies, then it may be expected that literature has the same pleasure-inducing, "narcotic" effect on the artist (or on the sympathetic reader) as dreams have on the dreamer. But unconscious wishes may only seek the "compromise" that a gratification within the boundaries of form has to offer. "Unsatisfied wishes are the driving power behind phantasies", writes Freud; "every separate phantasy contains the fulfillment of a wish, and improves on unsatisfactory reality."[19] In *The Great Gatsby* we shall see how hostility is projected onto the landscape and thereby released, and how characters

---

[19] Freud, "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming", p. 37.

are often split into two separate persons in order that the author may avoid recognizing their singular ambivalence. All form is the pseudo-logical transformation of repressed desires achieved by the author's secondary revision of their more threatening aspects. Thus, by defending, via the gratification of unconscious wishes, against the anxieties an unsatisfactory reality may induce in man, literary form exists as a "compromise-formation" according to psychoanalytic theory. While the past may be preserved as good experiences are relived, and improved as bad experiences are censored, an unconscious security is derived from the reader's consequent capacity for consolation and self-defence.

(ii)

The sustained tension between romance and realism testifies to the problem of perception in *The Great Gatsby* and underlies the hypothesis that Fitzgerald has written two novels in one. The first *Gatsby* is a modern fairy tale, in which the protagonist Gatsby has risen from poverty and anonymity to a financial prominence and legendary status. Because this rise has been sponsored by criminal earnings, though, Gatsby's is a transmogrified "rags-to-riches" story, with a "golden girl"-princess, Daisy Buchanan, as the dubious object of relentless pursuit. The second *Gatsby* is a detective story which unfolds before the psychological probings

of a new central focus, Nick. Ironically enough, Nick exhibits a passivity atypical of detective work and characteristic of the non-participant, or voyeur; he pieces together with facility, however, the components of the Gatsby legend that are exposed to him in succession - the romantic illusions of this enigmatic "noble criminal", the taint of his wealth, and the very realistic aspect of his sordid involvement with the material world as accomplice in a proposed adultery, witness to a hit-and-run accident, and murder victim. William Troy supports the notion that The Great Gatsby comprises a double fictional thread:

> . . . insofar as the book is Gatsby's story it is a story of failure - the prolongation of the adolescent incapacity to distinguish between dream and reality, between the terms demanded of life and the terms offered. But insofar as it is the narrator's story it is a successful transcendence of a particularly bitter and harrowing set of experiences, localized in the sinister, distorted, El Greco-like Long Island atmosphere of the later twenties, into a world of restored sanity and calm, symbolized by the bracing winter nights of the Middle Western prairies.[20]

Whether Nick's story is, in fact, "a successful transcendence" of the Eastern misadventure in which he becomes involved, however, remains to be seen. Because it will be the intent of the ensuing chapters to offer interpretations of the novel's split form, the opportunity must be taken at this point to

---

[20] Troy, p. 190.

investigate the characteristic construction and function of both fairy tales and detective stories.

It has been written that "fairy tales depict in imaginary and symbolic form the essential steps in growing up and achieving an independent existence."[21] Speaking in symbols of unconscious motivation, they comprise the struggle between good and evil forces where, it must be noted, "evil is as omnipresent as virtue"[22], and characters are one-dimensional - either thoroughly idealized or wholly corrupt - in order that good and evil may exist in isolation. Because it is within the power of the fairy tale to entertain while portraying moral conflicts, oedipal struggles, anxieties in the search for independence, and the growth to emotional maturity, Bettelheim speaks of "a unique art form"[23] whereby the reader may be consoled that all of life's obstacles can be mastered and end optimistically in satisfying adult relationships:

> Fairy tales intimate that a rewarding, good life is within one's reach despite adversity - but only if one does not shy away from the hazardous struggles without which one can never achieve true identity.[24]

---

[21] Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 73.

[22] Ibid., p. 8.

[23] Ibid., p. 12.

[24] Ibid., p. 24.

The fairy tale is a censored form of wish-fulfillment, a means by which the reader's inner conflicts and unconscious desires are mirrored in other characters and events, resolved externally, and via this objectification at least superficially mastered. In this way, the fairy tale form illustrates the paradox of an "ideal" reality.

Bettelheim records a popular belief that "myths and fairy tales were derived from, or give symbolic expression to, initiation rites or other *rites de passage* - such as a metaphoric death of an old, inadequate self in order to be reborn on a higher plane of existence."[25] Jay Gatsby is such a mythic embodiment, personifying the antagonism of real and illusory worlds, of material and spiritual levels of existence. As Marius Bewley implies, the myth of Gatsby as a man torn between spirit and flesh in a progressively materialistic world may be extended to the dream for synthesis of past and present time that is manifest in the cultural unconscious of mass American society striving for a golden[26] future:

---

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

[26] A deliberate play on the word "golden", which is intended to convey a double meaning; i.e. "golden" used in the sense of the harmony of a golden age, and "golden" used in a financial sense.

Money is associated with excrement in psychoanalysis and becomes evident with the progression of my study as one of several anal images that form a part of the fictional thread (see below, p. 50); Daisy's voice is "full of money" and Daisy herself is referred to as the "golden girl".

> The 'mythic' character can never withdraw from that air which is his existence - that is to say, from that area of consciousness . . . which every individual shares with the members, both living and dead, of his group or race. Gatsby is a 'mythic' character in this sense - he has no private life, no meaning or significance that depends on the fulfillment of his merely private destiny, his happiness as an individual in a society of individuals.[27]

One is sceptical as to whether Gatsby's greatness should be interpreted in the idealistic terms of the romance in which he appears as an "incredible" protagonist who simultaneously attracts and repels reader identification in his superiority. Since Gatsby's romantic illusions about himself betray him in their ultimate failure to provide consolation as they lead him to his death, the "greatness" that evolves from his indefatiguable aspiration to unreachable heights would more logically appear as the ironic invitation to his tragic fall in the real world. Julius Heuscher, in his A Psychiatric Study of Myths and Fairy Tales, notes that "the reality value of the immediate experience is shunned on account of our natural scientific, analytical orientation which aims to objectivate everything including the human being, to reduce everything to measurable items interrelating in complicated causal chains. Thus materialism has split our world in two;

---

[27] Marius Bewley, "Scott Fitzgerald and the Collapse of the American Dream", in his The Eccentric Design (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), p. 276.

one world which is real because it is measurable, and one which is illusory because it is _only_ subjective."[28] The divided worlds Heuscher describes integrate in the figure of Gatsby; Gatsby has built an illusion around a single dream for success sustained by a very subjective personal faith, while the realization of that dream is measured in degrees by the accumulation of material possessions, money, estate, Rolls-Royce, hydroplane, and the bargained-for, but never purchased dream girl, to name a few. As Heuscher elaborates on the danger of identity loss that accompanies personal commitment to either material or spiritual extremes, he unintentionally reflects the situation of Fitzgerald's protagonist, who pledges himself to _both_ extremes and in the process confuses the values of each. The object of Gatsby's faith and worship is material success, a financial wealth and the youth it "imprisons and preserves" (_GG_, 150); money is Gatsby's shelter, his "religion", as he falls victim to precisely that materialistic allure Heuscher warns against:

> It is admittedly an oversimplification to reduce the basic challenge to our evolution to three stages: one, progressive feeling of loss of unity with our (spiritual) origin; two, gaining awareness of our identity in the course of our contact with the material world; and three, eventual synthesis on a higher plane . . . The process of extricating one's

---

[28] Julius E. Heuscher, _A Psychiatric Study of Myths and Fairy Tales_ (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1974), p. 15.

> self from a one-sidedly materialistic world in which only the measurable is acknowledged and in which determinism prevails, implies a gradual reorientation toward life which involves our entire subjectivity. This effort is constantly endangered in two ways. One may slide backward into exclusively materialistic and deterministic ways of thinking, or one may lose one's self in too lofty, abstract, subjective or mysterious thoughts which have no real impact on the conduct of our life and cannot be communicated adequately to our fellow human beings. The challenge is to face our lower material world without becoming imprisoned by it and without fleeing from it regressively into vague, lofty daydreams in which we lose our identity.[29]

Heuscher views the fairy tale as the reflection of three epochs of human evolution, which he summarizes as "a prematerialistic period" (a golden age of harmonious integration with the environment), a period in which man's chief interest lay in aspects of the material world, and "a (future) post-materialistic period": "The central theme [in the fairy tale] is the development of a spiritually self-aware individual during the course of the three mentioned epochs or phases."[30] In analogous fashion, the detective story re-enacts the Fall and portrays metaphorically, as W. H. Auden notes, "the dialectic of innocence and guilt"[31], occasioning the

---

[29] _Ibid_., p. 95.

[30] _Ibid_., pp. 195-7.

[31] W. H. Auden, "The Guilty Vicarage", in his _The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays_ (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962), p. 147.

detective's task to re-instate and restore man to the paradisal state of grace from which he has been outcast by the sinful crime. Although The Great Gatsby does not revolve around any singular crime, it may be seen in its entirety as criminal, for the protagonists, Nick and Gatsby, exploit themselves and other characters in order to reshape destiny in the imaginative realm to accommodate their conscious and unconscious wishes. These wishes are primarily oedipal[32] in origin, and are interpreted by the narrator, Nick, whose job it has been to recreate Gatsby's story. The eerie mode of Nick's progressive self-revelation, however, promptly leads the reader to suspect that Gatsby's story, his wishes, his triumphs, and his defeats, are Nick's own, or more precisely, have been projected by Nick onto Gatsby, the substitute protagonist in Nick's oedipal phantasy. Thus the detective story form of The Great Gatsby becomes a psychological means by which the narrator, Nick, can undergo catharsis by projecting his unconscious desires as well as his guilt onto the protagonist, Gatsby, and be reassured of his own wishful innocence. Auden, in fact, draws our attention to the literature of Franz Kafka, which bears the similarity of indulgence in oedipal phantasy to The Great Gatsby, and in which "it is the guilt that is certain and the crime that

---

[32] Ibid., p. 152. Auden writes that in the typical "Whodunit?", "the best victim is the negative Father or Mother Image".

is uncertain; the aim of the hero's investigation is not to prove his innocence (which would be impossible for he knows he is guilty), but to discover what, if anything, he has done to make himself guilty."[33]

Charles Rycroft supports the theory that detective stories are oedipal[34]; the reader participates with the detective in order to master his own reawakened aggressive feelings toward his parents and remove the guilt that ensues, thereby resisting identification with, and sympathy for, the criminal. Rycroft records in his article the hypothesis of Geraldine Pedersen-Krag that

> the victim [of murder] is the parent for whom the reader (child) had negative oedipal feelings. The clues in the story, disconnected, inexplicable and trifling, represent the child's growing awareness of details it had never understood, such as the family sleeping arrangements, nocturnal sounds, stains, incomprehensible adult jokes and remarks . . . The reader addicted to mystery stories tries actively to relive and master traumatic infantile experiences he once had to endure passively. Becoming the detective, he gratifies his infantile curiosity with impunity, redressing completely the helpless inadequacy and anxious guilt unconsciously remembered from childhood.[35]

---

[33] Ibid., p. 158.

[34] Charles Rycroft, "The Analysis of a Detective Story", in his Imagination and Reality (London: The Hogarth Press, 1968), pp. 114-28.

[35] Ibid., p. 114.

Pedersen-Krag is referring, of course, to the child's (reader's) mental revisitation of what Freud calls "the primal scene", where the child suspects the infidelity of the parent to whom he is amorously attached, and entertains the wish to dispose of the parent with whom he feels compelled to compete. As detective, he may satisfy his voyeuristic tendency, in addition to a phallic desire to penetrate the mystery and subsequently be in defensive control of the threats the parent-displacements may pose. It is small wonder, then, that Freud had likened the detective work of the Oedipus myth to psychoanalysis, with its "process of revealing . . . cunning delays and ever-mounting excitement"[36]. Having outlined this groundwork, I should like to proceed to an analysis of the unconscious wishes and phantasies that shape the fairy tale form of The Great Gatsby and from there shift to an exploration of Nick's projection phantasy as a detective who creates, probes, and gratifies the primal scene wishes behind his own story under the protective mask of mystery accorded the fairy tale legend of the great Jay Gatsby.

---

[36] Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, p. 363.

CHAPTER III

THE FAIRY TALE

The Great Gatsby is a modern American fairy tale. The poor boy protagonist, who achieves an illicit financial success and notoriety through criminal dealings, is glamourized as a noble prince in Fitzgerald's parody of the traditional "rags-to-riches" myth; unfortunately, the "prince" is in ironic pursuit of a sham "princess" who inhabits a fallen kingdom: wealthy, upper class America. Furthermore, the growth of Jay Gatsby from his fixation at an emotionally insecure adolescence to a sexual maturity and independence is stunted. The American dream, "that great mass neurosis"[1] as Edwin Fussell aptly labels it, rescues Gatsby from the need to recognize his own limitations and effects a sustained misdirection of the neurotic's life. Gatsby's rude exposure to a reality from which he had once efficiently sheltered himself proves fatal with the final stage of his dream's materialization in Daisy, the "forbidden fruit", and eliminates the possibility of a consolatory happy ending to the fairy tale. Consequently, the very normal progression from child-

---

[1] Edwin Fussell, "Fitzgerald's Brave New World", in Frederick J. Hoffman, ed., The Great Gatsby: A Study (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962), p. 252.

hood innocence to adulthood experience that constitutes the traditional fairy tale appears in The Great Gatsby, as Charles Thomas Samuels suggests, in sinister perversion:

> The theme of Fitzgerald's novel is more inclusive and more shocking than we have known. Its subject is atrophy; the wasting away of the self as one grows into the world of sex and money and time; the wasting away of America as it grows from wilderness to civilization, of the universe as it grows by its impossible plan.[2]

This grim statement corroborates the theory that the disillusioned Fitzgerald conceived the idealistic fairy tale progression to maturity as a paradoxical growth to decay; its full implication may be savoured in an in-depth analysis of Gatsby's tragic tale.

(i)

"You could not exactly call him an imposter;" reports Isabel Paterson in her review of the novel, "he was himself an artist of sorts, trying to remold himself. His stage was a Long Island summer colony, where he came in contact with the realities of his dream and was broken by them. That he was a bootlegger, a crook, maybe a killer (all on the grand scale) is part of the irony of things;

---

[2] Charles Thomas Samuels, "The Greatness of 'Gatsby'", in Henry Dan Piper, ed., Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby: The Novel, The Critics, The Background (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970), p. 158.

for it wasn't his sins he paid for, but his aspirations."[3] Gatsby's story is narrated in retrospect by Nick Carraway, a conservative young Westerner who has journeyed East to explore his potential in the bond business. Nick disapproves of the aura of notoriety that surrounds Gatsby, his neighbour, who at various points in the opening chapters is reputed to have been "a German spy" (GG, 44), a murderous gangster (GG, 44), and "a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm's"(GG, 33); in any case, the intimation is that Gatsby's rise to the financial top has been a dishonest one. But Nick idealizes Gatsby as well for both his "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life" (GG, 2) and his "extraordinary gift for hope . . . [his] romantic readiness" (GG, 2), and prepares the reader for the pollution of Gatsby's sustaining personal faith: ". . . Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams" (GG, 2). One sees that Gatsby's idealism is not of an orthodox religious nature; rather, it stems from the religion of money (a stepping stone to success, potency, and happiness), as does the hospitality of this host whose inexhaustible supply of food, drink, music, and gaiety occasions societal congregation at an ostentatious West Egg estate. But Gatsby is physically separated from the East Egg

---

[3] Isabel Paterson, "The Great Gatsby: Up to the Minute" (1925), in Bruccoli and Bryer, eds., F. Scott Fitzgerald: In His Own Time. A Miscellany, p. 347.

palaces that glitter in view across the bay, and his nouveau-richesse denies him the formality of style that accompanies the heirs of old ancestral wealth. Nick immediately suspects that his host reflects only a contrived self-assurance: ". . . I was looking at an elegant young roughneck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd" (GG, 48). Nonetheless, Gatsby conveys a false, romantic self-image to Nick in what proves to be a privately designed fairy tale:

> I am the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West - all dead now. I was brought up in America but educated at Oxford, because all my ancestors have been educated there for many years. It is a family tradition . . . My family died and I came into a good deal of money . . . After that I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe - Paris, Venice, Rome - collecting jewels, chiefly rubies, hunting big game, painting a little, things for myself only, and trying to forget something very sad that had happened to me long ago . . . . Then came the war, old sport. It was a great relief, and I tried very hard to die, but I seemed to bear an enchanted life. (GG, 65-6)

The melancholy prince is anonymous at his own parties in a castle where hedonistic living and servants at his disposal feed the reader's narcissistic phantasy. He appears to be under a spell and in need of a kiss from the fairy princess to restore in him the will to live or, as happy endings go, to initiate him into sexuality and the adult world of human relationship.

The legendary Gatsby first emerged to Nick's eye as

a shadowy figure, who "stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling" (GG, 21). Gatsby's association with the watery womb is a key motif in the novel, whose nine chapters give birth to a stillborn idealism with Gatsby's death in the pool to portray how dreams have suffocated his potential for an honest living. In an ironic foreshadowing of his timely demise he experiences the promise of renewed love during a rainstorm: "Gatsby, pale as death, with his hands plunged like weights in coat pockets, was standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically into my eyes" (GG, 86). The "puddle of water" becomes an entire pool, Gatsby's "womb-tomb", at the end with the death first of love, then of life. What potency Gatsby has is symbolized in the strength of purpose by which he has accumulated his wealth, and is displaced graphically in his material possessions: the car that is "a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length" (GG, 64), when coupled with the mansion that stands "spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy" (GG, 5), may represent by substitution the male and female genitals, and indicate thereby the confused sexuality or androgyny of the protagonist. The implication of a feminine strain in Gatsby occurs in his passive submission to Dan Cody and in his identification with Daisy whom, in her youth and wealth, he sets as an idealized version of himself. This strain is best illustrated in Nick's

description of the "gorgeous pink rag of a suit [that] made a bright spot of color against the white steps" (GG, 154), symbolizing the castrated hero.

Late in the novel, Tom Buchanan accurately refers to Jay Gatsby as "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere" (GG, 130). The prince is in reality a pauper; poor Jimmy Gatz who, in his awareness that life as a farmer promises a dim future, denies his Midwestern heritage, reconceives himself, undergoes rebirth as the self-made Jay Gatsby, with no debt of existence to his shiftless father, then guides himself by a private faith and hope:

> The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God - a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that - and he must be about His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. (GG, 99)

The purchase of identity, the defiance of pre-destination, the degradation of parental roots, and the narcissism of self-indulgence protect Gatsby from a tempting self-degradation as a bland farmboy. He not only builds castles in the air, he leases them:

> For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing. (GG, 100)

Gatsby's faith is in his own concept of reality, which he understands to be a subjective rather than an objective truth. His pseudo-adoption by self-made millionaire and romantic sea-

adventurer, Dan Cody, who "turned up as James Gatz's destiny in Little Girl Bay" (GG, 100) to play the Pygmalion role, acts metaphorically as Jay's initiation to manhood. He is seduced by the attractively independent lifestyle of this "pioneer debauchee" (GG, 101), graduates from a directionless life at sea, and materializes as a romantic legend split from Dan Cody: ". . . the vague contour of Jay Gatsby had filled out to the substantiality of a man" (GG, 102). It is this Jay Gatsby, and not the criminal that Wolfsheim claims to have "made", who is first enchanted by the "ripe mystery" (GG, 148) about the house of Daisy Fay's maidenhood.

Gatsby's princess is a "'nice' girl" (GG, 148), and the mystery of intercourse not only with her, but with the money by which her morality appears to be measured, obsesses him. As John Carroll notes, his love for Daisy exceeds personal infatuation:

> There is no room for the merely personal in his love for her. She is an emblem of a world of limitless success, and his conquest of her is an act by which Gatsby proves his greatness to himself.[4]

To the poor boy and hence social misfit, she is a prize to be won by the highest bidder: "It excited him, too, that many men had already loved Daisy - it increased her value in his eyes." (GG, 148) In "A Special Type of Object Choice

---

[4] Carroll, p. 282.

Made By Men", Freud describes one particular condition of love as "the 'love for a harlot'", whereby "a virtuous and reputable woman never possesses the charm required to exalt her to an object of love; this attraction is exercised only by one who is more or less sexually discredited, whose fidelity and loyalty admit of some doubt."[5] Because the man needs to feel jealous in order to experience love, his desire is not for exclusive possession of the woman. In Gatsby's case, however, not even a partial possession of Daisy is feasible. The medals worn by the heroic American soldier are not as attractive or impressive as the jewels that adorn the rich. Gatsby is distanced from his golden girl-princess by the green dollars which fuse, upon his imminent loss of her, into the green light at the end of the dock where she lives as a married woman.

(ii)

Gatsby's anal[6] capacity to retain time, for he

---

[5] Sigmund Freud, "A Special Type of Object Choice Made By Men" (1910), in Philip Rieff, ed., Sexuality and the Psychology of Love (New York: Collier Books, 1974), p. 50.

[6] Charles Rycroft, A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), pp. 6-7. Rycroft defines anality as a "type of character neurosis inferred to be the result of fixation at the anal stage. The term is usually used to refer . . . to compulsive obstinacy, orderliness, and parsimony, but can refer to their opposites,

insists he can indeed repeat his past with Daisy (GG, 111), stems from his determination to live outside of it, where the past is lived as a continuous present. While the traditional fairy tale usually spans a long period of compressed time, namely the process of growth from childhood to adulthood, time in *The Great Gatsby* is redefined as an oppressive force that the protagonist denies. His incompatibility with time is graphically illustrated in the reunion scene (GG, 87) as he reclines against Nick's defunct clock on the mantelpiece and almost breaks it. It is as though Gatsby is warned, in his ignorance of passing time, against tampering with a natural process; his isolation, or exile, from the realm of mortality serves paradoxically, however, as a warning *against* the weak defence of denying reality in the novel. The romantic idealism of youth is no longer consolatory in a world that has redefined happiness in materialistic terms; in fact, Jimmy Gatz's "ideal" can only materialize through criminality, and the mode of existence he assumes as Jay Gatsby is but a defence against existence as Jimmy Gatz. Ironically, his dream for success is castrative in that it promotes a perpetual aspiration that can end only in perpetual non-achievement. Gatsby

---

viz. compulsive pliancy, untidiness, and generosity."

Further indicative of Gatsby's anality are his obsessive collection of news clippings about Daisy (95) and his opposite inclination toward generosity in the elaborate preparations he makes for the lavish parties open to the Long Island public (39-40).

has created the illusion of a personal fairy tale, but as soon as the reunion he preconceives with Daisy actually occurs, his lack of control over the increasingly manipulative illusion becomes threatening. "The promise of fulfillment is, in a sense, more splendid than fulfillment itself", writes John Carroll, "for as love is consummated, the moment recedes into the past, and the lovers are caught in time."[7] Gatsby's love, unlike Daisy's, is not "in the meantime, in between time" (GG, 97); the narcissistic aggressor of an ideal romance becomes the masochistic victim of Daisy's real boredom: "'What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon?' cried Daisy, 'and the day after that, and the next thirty years?'" (GG, 118)

The role of Daisy Fay in The Great Gatsby, whose name creates the image of an innocent, flowery sprite, is "over-determined", lending to multiple levels of interpretation. Not only is Daisy the fairy princess who, at least according to Gatsby, marries the wrong prince, but she comes to represent America itself, the "fresh, green breast", on an historical level and the surrogate mother on personal, religious, and erotic levels. As Ernest Lockridge points out, "Daisy Fay becomes Gatsby's version of the Virgin Mary, both mother and bride of 'God'"[8]. The greatest emphasis in Fitzgerald's por-

---

[7] Carroll, p. 283.

[8] Ernest Lockridge, "Introduction", in his The Great Gatsby: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 14.

trayal of Daisy, though, falls on her captivating temptress' voice, which has become a musical leitmotif by the time Gatsby verbally reveals the significance it bears for him:

> 'Her voice is full of money' . . . It was full of money - that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it . . . High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl . . . (GG, 120)

Nick had previously lighted on the variety of its healing effect ("the exhilarating ripple of her voice was a wild tonic in the rain" (GG, 86)), its erotic quality ("her throat, full of aching, grieving beauty, told only of her unexpected joy" (GG, 90)), and its promise of immortality ("it couldn't be over-dreamed - that voice was a deathless song" (GG, 97)); Gatsby, though, is ironically the confessor of an unconscious association of Daisy's voice with money, which in turn is associated with excremental immorality. The beauty of the American fairy tale princess is mirrored in the gold of wealth and not in the gold of an immaterial halo.

The dichotomous conception of Daisy as golden girl-princess to be sought and femme fatale-enchantress to be avoided is supported in her relationship to the protagonist. While on the one hand she embodies the ideal innocence that underlies a soothing voice and healing kisses, leading Gatsby to assume a holy attitude to what is essentially erotic object matter, envy of her wealth and class corrupts the ambi-

tious prince. He is taunted with a display of how money usurps the function of religious sanctuary:

> . . . Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves . . . of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor. (GG, 150)

Daisy's marriage to Tom Buchanan is an extension of the financial security she is not at all anxious to forfeit for life with a bootlegger. Although Tom is an adulterous brute, the damsel in marital distress is nonetheless "'p-paralyzed with happiness'"(GG, 9) and only gives the illusion of displeasure, not craving rescue at all. Her flirtations with Gatsby and the recognition that wealth promotes and condones the superficial love affairs of her husband serve to shelter the emotionally repressed Southern belle. She prefers to endure hypocritically her ennui, while confessing to being "pretty cynical about everything" (GG, 17), and demonstrates a moral insincerity as she overlooks Tom's infidelity with a quiet acceptance and later plays with flair the phony princess who spiritually seduces the prince while knowing all the while she would never venture far away from the dubious respectability her present identity embodies. In a dramatically ironic interlude at the party given by Tom's mistress during their brief idyll in New York, Myrtle's sister blames Daisy's religion for the impossibility of a divorce when it is indeed religion - the religion of money and the social dictates of money's marriage to money - that demands

their continued commitment. Even when the princess visits Gatsby's ball in Chapter Six and the sad prince comes out of hiding to joyously mingle with his previously neglected guests, there evolves "an unpleasantness in the air, a pervading harshness" (GG, 105) as the princess is noticeably appalled by the gaudy informality and alcoholic grotesqueries of the guests. Gatsby's futile attraction to her can only increase, however, as though his inspiration were induced by some mystical spell oblivious to the social reality by which it is silently understood that the golden lock can only be opened by the golden key.

If, despite her superficial innocence, Daisy may be related by Lockridge to the holy Virgin, then the sensuality of Myrtle may be exaggerated to the point of her counter-connection with the erotic Venus, of whom "myrtle" is the shrub. This doubling by extreme division of female traits may express, as Robert Rogers suggests, "ambivalent feelings, the conjunction of which (particularly when hostility is repressed) is so intolerable that the ambivalence is dealt with defensively by decomposing the loved and hated [mother] into two separate and seemingly unrelated persons."[9] Both good and bad mothers, the virgin and the harlot, are controlled

---

[9] Robert Rogers, A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970), p. 5.

by the physically and financially potent Tom, visually evidenced in Daisy's bruised finger (GG, 12) and Myrtle's broken nose (GG, 37). This lends to the critic a somewhat complicated avenue of study. If we may take a moment to hypothesize, Daisy represents for Gatsby the "good" mother, and is thoroughly idealized, though ultimately not devoid of some measure of irony in the reader's eye. This idealization is complemented by the relocation of Daisy's bad traits (i.e. her preference for Tom over Gatsby) in the character of Myrtle, the "bad" mother who prostitutes herself to the "father", Tom. As a result, the "good" mother is preserved for Gatsby, who represents the child who participates in the frustrations of the oedipal triangle. Gatsby seeks to obliterate phantasies of the "bad" mother, the "harlot", in favour of an imagined rivalry for the "good" mother, the "virgin". Although the father, Tom, is the opponent, he is also an intimate part of Gatsby; Tom Buchanan embodies the projection of Gatsby's aggressive instincts against both mothers, and the following song, which is heard upon Jordan's revelation to Nick of Tom's initial act of promiscuity during marriage, is more than appropriately located:

> 'I'm the Sheik of Araby
> Your love belongs to me.
> At night when you're asleep
> Into your tent I'll creep -' (GG, 79)

The mysterious, glamorous, sexually potent Sheik is the man who wins the mother's favours; all that Gatsby can secure is

a kiss. In his study of the novel, Henry Dan Piper asks: "Was Gatsby's idealized love of Daisy only a kind of sexual impotence?"[10] This question may be answered in the affirmative if we take as our springboard a study of the childlike Gatsby in his partially feminine identification with both polarizations of the idealized and corrupt mother, from each of whom he is split.

Daisy is Gatsby's ego-ideal - an idealized version in her youth and innocence of his own self, with whom he seeks to fuse. Such a self-mastery, however, is artificial, achieved by what may be considered, in effect, an ego-denial. The "child" plays "show-and-tell" when he submits Daisy to a tour of his fabulous home. The implication at one point is that Gatsby doesn't value his possessions for their own inherent worth, but as a seductive trade-off for Daisy, a means to his romanticized end: "He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy, and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes." (GG, 92) The overly ambitious suitor is ironically accused by Nick, who has pandered for him in arranging his rendezvous with Daisy, of "acting like a little boy" (GG, 88). But Nick, although go-between, is Gatsby's alter-ego; he is actually only a displaced pimp for the hero who really pimps for himself, producing a mirror effect in the split Gatsby as

---

[10] Henry Dan Piper, F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 139.

he commits yet censors his own act. While Daisy represents the person Gatsby "wants to be", Myrtle represents the person Gatsby "is". Gatsby is a "kept man" in much the same way Myrtle is a "kept woman"; both prostitute themselves, she physically and he morally, to a dream for wealth that each phantasizes will materialize through the aid of a wealthy Buchanan. Significantly, the "bad" mother Myrtle is destroyed by the "good" mother Daisy in a car accident, paralleled by Tom's subsequent arrangement for Gatsby's disposal. The rich are in cahoots, and Gatsby and Myrtle are sacrificial lambs. Nick draws our attention to Tom and Daisy during the aftermath, at their kitchen table, where "there was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture, and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together." (GG, 146) Myrtle's demise anticipates Gatsby's demise. The gruesome image of her left breast, the "bad" breast, "swinging loose like a flap" (GG, 138) and of her mouth torn at its sides occasions the emergence of Gatsby's forced need to recognize Daisy's ambivalence, for the character who once embodied Daisy's own immorality is eliminated. Gatsby is unable to "rescue" Daisy from the "bad" aspect of her character that causes her disloyalty to him as Tom's wife. The impulse to save the woman is rooted in the man's wish for narcissistic gratification according to Freud: "The man is convinced that the loved woman has need of him, that without him she would lose all hold on respectability and rapidly sink

to a deplorable level. He saves her from this fate, therefore, by not letting her go."[11] The deflation of Gatsby's rescue phantasy, however, culminates in his own journey to death, the ultimate castration, on an inflated mattress in his pool-bed.

(iii)

The family concept is explicitly frustrated in The Great Gatsby. Nick has left home, Gatsby lives in solitude, Jordan boards with an old spinster aunt, the Wilsons are childless, and Tom and Daisy are welded by a social bond. Sexuality is problematic as the reader witnesses incompatible partners in two unstable marriages, one-sided commitment in the two love affairs that ensue from these marriages, the liaison of Nick and Jordan, which temporarily thrives despite Nick's moral dishonesty, and an impotence in the contemporary lifestyle that is exposed in setting, narration, and character. For the purpose of our discussion, there are two relevant settings in the novel: the Eggs and New York City, and the valley of ashes. The first division of land is described by Nick in terms that metaphorically suggest the "good and bad breast" of the Daisy-Myrtle dichotomy: "Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and se-

---

[11] Freud, "A Special Type of Object Choice Made By Men", p. 52.

parated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western hemisphere" (GG, 5). While East Egg is the home of the Buchanans' "clean" wealth, the garish abode Gatsby has purchased with his "tainted" money is situated in West Egg, which is separated from the city by wasteland farm territory. This second setting, which deserves critical attention, is split from the artificial urbanity of the Eggs and New York City, where morally hollow men may acquire at least a financial substance to rescue them from an immediate condemnation. This avenue of shelter is denied to the poverty-stricken inhabitants of the valley of ashes, a surrealistic landscape in which the "foul dust" that engulfed Gatsby has expanded to "a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of ash-gray men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air." (GG, 23) One of these figures is George B. Wilson, garage proprietor, "a blond, spiritless man, anaemic, and faintly handsome" (GG, 25), who is married to Tom Buchanan's mistress, Myrtle, a sensuous woman with "an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering." (GG, 25) While this latter setting may be equivalent, for example, to the woods of spiritual obscurity that frequently pose threats to the fairy tale protagonist, no monsters or dragons inhabit its bleak stretch of

land. The only opponent to man is a passive pair of faceless eyes that "brood on over the solemn dumping ground" (GG, 23):

> The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic - their retinas are one yard high. They look out of no face, but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a non-existent nose. (GG, 23)

Although an advertisement for spectacles, the billboard eyes are detached observers of an incurably diseased, spiritually incapacitated society that does indeed need "doctoring". The eyes that watch, but can offer no help in a world where money is the only source of succour, betray an impotent God who "sees everything" (GG, 160), but who has replaced Paradise with the unfertile gardens of dusty wastelands that are infested by immoral men.

The simple narrative technique of the traditional fairy tale is modified in Fitzgerald's impressionistic prose style. The formless "sea-change of faces and voices and color" (GG, 40), the "swirls and eddies of people" (GG, 41), the laughter that is "spilled with prodigality" (GG, 40) in Gatsby's "blue gardens" (GG, 39), and the partying groups that "change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath" (GG, 40) take outlined, abstract shape in a mental landscape that is weathered by a watery, alcoholic haze that contrasts the severe anality, or dusty solidity, of the dirty wasteland environment. The physical blur of Owl Eyes' vision, the blurred morality of society symbolized

in the false god Eckleburg, the externally stimulated, alcoholic blur of the party guests who behave grotesquely, and the metaphorical blur of Gatsby's timeless, timefree vision suggest that the threat of man's impotence manifests itself in several ways (i.e. visual, spiritual, communal, and sexual) in the novel. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the first syllable of "Gatsby" is a shortened slang version of "Gatling", or gun, a phallic symbol. To express it crudely, the only "gun" Gatsby operates is during his "command of the divisional machine-guns" (GG, 150) in the war. He is frightened when his phantasy of possessing a married woman begins to materialize; the implication is that the pursuit of Daisy specifically was only a defence against the anxiety of a feared impotence. When the object of love is a married or unavailable woman, feelings of enmity against the man from whom she is taken are gratified.[12] However, the son knows he can attempt to, but never succeed in, possessing the mother, lest he suffer the castrative consequences administered by the father. As we may recall, Tom's insulting jabs and accusations at Gatsby - in short, his verbal castration of Gatsby in Daisy's presence - is occasioned by Gatsby's rivalry for her. In the scene where Gatsby first feels confident of Daisy's favourable response, he is simultaneously cast into an emotional

---

[12] Ibid., p. 51.

confusion causing him to throw shirts around the room in panic. While eternal pursuit was a pleasurable defence, attainment is a threat. Daisy, too, cries hysterically at the products of the wealth that has brought her misery and joy in almost equal measure. The mist that is described as clouding Gatsby's view of the green light at this point, and that is another in a series of anal images that include the "foul dust" and the wasteland, appears as an ominous warning. The mockingly perverse, green go-signal that once extended a continuous invitation to pursue a dream has become slightly tainted by a step toward the realization of that dream; hence the "ideal" aspect of Gatsby's unachievable phantasy has been spoiled.

(iv)

Arthur Mizener has classified The Great Gatsby as a "tragic pastoral"[13]. Several traditional fairy tales are pastoral in their settings, one reason for which being, perhaps, the sense of comfort nature's portrayal as the benevolent, embracing mother affords the child. In the second chapter of this "tragic" pastoral, Nick accompanies Tom and Myrtle to New York City with the following commentary: "We drove

---

[13] Arthur Mizener, "F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1896-1940: The Poet of Borrowed Time", in Kazin, ed., F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work, p. 36.

over to Fifth Avenue, so warm and soft, almost pastoral, on the summer Sunday afternoon that I wouldn't have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner" (GG, 28). As an ambassador from the Western farmland region, Nick's phantasy consists of "shepherding" these "wayward sheep" of the East. If the pastoral image may be extended with relevance to Gatsby and the notion that sheep eat flowers, then the oedipal wish to devour the bad mother, "Myrtle" and achieve oral fusion with the good mother, "Daisy", not only stems but blossoms from this image. If we trace the steps in fairy tale terminology, the sexual climax of the unfulfilled prince occurs when he kisses the princess and undergoes symbolic incarnation as a "real" prince (i.e. a prince who has won a princess). According to John Carroll, Gatsby denigrates his dream when he incarnates it in Daisy: "To incarnate a dream is to make it vulnerable; to give the dream material trappings is, with Gatsby's heritage, to make it 'vulgar and meretricious'."[14] In any case, the incarnation of Gatsby's dream into substance marks the death of illusion and the birth of a new reality:

> . . . Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalks really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees - he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder . . . He knew that when he kissed this girl and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp

---

[14] Carroll, p. 300.

> again like the mind of God . . . At
> his lips' touch she blossomed for him
> like a flower and the incarnation was
> complete. (GG, 112)

Only a symbolic, "substitute" intercourse is enacted as Gatsby climbs above the trees to "a secret place" to fuse with the mother, and to suck the "milk of wonder" from her breast. The fairy tale naïveté of orgasm in a kiss is retained in Gatsby's experience. Sexuality is repressed, for Gatsby never wins Daisy in totality; the incarnation he undergoes only represents the access to a partial, and hence inadequate, potency.

At the end of the second chapter in the novel, following Nick's departure from Myrtle's New York party with a photographer he had befriended, the latter draws four of his works from a large portfolio, and each is presented to Nick by a specific title. It is the first of these titles, "Beauty and the Beast" (GG, 38), that is pertinent to the study of Gatsby's situation, for in that fairy tale, as Victor Doyno notes, "a lowly creature regains his former princely condition by the transforming power of a beautiful girl's kiss."[15] The Beast, who is really a prince under the spell of a wicked sorceress, cannot regain his lost identity until a beautiful virgin consents to marry him. Jimmy Gatz is "beastly" too as a

---

[15] Victor A. Doyno, "Patterns in The Great Gatsby", in Piper, ed., The Great Gatsby: The Novel, The Critics, The Background, p. 165.

financial misfit who seeks to acquire, rather than regain, princely status. In a parallel to the traditional fairy tale situation, he plots to procure a kiss from the princess, the rescue and winning of whom will ensure his complete and permanent metamorphosis from beastly pauper to spiritually beautiful prince. Gatsby's rejection of symbolically beastly existence, however, may be an unconscious repression of sexuality, a self-imposed impotence that ensures a superficial preservation of adolescent innocence and excludes the possibility of a fulfilling heterosexual experience.

In "Beauty and the Beast"[16], the young girl Beauty demonstrates an oedipal love for her widowed father by caring for him in a wifely, although non-sexual, manner, and by ultimately offering herself up in her father's place as a sacrificial victim to the ugly Beast. The father, who had trespassed on the creature's property and stolen a rose for Beauty, was condemned to death, unless one of his daughters would substitute for him, which Beauty of course did. The Beast then fell in love with her, lavished her with tokens of his wealth, yet despite his inner beatitude was rejected several times in his proposals of marriage to the maiden. Her sympathy, though, led to an eventual acceptance of the Beast for his virtue.

---

16 "Beauty and the Beast", in Iona and Peter Opie, eds., The Classic Fairy Tales (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 139-50.

Her kiss revives him as he lies near death in a garden canal, and he is restored to his former identity as a prince. Unlike Beauty, Daisy Buchanan never learns that a happiness based on moral goodness is superior to that derived by materialistic means. The kiss she gives Gatsby offers only an illusory succour; as Leslie Fiedler suggests, it does castrative damage to the prince, stripping him of the hope for a happy outcome to his quest for love:

> The penniless knight . . . goes out to seek his fortune and unluckily finds it. His reward is, just as in the fairy tales, the golden girl in the white palace; but quite differently from the fairy tales, that is not a happy ending at all. He finds in his bed not the White Bride but the Dark Destroyer; indeed, there is no White Bride since Dark Lady and Fair, witch and redeemer, have fallen together.[17]

The transference of Daisy's oedipal love to Tom, a paternal man who takes over where her family left off in sheltering her with money, is the result of her desire to perpetuate financial gratification of her narcissistic whims in a world "redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery" (GG, 151). Daisy does not progress from a selfish, childish lust for material goods to a moral maturity; with Tom she can live carelessly and retreat into her financial shell. After re-discovering the lost princess five years later, Gatsby's exposure

---

[17] Leslie A. Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1975), p. 313.

by Tom as a criminal can only be said to have "rescued" him from life in a reality to which he does not belong - the reality of the adult world. In this world five years cannot be effaced, possession of a married woman cannot be exclusive, romantic gain is accompanied by the anxiety of loss, and the would-be princess has no real virtuous substance. The golden girl has elected a financial rather than a moral prince, a man of concrete wealth rather than an adolescent stuck on an idealistic dream for innocence. Marius Bewley extends the microcosmic quality of Daisy's uncooperativeness in Gatsby's quest to a larger social antagonism to idealistic man:

> . . . Daisy's significance in the story lies in her failure to constitute the objective correlative of Gatsby's vision. And at the same time, Daisy's wonderfully representative quality as a creature of the Jazz Age relates her personal failure to the larger failure of Gatsby's society to satisfy his need. In fact, Fitzgerald never allows Daisy's failure to become a human or personal one. He maintains it with sureness on a symbolic level where it is identified with and reflects the failure of Gatsby's decadent American world.[18]

Although Daisy withdraws from her role as princess in the fairy tale, Gatsby continues to project his own self-gratifying wishes for undivided love onto his princess, when it is not her, but himself, whom he loves. Reluctant to pro-

---

[18] Bewley, p. 279.

gress from narcissism to object love, the choice of the "archetypal romantic monogamist"[19] is a distorted version of himself. He clings to the phantasy of rescuing her, perhaps, in a bid for self-preservation from his own aggression against the withholding mother. In preserving the fairy tale illusion Gatsby preserves himself; when the fairy tale illusion collapses, however, Gatsby collapses with it. By a paradoxical irony, Gatsby's awakening to the "real", as opposed to mythological or fairy tale world, is a waking nightmare that ends in death. He is betrayed by a disconsolatory phantasy - the victim of a tragedy of errors. Both Gatsby and fairy tale are destroyed by the illusions that bore and nourished them, and Gatsby's journey to discover and unite with the princess-golden girl-mother has become, as Nick reports, a journey to self-annihilation: "So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight" (GG, 136-7). One critic, Henry Dan Piper, suggests that "the entire novel seems to have been written as the expression of a death wish"[20], which is an ironic epitaph to a work distinguished by its high degree of romantic sentimentality and nostalgic charm. The pathos is evident, nonetheless, in the novel's dénouement. The liquidity of the interior landscape at Gatsby's summer

---

[19] Carroll, p. 294.

[20] Piper, p. 107.

parties has solidified to the dust that cakes the furniture of his mansion. The death of his reverie is grotesquely depicted in nature: "The shadow of a tree fell abruptly across the dew and ghostly birds began to sing among the blue leaves" (*GG*, 152). These images evoke the sensation of a deathly chill, or frigidity. Gatsby once conceived of his love as being of a "super"-human quality, transcending tawdry physicality and emotion, as his curious remark that Daisy's love for Tom "was just personal" (*GG*, 152) implies. In actuality, it was her love for Gatsby, if one may call it that, that was merely a personal infatuation, while her love for Tom is a love that surpasses the personal and is a product of social exigency. Finally, the pathos of Gatsby as a fairy tale hero unleashed in a world that is at once too old and not old enough for him justifies Nick's memorable judgment of his friend and neighbour: "'They're a rotten crowd . . . You're worth the whole damn bunch put together.'" (*GG*, 154) The world is "too old" for Gatsby in that the adolescent idealism he displays of *having* an incorruptible ideal has been outgrown by the adult world. On the other hand, the world is "not old enough" for Gatsby in terms of his moral maturity, his recognition of the human need for faith and hope in *something*, be it moral or immoral.

It is among the novel's great achievements that a criminal can appear noble, and that Gatsby's disillusionment at finding that his dream is no longer a "natural" thing to

him can be so chillingly felt:

> 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. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about . . . (GG, 162)

The world that is "material without being real" refers to the spiritual void that Gatsby had been trying to fill in a materialistic way to compete with Tom on his own grounds for Daisy. The imaginative world he had once created and that was so real to him has been destroyed, and the "prince" has become once again a "spiritual" pauper. The grotesque, distorted world to which Nick accredits Gatsby's exposure is, in many respects, the "real" world that exists under the camouflage of the latter's escapist illusions. The former prince has no entourage of mourners in death; his "friends" have exploited his generosity, taking him for better but not for worse. Apart from Nick, only Henry C. Gatz is on hand, a proud father who associates greatness with wealth in lamenting the loss of a son who could eventually have emulated James J. Hill in helping to "build up the country" (GG, 169). But despite Gatsby's behavioural rigidity as a boy, organizing his time à la Benjamin Franklin the self-made man on the flyleaf of a comic book, he departs from the world in the same modest way he entered it, stripped of the pretensions of his notoriety and wealth, as Jimmy "Gatz", the name

itself a "castrated" form of "Gatsby". It would appear that in American mythology, the spell of destiny cannot be broken by the kiss of a fairy princess. The frog is denied the benefits of a real prince because the frog is, after all, underneath his princely exterior, only a frog.

(v)

Nick's concluding contemplation in The Great Gatsby places the unconscious wish for oral fusion and intercourse with the mother-land, as well as Gatsby's defence against such an integration, in historical perspective. The idealized woman is displaced in the "fresh, green breast of the new world" (GG, 182) and civilization fades to frontier innocence as "the inessential houses [begin] to melt away" (GG, 182) in the sympathetic Nick's imagination. The beauty of nature has seduced man with the promise of a great hope - the American dream for success and consequent happiness - just as Daisy has lured Gatsby:

> [The island's] vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. (GG, 182)

The land itself gave birth to idealism, inducing the romance

of idealistic wonder in man, and then nourished its child with the food of hope. While Western man mechanically raped the seductive Virgin Land, Gatsby's defensive ploy against impotence was to use the wealth he had acquired as the power needed to control and even degrade the withholding princess-mother, in a symbolic sense, by projecting her onto the gaudy mansion that displays his comparatively vulgar taste. Gatsby had achieved an artificial potency in wealth and in strength of will, which he hoped would equip him for pursuit of a dream that, according to Nick, "was already behind him" (GG, 182). Nick's idealization of Gatsby never ceases. In his eulogy to the "noble prince" he refuses to admit, or is perhaps even blind to the fact that Gatsby's ideals were not rooted in the frontier dream for the goodness of man and the reflective goodness of nature, which died with the corruptive influence of civilization; rather, Gatsby's ideal could be defined as access to the material best in the real world.

John F. Callahan describes the fall from innocence to progressive experience in his study of myth and history in the novel:

> In its totality The Great Gatsby sketches the evolution of America from 'fresh, green breast of the new world' to 'valley of ashes', from continent with a spirit 'commensurate to man's capacity for wonder' to place of nightmare, exhaustion, and death. Founded upon the myth of a new Eden, the history of the United States has displaced that vision into an industrial, excremental reality . . . The

> breath of creation is smoke which brings contamination to the land.[21]

In Nick's faulty estimation, the fairy tale prince sheltered by a hope for eternal innocence would not fall with the world to a new awareness. Gatsby could not perceive that no man alive in the mortal realm is self-made and, despite his aspiration, still subject to defeat. Edwin Fussell records the pattern of social pursuit as being regulated by a desire to realize the American dream and the ultimate happiness in which its realization would result: Fitzgerald, however, "begins by exposing the corruption of that dream in industrial America . . . [and] ends by discovering that the pursuit is universally seductive and perpetually damned."[22] The boats that beat on against the current, "borne back ceaselessly into the past" (GG, 182), are metaphors that place the futile dream in perpetually regressive motion, while the violence of their perpetually progressive struggle demands the constancy of man's faith. Although the ending of the fairy tale is an unhappy one, the outer frame of the novel itself concerned with Nick's experience supplies a surrogate consolation. Amid his misappreciation of Gatsby's

---

[21] John F. Callahan, The Illusions of a Nation: Myth and History in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1972), p. 12.

[22] Fussell, p. 245.

true "worth", Nick returns home with the awareness that the abstract idealism he imagined Gatsby to entertain cannot stand alone in the fallen state of the material world, for visions, like the men they infuse then consume, are ephemeral. Nor, however, should material greed continuously thrive considering man's capacity for the hope that inspires these dreams, and for the faith that sustains them. As the fairy tale demonstrates, and perhaps moralizes against without the offer of a solution, the spiritual strengths of Gatsby were tragically misplaced in his criminal instinct for survival.

CHAPTER IV

THE DETECTIVE STORY

When Jay Gatsby dies along with the illusion of material and psychological reward that had sustained him for so long, Nick Carraway asserts that he "began to have a feeling of defiance, of scornful solidarity between Gatsby and me against them all" (GG, 166). Having played confessor to all the major characters, the recipient of "intimate revelations" (GG, 1), as well as accomplice, or "go-between", in the amorous escapades of Gatsby and Daisy, Nick's role as observer exceeds the bounds of objectivity. Wayne C. Booth calls him the "narrator-agent" who, in addition to observing the action, participates in it to the extent of "producing some measurable effect on the course of events."[1] The equally significant dependence of the narrator upon the tale he relates, however, has been grossly understated. In fact, it is the symbiotic nature of Nick's relationship to Gatsby that provides the predominant fictional enigma. "'I don't like mysteries'" (GG, 72) is Nick's ironic exclamation at

---

[1] Wayne C. Booth, "Distance and Point-of-View: An Essay in Classification", in Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism, p. 178.

one point in the novel, when it is he who is not only the source of the mystery but the instrument of its detection. John F. Callahan refers to Nick's "moral and epistemological superiority complex", his projected "desire to be the only one who knows and broods about the truth. To recognize the taint in an evil world seems for him a means almost toward elite status."[2] But who is Nick Carraway? Why does he toss "half-sick between grotesque reality and savage, frightening dreams" (*GG*, 147) in the midst of *Gatsby's* nightmare, or feel the urge to warn Gatsby about "something" (*GG*, 147) before it is too late?

(i)

As chief investigator of Gatsby's notoriety in the detective story, Nick suspects a falsity about the legend from the outset:

> I would have accepted without question the information that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or from the lower East Side of New York. That was comprehensible. But young men didn't - at least in my provincial inexperience I believed they didn't, drift coolly out of nowhere and buy a palace on Long Island Sound. (*GG*, 49)

Nick dispels the illusion of Gatsby's makeshift identity by "exploding those first wild rumors about his antecedents, which weren't even faintly true" (*GG*, 102), yet promptly

---

[2] Callahan, p. 44.

denies Tom's later accusation that Gatsby is a bootlegger (*GG*, 109). Prolonging an idealization of Gatsby, with whom he shares a spiritual affinity, Nick explains that "he was clutching at some last hope, and I couldn't bear to shake him free" (*GG*, 148). Gatsby's unfortunate experience in the fairy tale Fitzgerald has created results in the anxiety of its narrator, though, and manifests itself in Nick's empathy with the fallen hero, whom he imagines to perceive a distorted world, "material without being real" (*GG*, 162). Bold enough to imply a capacity to feel what Gatsby feels, Nick may be projecting his own disillusionment with the adult world onto his idealistic alter-ego. In simultaneity with the death of Gatsby's dream in that hotel suite in New York, where he tried desperately "to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room" (*GG*, 135), occurs Nick's thirtieth birthday, which he renders in images of emaciation that bespeak the death of youth:

> Before me stretched the portentous menacing road of a new decade . . . Thirty - the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning briefcase of enthusiasm, thinning hair. (*GG*, 136)

Nick's life appears to flash before him as he recollects the misadventure of Gatsby's thwarted growth to emotional maturity. In emulation of the model set by the self-made Gatsby, Nick's consolatory wish, since the implantation of his father's

severe morality in Nick eliminates the possibility of his remaking himself, is to be self-sufficient. This wish is partially satisfied by his decision to move East, where he entertains "that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer" (GG, 4), and where he may work toward an identity independent of his father's material wealth. Mingling with a new crowd in the East, Nick even participates in an affair with Jordan Baker, in admiration of whom he confesses that "almost any exhibition of complete self-sufficiency draws a stunned tribute from me" (GG, 9).

In spite of Nick's infatuation with Jordan, though, and in consequence of his self-conception as a kindred spirit to Gatsby, there exist implications of Nick's homosexuality. In a bid for narcissistic gratification, he projects his own homosexual attraction _to_ Gatsby _onto_ his ego-ideal[3], reading the reflection of an almost maternal* love into the smile Gatsby lavishes upon him:

---

[3] Rycroft, _A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis_, p. 40. Rycroft defines "ego-ideal" as "the self's conception of how he wishes to be."

*The idea of Nick's maternal attraction to Gatsby was suggested to me in discussion with my thesis advisor, Dr. Rosenblood.

An explanation for this attraction may be that in frequent cases the homosexual man is the man who has adopted the mother-figure as role-model, and who discovers himself in other men as love-objects. In other words, the homosexual becomes the mother, and the man he loves a substitute for himself.

> It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced - or seemed to face - the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on you with an irresistable prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. (GG, 48)

"That the love of Narcissus for himself transcends mere admiration or egotism, that he wants in a literal way to possess himself sexually, is symbolized by his attempt to kiss his image in the pool"[4], writes Robert Rogers in his Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature; Gatsby is that image split from Nick, an externalized self-representation onto whom Nick may project wishes that need to be gratified, anxieties that need to be mastered, or fears that need to be dislodged. Freud describes this technique of doubling as "an insurance against destruction of the ego"[5], and his definition of homosexual love, paraphrased by Rycroft, supports the notion that Nick's love for Gatsby is actually a displaced self-love: ". . . homosexual love differs from

---

[4] Rogers, p. 20.

[5] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919), in James Strachey, ed., The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud (London: The Hogarth Press Ltd., 1975), XVII, 235.

heterosexual love in being narcissistic, since the object is loved on account of its similarity to what the subject is, once was, or hopes to become, as opposed to heterosexual love, which is anaclitic, being dependent on the object providing what the subject cannot himself be."[6] In an ironic epilogue to Nick's self-exaltation in Gatsby, the latter's decline is prerequisite to Nick's salvation. With this in mind, The Great Gatsby must be read not only as the fairy tale legend of the self-made titular hero, but as a projection and exploration of the narrator's own phantasy of being delivered from "the warm center of the world" (GG, 3) as he relinquishes the security of familial wealth and migrates from the West to the East in metaphorical pursuit of experience and independence. The Great Gatsby, in effect, parodies this quest for identity embodied in the detective story form; in setting up the mystery of Gatsby, a figure with whom he identifies, within a fairy tale frame, the detective Nick is enabled to conceal and at the same time explore at a safe distance the wishes and crises complicating his own progression to identity as an adult.

Like Gatsby, Nick is an anal character[7], inclined at one moment to "reserve all judgments"(GG, 1), and busily

---

[6] Rycroft, A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis, p. 62.

[7] Refer to above, p. 37, n. 6.

preoccupied at the next with arranging in retrospect the experiences of that fateful summer he generously recreates for the reader two years later, complete with a cataloguing of guests and a repertoire of personal reflections. While the neurotic Gatsby he creates as the focal point of his Eastern adventure enjoys refuge in imaginative retreat from an identity that promises only material deprivation, Nick remains trapped by the internalized conscience and old order morality of his father, which together comprise the major aspect of Nick's distinction from Gatsby. Although he fancies himself "privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men" (GG, 1), Nick is an impotent advisor, "a moral eunuch"[8] according to Gary J. Scrimgeour, castrated by the "provincial squeamishness" (GG, 181) of his overbearing superego. He projects his own wish for realization of a phantasy-fulfilling life onto Gatsby and even panders to the achievement of Gatsby's symbolic intercourse with the dream of success Daisy represents.

Gatsby embodies the id instincts of the personality as he exercises an unrestrained free will in arresting time and adjusting the lifestyles of others to suit his own demands, while Nick, who fights a losing battle to be completely

---

[8] Gary J. Scrimgeour, "Against The Great Gatsby", in Lockridge, ed., The Great Gatsby: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 78.

detached from the artificial glitter that repulses him, embodies the repressive superego. In his characteristic ambivalence, he confesses to being "within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life" (GG, 36). As though to regulate the guilt he feels for idealizing the bootlegger, and conforming, at least temporarily, to the morally anarchic life of the wealthy in this novel as he lies to himself (GG, 179) in his affair with Jordan, Nick informs the reader at the beginning of his story that Gatsby "represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn" (GG, 2). In fact, unlike Gatsby, as John Carroll notes, "Nick acknowledges his subjection to time, recognizes the losses that it imposes on man"[9], yet the guilt in which his fall from metaphorical innocence to experience culminates never quite undergoes catharsis, not even when the idealism of the now cynical Nick is destroyed with Gatsby's death: ". . . when I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever" (GG, 2). The detective story form faces a challenge here as the dialectic of innocence and experience appears to be synthesized not in a restoration to grace following re-enactment of the Fall, but in a prolonged romantic naïveté and an eventual disillusionment. Although

---

[9] Carroll, p. 285.

as detective Nick's immediate task is to expound the mystery of Gatsby's life and death, his personal involvement with the apparent protagonist and his own growth to a maturity synthesizing innocence and experience, which is complicated by a perplexing guilt, invites analysis as well. In an instinct for self-preservation, Nick's wish is to find a criminal onto whom he may displace the guilt which is reawakened in him, as I shall now proceed to illustrate, through voyeuristic revisitations of the unconsciously remembered and still obsessive primal scene mystery of a distant childhood.

(ii)

Nick's first and one-sided encounter with Gatsby is a suspenseful view of him during the ritual of his isolation one evening when joined only by "the silhouette of a moving cat" and "the silver pepper of the stars" (GG, 21). Because Gatsby "gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone" (GG, 21), Nick obliges him and allows his reverie about the increasingly mysterious legend to end on a note of expectation in the "unquiet darkness" (GG, 21). Even before Nick can fully absorb the miscellany of rumours about his neighbour, his suspicions are disquieting. Gatsby's own account of his idyllic European existence as a "young rajah" (GG, 66) causes Nick to restrain laughter and as Gatsby chokes on the assertion of his having been "educated at Oxford", Nick

wonders "if there wasn't something a little sinister about him after all" (GG, 65). Nick's inclination to perform an intellectual probe of Gatsby's identity, complete with a subtle interrogation of Jordan, who supplies the missing details of Daisy's past connection with the young soldier, is complemented by his own recurrent stance as voyeur. Very early in the novel Nick decides against becoming a "well-rounded man", for "life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all" (GG, 4). Windows, however, do not always accommodate the voyeur's wish for gratification through visual penetration; Nick is denied symbolic achievement of even the substitute vaginal penetration that peering through the barrier represents for the impotent voyeur when his first revival of the primal scene occurs outside the New York City apartment occupied by Myrtle and Tom: ". . . high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering" (GG, 36). Similarly, as Nick and Gatsby motor over a bridge and New York City looms into view, "rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps" (GG, 69), Nick interprets that "the city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world" (GG, 69). Curiosity is aroused in Nick - a curiosity that his function as detective gives him an excuse to satisfy; the excitement

of his first visual intercourse with the city is manifest in his utilization of a vocabulary that betrays a man in anticipation of coitus. New York is untouched, virgin territory for Nick, the "New World" where, we may recall, he experiences a thrill in his self-proclamation as "a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler" (GG, 4) in the opening pages of his account for being able to direct a stranger to West Egg village.

Nick's preoccupation with "the first time" not only ties in with the notion that his metaphorical loss of innocence occurs in the city hotel suite as he concedes the transition to his thirty-first year, but with the fact that the primal scene is the scene of the child's first intuition of parental intercourse and probably his first exposure to the experience of guilt. The primal scene phantasies of Nick during the romantic rendezvous of Gatsby and Daisy in his bungalow amount to an awkward oedipal anxiety at feeling an intruder in his own home. But Nick, we must remember, has "arranged" the nostalgic private reunion of the former lovers. Listening outside their door, he hears "a sort of choking murmur and part of a laugh" (GG, 87), but his move outside the house into the dripping rain only serves as a prompt reminder of "the murmur of their voices, rising and swelling a little now and then with gusts of emotion" (GG, 89-90). Finally he re-enters, "after making every possible noise in the kitchen, short of pushing over the stove" (GG, 90), and finds Daisy in tears and a new Gatsby who "literally glowed" (GG, 90) in

his obvious satisfaction. In short, Nick has perpetrated a re-creation of the primal scene in a place where it is safe to relive infantile curiosity and his voyeuristic participation as a child.* Having escaped his oedipal phantasies in the West, the oedipal "criminal" only returns to a displaced scene of the "crime" in the East, where the "crime" may be re-enacted. In retracing Nick's twofold description of the "enormous power" of Tom's body ("a body capable of enormous leverage - a cruel body" (GG, 7)), and the "erect carriage" of the masculine Jordan, "which she accentuated by throwing her body backward at the shoulders like a young cadet" (GG, 11), the reader will discover that both characters appear as substitutes for Nick's father, a "cruel" man by the rigid, military-like quality of his strict morality. Nick professes an equal moral potency ("I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known" (GG, 60)), despite having escaped the commitment of marital engagement back home ("the fact that gossip had published the banns was one of the reasons I had come East" (GG, 20)), while Tom's voice of "paternal contempt" (GG, 7) and Jordan's "contemptuous expression" (GG, 19) are clearly projections of the contempt Nick feels for his father and that he imagines his father feels for

---

*This idea was developed in discussion with my thesis advisor, Dr. Rosenblood.

him.[10] Although as detective Nick usurps the paternal role, giving advice and receiving confidences, his place in the oedipal triangle, like Gatsby's, is as child. I wish to proceed with a clarification of what "crime" it is that this "child" has committed, and of how, by virtue of the detective's creation and probe of the pivotal fairy tale mystery, the detective story form occasions a reinterpretation of the nature and a relocation of the source of oedipal wishes in the novel.*

Nick's envious resentment of Tom is evident in the subtle undertones of his introduction of the latter to the reader:

> His family were enormously wealthy - even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach - but now he'd come East in a fashion that rather took your breath away;

---

[10] Interesting to note at this point is a passage where Nick describes Jordan as being "incurably dishonest. She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage and, given this unwillingness, I suppose she had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent smile turned to the world" (58-9). Jordan clearly reflects the dishonest character of Nick, and one suspects that the disdain Nick feels for her is, in fact, a mild form of the self-disgust he conceals with the pride by which he professes to being honest. Furthermore, Jordan, like Gatsby, exhibits a combination of masculine and feminine traits, and both may be interpreted as characters split from Nick.

*The explication of Nick's primal scene phantasy contained in the following paragraph was suggested to me by my thesis advisor, Dr. Rosenblood.

> for instance, he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that. (GG, 6)

Tom's financial potency, coupled with his "cruel body" and voice of "paternal contempt", establish him as an Eastern replacement for Nick's own father, and an appropriate object for Nick's revenge. In fact, the Nick-father-mother oedipal triangle of the West becomes the Gatsby-Tom-Daisy grouping of the East, and as Nick sets Daisy up with Gatsby, he is deliberately attacking the cruel father, who has meanwhile been unfaithfully preoccupied with the "bad" mother, Myrtle. By matching Daisy with Gatsby, a replacement for the child Nick and hence not a sexual threat, Nick preserves the virginal, "good" mother and achieves a fourfold gratification for himself: in addition to satisfying his voyeuristic tendencies by reviving the primal scene within the safety of his own home, Nick the child gains revenge on the father, is united with the mother through Gatsby, with whom he identifies, and moreover is able to gratify his homosexual wishes by discovering himself in Daisy as well, in her feminine passivity. Nick, too, is submissive to the punishing conscience he has inherited from his father[11], and is not spared some degree of oedipal guilt, which he attempts to alleviate with

---

[11] Rycroft, A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis, p. 62. Rycroft defines latent homosexuality as referring "to defensive and submissive attitudes adopted towards more powerful males".

Gatsby's death at the tale's end.

With regard to Nick's impotent stance as voyeur, it may be said that the detective discovers a phallic substitute in his verbal potency and in his capacity for experiencing a stimulation by probing clues to the crime or mystery. The rich vocabulary Nick wields to paint the exaggeratedly hedonistic party scenes, and his wary consideration of a poverty that is misplaced amid the Eastern glitter ("It had occurred to me that this shadow of a garage must be a blind, and that sumptuous and romantic apartments were concealed overhead" (GG, 25)) seem to promise that while the eyes of the castrated seer, Doctor Eckleburg, blindly "brood on over the solemn dumping ground" (GG, 23), the eyes of Nick will not merely "see" the slice of Eastern life in which he has become involved, but attempt to "comprehend" its details.

In "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming", Freud notes that "the stress laid on the writer's memories of his childhood, which perhaps seems so strange, is ultimately derived from the hypothesis that imaginative creation, like day-dreaming, is a continuation of and substitute for the play of childhood."[12] When Nick imaginatively recreates the scene of Gatsby's "mystical" kiss, his own position as voyeur is accentuated as he captures the mystery of the "cool night with that

---

[12] Freud, "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming", p. 42.

mysterious excitement in it" (GG, 112), while projecting a desired potency onto Gatsby. As the culmination of his "mounting" to a "secret place" (GG, 112), the kiss Gatsby exchanges with Daisy acts as a substitute for the act of sexual intercourse, and by the token of Nick's projected identification with Gatsby, as Nick's means of defence against the anxiety of impotence in another portrayal of the primal scene and fusion with the mother. Curiously enough, however, the reflections in which Nick subsequently engages betray how once again he is haunted by guilt in the revitalization of his memory of the primal scene, and how he experiences even the loss of the imagined potency he has displaced in Gatsby:

> Through all he said, even through his appalling sentimentality, I was reminded of something - an elusive rhythm, a fragment of lost words, that I had heard somewhere a long time ago. For a moment a phrase tried to take shape in my mouth and my lips parted like a dumb man's, as though there was more struggling upon them than a wisp of startled air. But they made no sound, and what I had almost remembered was uncommunicable forever. (GG, 112)

It would appear that the oedipal voyeur must suffer the consequences of a symbolic self-castration as even his vague remembrance of the primal scene mystery is blotted out completely by an overbearing guilt, which manifests itself in Nick's incapacity for recollection.

In "The Uncanny", Freud describes one form of ego-disturbance as "a harking-back to particular phases in the evolution of the self-regarding feeling, a regression to a

time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people."[13] Nick's sense of entrapment is evident as he hurries to work "down the white chasms of lower New York to the Probity Trust" (GG, 56). This, coupled with his depiction of the watery, flowing movement in which he feels immersed at the first of Gatsby's parties he attends, suggests Nick's phantasy of buried existence within the womb while his later attempt to penetrate the "ripe mystery" about Daisy Fay's house as he imagines it in terms of a feminine desirability (GG, 148) suggests his desire to emerge from the womb to a symbolic maturity. As Freud further notes, "an uncanny experience occurs . . . when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression."[14] Gatsby's self-arranged emergence from the shell of poverty and his relentless pursuit of the virgin princess, as described to Nick by Jordan, instill a new, although temporary courage in Nick as he proclaims that Gatsby "came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendor" (GG, 79). Nick has come alive to himself at this point, and is able to kiss Jordan, as Gatsby, who "took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously" (GG, 149), would kiss Daisy,

---

[13] Freud, "The Uncanny", p. 236.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

against the backdrop of a suitable image of penetration: "We passed a barrier of dark trees, and then the façade of Fifty-ninth Street, a block of delicate pale light, beamed down into the park" (GG, 81).

(iii)

Nick Carraway is explicit in his admission that he entertains sexual phantasies:

> I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night, and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. (GG, 57)

His selection of women who are strangers, however, acts as a defence against the realization of his phantasy, in much the same way that Gatsby's pursuit of a married woman who is, as a result, unattainable, defends against the anxieties that sexual union poses for him. In contrast to Gatsby's open exhibition of his love for Daisy, of which the lavish parties he concocts in hopes of baiting her form a part, Nick, as voyeur and moral conservative, feels it is safer to watch than to do. Of Jordan, he claims: "I wasn't actually in love, but I felt a sort of tender curiosity. The

bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something" (GG, 58). Nick does indeed wish for sexual intercourse with Jordan, and has previously referred to "wasting the most poignant moments of night and life" (GG, 57) while watching "throbbing taxicabs" (GG, 57); however, the omnipresent morality of a father who would "know" and "disapprove" (GG, 57) instills in Nick a paranoiac fear of sexuality: "I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires" (GG, 59). Like Doctor Eckleburg, who watches helplessly, Nick is but a castrated seer, rendered impotent by these "interior rules". Eckleburg, however, is not only the *victim* of castration as he hovers, in his association with a futile morality, over the spiritually arid wasteland; by paradox, he represents a projection of the castrator, Nick's own father, or externalized conscience. Freud speaks of the "evil eye"[15] as an element of the uncanny, and relates it to paranoia, in that it is a projection of the patient's fear of harm. Needless to say, Nick has two eyes symbolically watching him; one belongs to his biological father and the other to a religious (or anti-religious) father, both the phantasized products of Nick's paranoiac "omnipotence of thoughts"[16].

When Wilson remonstrates with his wife about her

---

[15] Ibid., p. 240.

[16] Ibid., p. 240.

affair, he points to the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg and warns Myrtle that "'God knows what you've been doing, everything you've been doing'" (GG, 160). Within the confines of the narrative, however, Nick is the central intelligence in whom each character confides. Although we have previously identified Nick with the impotent "observer" in Eckleburg, his "involvement" with the tale and the obvious bias he exhibits in Gatsby's favour distort his objectivity. In a ringside account of the verbal bout in which Gatsby and Tom engage, Nick applauds Gatsby's intermittent manifestations of emotional control: "I wanted to get up and slap him on the back. I had one of those renewals of complete faith in him that I'd experienced before" (GG, 130). Moreover, when Tom attacks Gatsby's ostentatious exterior, Nick's resentment shows: "The transition from libertine to prig was so complete" (GG, 131). Nick is even willing to substitute for Gatsby in the penetration of a domestic scene as he peers through the Buchanan window to find Tom and Daisy "conspiring" over cold chicken. In short, Nick demonstrates an unusually personal concern for Gatsby's defeat of the father surrogate, Tom, for only through Gatsby can Nick's own oedipal phantasy be realized and a threatening father controlled.

After Gatsby's death, which Nick accurately guesses has been arranged by Tom, Nick sadly notes with the conspicuous absence of a crowd at the funeral that "I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone" (GG, 165). Nick's report of the

hit-and-run accident involves a dehumanization of the victim Myrtle, the negative mother-figure, around whom the crowds gather in voyeuristic ecstacy: "her thick dark blood" (GG, 138) mingled as car oil would with the dust on the road, "her left breast was swinging loose like a flap" (GG, 138), a reminder of Owl Eyes' wrecked auto "shorn of one wheel" (GG, 54), and her ripped mouth suggests she might have "choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long" (GG, 138) as an engine would choke and die. The death of Myrtle, as described by Nick in particular, involves a violence that a child would associate with the force of sexual play during intercourse. With the "bad" mother disposed of, however, intercourse theoretically no longer occurs and revisitations of the primal scene are resisted, for in the child's phantasy the "good" mother is loyal to _him_ and rejects the father. While passing through the wasteland on a train, it is interesting to note that Nick takes a seat on the far side to avoid seeing "little boys searching for dark spots in the dust" (GG, 156). Soon after, he also resists joining the little boys who stand "clustered open-mouthed about the pool" (GG, 164). In a parody of the detective story form, the mystery _ends_ with the actual crime, and investigation is apparently over with the "bad" mother's death, for the detective need no longer seek penetration of the primal scene; furthermore, his guilt is assuaged when he punishes himself _through_ Gatsby by ending his account of this oedipal criminal,

twin to himself, with Gatsby's death.[17] Thus the detective story form gratifies Nick's voyeuristic instinct and affords him the role of detective in order that he may recreate the oedipal crime by means of displacement in setting and characters, and engage in a "safe" probe of wishes he has externalized in Gatsby, who becomes a harmless receptacle for the guilt Nick dispels from himself and atones for in his account of the protagonist's death.

(iv)

Robert Ornstein, in his account of Fitzgerald's "Fable of East and West", states that to the author, "the lure of the East represents a profound displacement of the American dream, a turning back upon itself of the historic pilgrimage towards the frontier which had, in fact, created and sustained that dream."[18] If the West represents the rural innocence of the frontier, or the roots of the father, then the more newly civilized East, the materialistic New World, represents the potentiality of the son and appears

---

[17] Nick's guilt is implied during his clandestine encounter with Gatsby following Myrtle's death, when Gatsby exhibits a concern for Daisy withstanding the shock; Nick is annoyed that "he spoke as if Daisy's reaction was the only thing that mattered." (144)

[18] Robert Ornstein, "Scott Fitzgerald's Fable of East and West", in Kenneth E. Eble, ed., F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Criticism (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1973), p. 63.

as a land of wishful promise. Tom claims he would be "a God damned fool to live anywhere else" (GG, 10) while Nick's "affair" with the East, at the price of a disillusionment that motivates his retreat to the West, may be appreciated as a step in the educational process. John Carroll explains that whereas Gatsby is a tragic hero who "pays the price of living too long with a single dream", Nick is a comic hero who achieves the conventional comic resolution "as he learns the way of the world, the price of experience, and what compromises can and cannot be made."[19] Eastern success devours Gatsby, but Nick is granted a reprieve; "the party was over" (GG, 181) in the East, but Nick is now ready to reappraise the Western ties he has all along been unable to sever:

> That's my Middle West - not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns, but the thrilling returning trains of my youth . . . I am part of that . . . 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 unadaptable to Eastern life. Even when the East excited me most . . . even then it had always for me a quality of distortion. West Egg, especially, still figures in my more fantastic dreams. I see it as a night scene by El Greco: a hundred houses, at once conventional and grotesque, crouching under a sullen, overhanging sky and a lustreless moon.
>
> (GG, 177-8)

---

[19] Carroll, p. 300.

Nick's return West represents a dubious maturation, however, dependent upon a realization that Eden cannot be physically restored in a new locale, but that a self-induced "inner paradise" in his submission to familial security may serve defensively as a substitute consolation in his newly fallen state. In the final scene of the novel, the identities of Gatsby and Nick appear to integrate as Nick envisages the virgin land of the past; as Gatsby merges with the land in Nick's phantasy, Nick in turn integrates with Gatsby in a spiritual sense and is reborn as the embodiment of the "compromise" which ironically defines failure as a prerequisite to success. In terms of the dialectic of innocence and experience (or guilt), only fallen man may achieve the moral awareness that precedes his restoration to a greater innocence. In a final bit of irony, however, "grace" has been redefined in financial terms in this particular detective story as Nick returns, despite however much the wiser, to the security of his father's wealth. Hence, what has been presented as "success" is, in fact, an ambiguous success that must just as readily be interpreted as a sort of failure. Although the flock of sheep Nick expected to see turn the corner in New York City at any moment may have been an unconscious representation of the American dream for a rediscovery of the pastoral frontier innocence, ruthless men such as Wolfsheim, a veritable "wolf-in-sheep's-clothing" for having lured his ward into criminality, have re-established the dream in

financial urban empires.

Religion is parodied throughout The Great Gatsby; not only is money the object of worship and the Virgin Mother revamped as the golden girl-temptress, but Nick reveals how Gatsby "found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail . . . He felt married to her" (GG, 149). Because in its traditional depiction the Grail quest involves an internal journey or probe for self-knowledge on the part of the morally infirm Knights of the Round Table, such a quest may find its mirror image, though somewhat distorted, in the detective story form. In compliance with the Narcissus myth, the Grail knights were, unknown to themselves, both the subjects and the objects of their quest, out on a mission to master an external object that was really only a displacement of themselves. In a parallel to the detective story, it is the guilt that is certain in the knight-protagonists, and its source that needs to be explored. Inspired to restore the state of grace from which they have been cast for their failure to accept an uncertain spirituality on blind faith as being superior to a transitory material reality, the knights ultimately discover that they have been the cause of its disruption. With such a stress on the power of the human will, the inevitable question presents itself: is there really a greater truth in aspiration (idealism) than in experience (realism)?

In a grotesque parody of the Grail quest, The Great

Gatsby reveals the debasement of romance in a modern society where man is judged not by what he is, but by what he has. Gatsby has a faith and a strength of will that are misguided. Henry Dan Piper sees him as a composite Grail knight-business tycoon, for "the Grail he pursues is the modern one of worldly success."[20] He exhibits a holy attitude to the object of what is unconsciously an erotic, vengeful, and narcissistic desire, for Daisy's portrayal is respectively as seductive virginal princess in Gatsby's eyes, as golden girl whose wealth Gatsby resents, and as Gatsby's own idealized self. Daisy appears to him "gleaming like silver" (GG, 150), the symbol of success, yet it is ironic that this Jazz Age knight, who is morally superior for his strength of purpose to the sham Grail of his quest, resorts to the social game of the rich to win her. Glimpses of Daisy are inspiring, but not in a consolatory sense: they only feed a negative obsession. Sadly enough, despite all Gatsby has at stake, it is not really Daisy the human being he seeks to possess; Gatsby has been married to a vision of material success, a phantasy turned partial reality short only of Daisy for completion. In his avarice, Gatsby, a euphemistic symbol for the society he represents, has been blind to the superiority of spiritual wealth. Unlike the luckier Grail knights who engaged in external pur-

---

[20] Piper, p. 122.

suit to achieve the faith that was always hidden within, his sight is never restored. Only in Nick is the probe for self-knowledge successful, but in a disconsolatory sense, as he acknowledges himself a displaced Westerner in the East ("That's my Middle West . . . I am part of that" (GG, 177)) but journeys back in emotional defeat to this repressive, puritanical heritage a "condemned" man.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND SYNTHESIS

The intent of this thesis has thus far been to offer two distinct yet interrelated psychoanalytic interpretations of The Great Gatsby on the basis of a proposed dichotomy in the novel's form. After briefly examining the traditional and psychoanalytic concepts of form according to a survey of critics in the chapter following my introduction, and determining the characteristics of two specific literary forms, the fairy tale and the detective story, I proceeded to apply psychoanalytic theory in the two ensuing chapters in separate exploratory readings of the novel. My chief discovery - amid the investigation of various unconscious wishes, phantasies, and fears - was that The Great Gatsby is neither a fairy tale nor a detective story, but rather a synthesis of both forms as they appear in ironic modification. Consequently, my concluding remarks will not only comprise a recapitulation of ideas discussed in previous chapters, but will attempt to describe the complementary nature of, and aspects common to the fairy tale and detective story forms of The Great Gatsby.

In summary, The Great Gatsby may be described as the ironic embodiment of interwoven or "synthesized" paro-

dies. The fairy tale that appears as an entertaining romance independent of the detective story frame into which it has been locked is exposed in its form as a disconsolatory illusion that parodies the traditional form; thus, the complementary act of seemingly unrelated forms unfolding in simultaneity occurs, but in disharmonious fashion as the fairy tale form nourishes the illusion that the detective story functions to destroy. To complicate matters further, the sustained fictional probe in which Nick engages to perform this unmasking caricatures the conventional detective story form, for with his resolution of the enigma about Gatsby occurs Nick's compounding of the mystery in the novel as he unconsciously and involuntarily reveals aspects of his own story. Rather than quest for truth, Nick hides, or at least displaces, the truth about his problematic growth to emotional maturity and independence in Gatsby, a human being separate from himself, yet with whom Nick grows out of admiration to be spiritually intimate. Moreover, Nick's role as detective grants him unchallenged, unquestioned permission to recreate the primal scene mystery that once aroused a curiosity in him, and that has awaited the substitute voyeuristic gratification afforded by the mystery's revival in the form of phantasy. Ultimately, both mystery and investigation end rather than begin with the actual crime of Myrtle's fatal accident, for Nick's primal scene phantasy is destroyed with the termination of the father's sexual act with the harlot-mother.

Nick rides in both seats on the see-saw of investigative probing and voyeuristic passivity; he is not only the potent detective who displays a paternal kind of mastery over the other characters, but the impotent suspect who relapses into his identity as the guilt-stricken son.

With the kernel of The Great Gatsby as illusion, the modern fairy tale evolves in mockery of its traditional form. Its chief witness, the impressionable Nick, is not consoled, but rather suffers disillusionment. Concepts of family and community are frustrated, testifying to the tale's atypicality; Daisy ironically believes that "the home influence will be very good for [Jordan] " (GG, 19) when only infidelity thrives in the Buchanan household, and the party guests who flutter about like moths at Gatsby's gatherings attest to a characteristic restlessness about society. The fairy tale protagonist, a self-proclaimed "prince" who is really a criminal, pursues a success he identifies with a girl whose youth and wealth sanction a "religious" commitment from him. Unconsciously, however, Gatsby is unable to direct his love away from himself as he sees his ideal reflection in Daisy, and the money he desires will serve only as a means of narcissistic gratification. Gatsby's romantic illusions betray him, however, and chief among these is the untrue assumption that he can be successful just because he wants to be in a society where wealth and class can only be mated with wealth and class. Consequently, the sympathe-

tic reader's faith in the strength of will is diminished despite Gatsby's tenacious refusal to acknowledge the limitation society imposes upon him. Further, the fairy tale as a censored form of wish-fulfillment is designed to portray the growth to independence made possible by the mastery of life's obstacles and enriched by a satisfying love relationship; however, Gatsby's stasis at emotional adolescence bespeaks his incapacity both to surmount the hardship of youth's decay with the passage of time, and to experience a love that is mutual and permanent. We must recall that the potential winning of Daisy's love threatened the impotent dreamer, and his reluctance to progress or "fall" from self-love, inherent in his pretensions to being self-made, to object-love made him atypical of the traditional fairy tale protagonist exemplified, for instance, in "Beauty and the Beast". The difficulty Gatsby encounters in his attempts to realize his love for Daisy may be attributed to the fact that such a love only increases and reflects a progressively damaging self-absorption on Gatsby's part, for Daisy, as I have repeatedly noted, embodies the wealth and the youth preserved by wealth that Gatsby covets. His journey to unite with her is a self-destructive one and suggests by association the plight of Narcissus enamoured of his own image.

The fairy tale and detective story forms of The Great Gatsby are modified, then, by an ironic tone. Both comprise oedipal wishes that shape and are gratified within

their separate forms, and both portray the fall from innocence to experience at the expense of guilt and disillusionment. Gatsby's major oedipal wish is to win the affections of the "good" mother, Daisy, from the rival father, Tom. Tom is not only the victim of Gatsby's rivalrous aggressions, but the personification of a twofold projection by Gatsby. In his roughness, he exercises in Gatsby's place an oedipal aggression against the "harlot"-mother, Myrtle, who is disgusting to the child and against the "virgin"-mother, Daisy, whom the child cannot exclusively possess; secondly, Tom, in his verbal castration of the fairy tale hero, is Gatsby's means of self-degradation and self-punishment - a projection of Gatsby's aggression against himself for being the poor boy who could never marry the rich girl. The oedipal motif is consistent in Gatsby's relationship to Myrtle and Nick as well. Myrtle, as she gratifies her phantasy of being wealthy in her liaison with Tom, reflects Gatsby's self-prostitution as he adheres to a dream for honest success he can never realize. His symbiotic relationship with Nick, of course, is founded on a mutual exploitation as Gatsby uses Nick to procure Daisy for him while Nick employs Gatsby in his oedipal phantasy as a means of external gratification of Nick's own vengeful, incestuous, and voyeuristic wishes.

The analysis of oedipal wishes in the detective story is by far more complicated and shifts to a consideration of the disenchanted narrator, Nick, as the focal point

of study. In short, the detective story form has occasioned a reinterpretation of the "obvious", and in this way serves a complementary function to the fairy tale. It appears "obvious" that *The Great Gatsby* is a novel that centres around the story of Jay Gatsby, but an examination of the novel's form has indicated that the role of protagonist is divided and that Gatsby shares the billing with Nick; in fact, for all intents and purposes in the detective story, Gatsby *is* Nick, the man who acts as puppeteer in the staging of the oedipal drama central in location and theme to the novel. Further to the complementary nature of the protagonists, it is important to note, since the novel has been presented as the projection of Nick's phantasies, that Nick is most effectively studied through his own study of Gatsby. I have previously discovered Nick's wish for an identity and a self-sufficiency independent of his father as perhaps the main reason for Nick's migration to the East under an assumed plan to explore his potential in the bond business. He never really escapes the watchful eye of his father, though, as his unconscious relationships to the Eastern characters demonstrate. His identification with Gatsby stems from the love triangle Gatsby forms with Tom and Daisy, which Nick sees as a displacement for the oedipal triangle he himself once formed with his parents in the West. Nick's willingness to aid Gatsby and hurt Tom in arranging Gatsby's rendezvous with Daisy is motivated by a series of oedipal wishes that have been dis-

cussed previously at length and may be summarized as follows: the first wish is for revenge on the castrating father by implicating the mother in an adulterous situation, for the severe superego of the father has paralyzed Nick emotionally; the second wish is for rescue of the "good" mother from the father and for preservation of the "good" mother for the child himself, who in turn is no sexual threat; Nick's third wish is for a revival of the primal scene which, in its externalized representation in new characters and a new Eastern locale, Nick can master. As the reflection of Nick's ideal self, Gatsby is the means by which Nick can re-enact, engage as substitute in, and illicitly view symbolic parental intercourse without having to re-experience the old childhood guilt. Further, Nick is granted through his kinship with Gatsby the added benefit of an opportunity to gratify superficially homosexual wishes that began with a submissive stance to his father and continued with feelings of inferiority to Tom and with the selection of the masculine Jordan as a love-object.

The traditional fairy tale, a form that portrays the struggle of good and evil forces in life and the necessity for the child to fall from his innocence and naïveté to the acceptance of hardship and disillusioning experience, is parodied in the novel. Gatsby's growth to maturity was thwarted by two misguiding "fathers": Dan Cody, the "pioneer debauchee" who taught Gatsby to be self-reliant and to exist

in emotional seclusion from the rest of the world, and Meyer Wolfsheim, the gangster who taught him how to step dishonestly toward the realization of his dream. The criminal Gatsby clings to his defences in refusing to submit to time and to the futility of denying mortality by living outside the realm of time as he dreams for a recovery of the past; this weakness is the source of his disillusionment and prevents his awareness of human limitation. Ironically, Nick idealizes Gatsby for the faith, hope, and charity that not only helped build the legend about him, but ultimately destroyed both legend and man. Important to an understanding of the reasoning behind this judgment is the fact that these "virtues" must not be interpreted in an orthodox religious sense, for Gatsby's only security, defence, and faith lay in material success. His fusion with Daisy by the power of a kiss is a step toward that success, and is proof that Gatsby is not the idealist Nick understands him to be. Gatsby willingly allows the purity of aspiration toward a goal to be transformed to the vulgarity manifest in the annihilation of hope once the goal is achieved. A dream that materializes loses its identity as a dream, eliminates man's need for faith, and in Gatsby's case allows him to partially overcome the impotence associated with dreaming and to gratify his material avarice. In fact, Nick illustrates by Gatsby's fate the ironies inherent both in the _dreaming_ that paralyzes the potential for progress, as well as in progress itself; not

only is the wish for fusion with the "fresh, green breast" futile, and even "taboo" since past historical time cannot be renewed, but the original, clichéd American dream for preservation of the frontier and power in the communion with the wilderness is depicted as having died with man's desire for the natural to become civilized and with the transference of energy from idealistic to materialistic striving.

Finally the form of the detective story is modified when the fall from innocence to experience that is portrayed in The Great Gatsby is synthesized not in the restoration to a state of spiritual grace, but in the parody of Nick's disillusioned return to material grace, or paternal security, at the Western homefront. In his exploratory revisitations of the primal scene he sought mastery over an old guilt. Situated in the East and safely distanced from the scene of his Western childhood, the voyeur who "watches" his substitute, Gatsby, in communication with Daisy feels less guilty than a participant would; however, although Nick escapes the original scene, the conscience that arrests his desires cannot be defied. In a metaphorical sense, Nick is never delivered from "the warm center of the world" (GG, 3), never really born out of the womb permanently; the opportunity for independence knocks, but Nick's fall from security at venturing eastward alone only resolves itself in his eventual regressive motion to a sheltered lifestyle, both financially and emotionally, as he reunites with his family. Nick is a sort

of inverse prodigal son who doesn't really squander his time in the East. The cynicism that has invaded his soul and the prolongation of his emotional repression are but the price he pays for a new awareness of the compatibility to be found in renewed submission to his father's world of moral rectitude; he returns to the scene of his "younger and more vulnerable years" (GG, 1), to "the Carraway house in a city where dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name" (GG, 177), where he may reclaim his share of, and exercise his own "sense of the fundamental decencies" that are "parcelled out unequally at birth" (GG, 1).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. The Great Gatsby. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925.

Opie, Iona and Peter, eds. The Classic Fairy Tales. London: Oxford University Press, 1974.

Turnbull, Andrew, ed. The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963.

Secondary Materials

Auden, W. H. "The Guilty Vicarage", in his The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays. New York: Random House, Inc., 1962.

Benét, William Rose. "The Great Gatsby: An Admirable Novel" (1925), in Matthew J. Bruccoli and Jackson R. Bryer, eds., F. Scott Fitzgerald: In His Own Time. A Miscellany. Toronto: Popular Library Edition, 1971.

Bettelheim, Bruno. The Uses of Enchantment. The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales. New York: Vintage Books, 1977.

Bewley, Marius. "Scott Fitzgerald and the Collapse of the American Dream", in his The Eccentric Design. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.

Booth, Wayne C. "Distance and Point-of-View: An Essay in Classification", in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Callahan, John F. The Illusions of a Nation: Myth and History in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald. Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1972.

Carroll, John. "F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby", in John Orrell, ed., Studies of Major Works in English. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Doyno, Victor A. "Patterns in The Great Gatsby", in Henry Dan Piper, ed., The Great Gatsby: The Novel, The Critics, The Background. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.

Fiedler, Leslie A. Love and Death in the American Novel. New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1975.

Freedman, Ralph. "Nature and Forms of the Lyrical Novel", in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Freud, Sigmund. The Interpretation of Dreams. Edited by James Strachey. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1976.

--------. "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming" (1908), in Philip Rieff, ed., Character and Culture. New York: Collier Books, 1972.

--------. "A Special Type of Object Choice Made By Men" (1910), in Philip Rieff, ed., Sexuality and the Psychology of Love. New York: Collier Books, 1974.

--------. "The Uncanny" (1919), in James Strachey, ed., The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1957. XVII.

Friedman, Norman. "Point of View in Fiction: The Development of a Critical Concept", in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Fussell, Edwin. "Fitzgerald's Brave New World", in Frederick J. Hoffman, ed., The Great Gatsby: A Study. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1962.

Handy, William. "Toward a Formalist Criticism of Fiction", in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Heuscher, Julius E. A Psychiatric Study of Myths and Fairy Tales. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1974.

Holland, Norman N. The Dynamics of Literary Response. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1975.

Lehan, Richard D. F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Works. Toronto: Forum House, 1969.

Lockridge, Ernest. "Introduction", in his The Great Gatsby: A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968.

Mizener, Arthur. "F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1896-1940: The Poet of Borrowed Time", in Alfred Kazin, ed., F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work. New York: Collier Books, 1967.

--------. F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963.

Ornstein, Robert. "Scott Fitzgerald's Fable of East and West", in Kenneth E. Eble, ed., F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Collection of Criticism. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1973.

Paterson, Isabel. "The Great Gatsby: Up to the Minute" (1925), in Matthew J. Bruccoli and Jackson R. Bryer, eds., F. Scott Fitzgerald: In His Own Time. A Miscellany. Toronto: Popular Library Edition, 1971.

Piper, Henry Dan. F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Critical Portrait. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1965.

Rahv, Philip. "Fiction and the Criticism of Fiction", in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Rogers, Robert. A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970.

Rycroft, Charles. A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977.

--------. "The Analysis of a Detective Story", in his Imagination and Reality. London: The Hogarth Press, 1968.

Samuels, Charles Thomas. "The Greatness of 'Gatsby'", in Henry Dan Piper, ed., Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby: The Novel, The Critics, The Background. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.

Schorer, Mark. "Technique as Discovery", in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Scrimgeour, Gary J. "Against The Great Gatsby", in Ernest Lockridge, ed., The Great Gatsby: A Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968.

Shroder, Maurice Z. "The Novel as a Genre", in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Troy, William, "Scott Fitzgerald - the Authority of Failure", in Alfred Kazin, ed., F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work. New York: Collier Books, 1967.