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DUALITY AND CONTRAST "IN THE GREAT GATSBY"

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ABSTRACT

When F. Scott Fitzgerald first published his novel *The Great Gatsby* in 1925, it was received with little or no attention from the critics because they saw in it a real documentation of the period and hence nothing surprising or creative in it. Fortunately, this misconception of treating a creative work as an historical record lasted only for a short time and the novel got the attention it deserved as more readers and critics came to acknowledge its excellence. In a very short time the novel became a best-seller and its author gained money and reputation. Now the novel is considered one of the best American literary works in the twentieth century.

This paper focuses on the relationship between the materialistic and the spiritual in *The Great Gatsby*. The spirit as embodied in the character of Gatsby who sailed eastward to recapture a lost moment in the past is in sharp contrast to those who represent 'gestures' or physical intimacy, namely his life-time love Daisy whose voice is 'full of money' and whose husband is 'a hulking' real athlete and pleasure-seeker. The setting of the novel is part of a recurrent contrast showing discord and harmony represented by the two houses situated in East Egg and West Egg. Together with other elements of the symmetrical opposition of the past and the present, the old world and the new world, Europe and America, the 'ash valley' and 'the green light'. The study reveals how all these parallels are made whether figuratively or literally so as to sustain and consolidate the major theme of the story 'the American Dream'. Moreover, the author's criticism of America is discussed in this novel which describes an era characterized by music, money and carelessness. Last but not least, the paper investigates questions such as what the essence of Gatsby's dream is, and whether the body is meant to triumph over the soul at the end of the story.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fitzgerald's criticism of the American experience is obvious in *The Great Gatsby*. He has treated the subject of the 'American dream' in this artistic work by embodying fictional characters standing for the materialistic side of the experience represented by the Buchanans as opposed to the spiritual side envisioned and incarnated by the tragic hero Gatsby, standing alone seeking perfection and using money as a means to make his dream come true. In fact, Nick Carraway, the narrator, is right when he describes the magnitude of Gatsby's dream by saying: "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 into my mouth".¹ It is evident that Nick has realized the essence of Gatsby's dream which represents the spiritual level of the 'American dream'. In this sense the phrase 'the American dream' refers to the romantic enlargement of the possibilities of life on a level at which the material and the spiritual become confused.² Gatsby is a victim of this 'dream' because he is unable to differentiate between fiction and reality. This is apparent in his willingness to mix up fiction with reality, his appalling sentimentality as Nick describes it; and above all the dislocation of his experience: Gatsby plays out a frontier dream in the new city, now dominated by money-brokers like Tom Buchanan, and all those who can manage their works from home without any obligation.³ Gatsby is a descendent of some Dutch sailors; paradoxically he wants to 'repeat the past' whereas history testifies to the fact that his ancestors, the Puritans, went first to Netherlands before coming to America but they were afraid that their children would not be educated properly.⁴ Their emigration to the 'new world' in the 1620s represents a pilgrimage or a holy mission to a place that could accommodate them materially as well as spiritually. As immigrants, they could not escape the influence of the idea of the 'American dream' – the myth of success – this is why we can assume that Gatsby's dream has roots in the American experience though his journey, speaking symbolically, is to the East. He is the true heir of a mission whose pursue of spiritual success is quite normal:

The immigrant's struggle for success never ends, because there is no limit to the possible goal. The second generation child, in turn rejects the alien parents because they cannot measure up American standards. The only way to soften the blow is to achieve a still greater success.⁵

Symbolically, Gatsby represents the second generation of the Dutch sailors who came to America seeking wealth. However, when someone like him possesses qualities beyond the perception of those who seek immediate satisfaction and hence might compromise. Arguably, it would be quite normal within such a context to have a mythical character like this great man who uses wealth to buy the golden past. However deluded Gatsby might be, Nick thinks that he turns out all right at the end of the story. He makes for his inability to see the dividing line between what is real, and what is beyond human realization by following his design to the end. According to Daisy's standards Gatsby's money is unclean but for him fortune is only a tool through which he can fill up his emptiness. He has accumulated his wealth so as to compensate for his 'dislocated' spirit. His dream is a scheme, a spiritual one amid a civilization that has no place for spiritualism. On contrary to his romantic scheme or design of bringing in 'order' among 'chaos', we are aware of the sharp contrast represented by the pragmatism of the Buchanans in East Egg, the foul dust in the wake of his dream, and the ugliness of the valley of ashes where Tom's mistress dwell. Gatsby's striving for success and prestige is, in a way, an attempt to overcome fears and inner emptiness.⁶ Like most Americans our protagonist is the product of the American experience, influenced by it and shaped by its characteristics, though everyone's personality is unique and unrepeatable. In this regard, however special his experience might be, he is presumably blind to the limitations of romantic possibilities. Neither can 'history' repeat itself, nor can he play the frontier again by taking by force a wife from her husband. Though, the first settlers took the land from the natives and drove

¹F.Scott. Fitzgerald.*The Great Gatsby*.(London: Penguin, 1926) p.118

²Marius Bewely,P.37

³Richard Lehan."The American Crusoe and the Idea of the West" in *Making America*. p.83

⁴J. A. Leo Lemay. "Religious Traditions in Early America" in *An Early American Reeder*. P.174

⁵Bardford Smith. "The American Character" in *An American Grab Bag*.P.89

⁶Bradford Smith. P.89

them out to the mountains. Time elapses forever and people change in their attitudes but Gatsby is an exception. He feels married forever to that careless girl who cherishes gestures and wealth. He has tried to act out the drama of the rags-to-riches hero on the materialistic level but, alas, cannot act it spiritually.

2. Objectives of the Study

1. To discuss the concept of the 'American Dream' as depicted in F. Scott's Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*.
2. To show the artistic quality of the novel by discussing the underlying themes.
3. To explain how characters, motifs, symbols and images are embodied to enhance the central theme of the story 'the American Dream' as shown in the contrast of the material and the spiritual part of the 'Dream'.

3. Methodology

The study follows the descriptive analytical method. It begins by an introduction forming a background to the study; followed by a summary of the plot, a literature review, a discussion and a conclusion.

4. Summary of the Great Gatsby

Jimmy Gatz is a self-made westerner who has assumed the name of Jay Gatsby and lived up to his ideals to the last moment of his life and came to East Egg so as 'to repeat the past'. Once, five years ago from the commence of our story, he fell in love with a beautiful girl called Daisy, who is for the time being married to Tom Buchanan, a wealthy and physically strong man who lives in the East-Egg, New York. The result of this marriage is a little girl.

The protagonist of our story Gatsby has arrived from the west to this far place near New York looking for his lost love Daisy. This time he came with huge wealth and bought a huge house in West Egg so as to get in touch with his youth love Daisy who is not aware of his presence in the nearby.

The narrator of the story Nick Carraway is a far relative of Daisy's who has come to this remote place looking for an opportunity for business and by chance rents a house next to Gatsby's mansion.

As the story unfolds we become aware of the embarrassing situation Mr. Carraway encounters. He tells how he saw his neighbor Gatsby for the first time, standing at the shore and watching a green light coming from a house at the other end of the other island East-Egg. These two islands form a kind of symmetry. A few days later Nick receives an invitation to attend a party by his neighbor Gatsby. In the party, he is old the story of this mysterious man who makes parties and receives strangers in his house in the hope that one day Daisy would walk in and say 'hello I'm here.'

Nick visits the Buchanans and Daisy introduces him to Jordan Baker, a tennis-player with whom he becomes involved in an affair afterwards. He meets her again in one of Gatsby's parties. Gatsby, via Miss Baker, asks Nick to arrange a meeting with Daisy in Nick's house. The old partners met once again and Gatsby could hardly believe it. In a second party Tom comes with his wife Daisy. Little by little he becomes conscious of the relationship between Gatsby and his wife. In fact, Tom is no exception as he also has an affair with a married woman, a Mrs. Wilson.

The confrontation between Gatsby and Tom over Daisy takes place in a hotel in New York. She has to choose either of them; her husband or her lover. She chooses her husband but accompanies Gatsby in his car. She refused to let him drive and sat behind the steer herself on the basis that he couldn't drive after this scene in New York. One their way home, she crushed a woman in the street and hadn't the guts to stop or look behind, though people in that place know Gatsby's car very well and it wouldn't be difficult for them to identify it. Unluckily, the dead woman's husband, ironically Mr. Wilson, saw the accident. Eventually, Gatsby's body was drifting in his swimming pools. Nobody dared to investigate the Buchanans or ask them to take responsibility. They shrank like snails in their vast wealth, and never felt guilty or responsible again. They were careless people in a crazy age, characterized by music and dancing over the victims' dead bodies.

5. Literature Review

5.1 Who is Jay Gatsby?

Most of the people who used to come to his parties as 'gatecrashers' or uninvited guests would give different answers to this seemingly easy question, sincerumors spread all over the country about his origin. Some say that he is a German spy, others say he is a prince. In fact, as more people come to his orgies, these new-comers create more stories about him. According, to the information provided in the story, we know very

little about his past. Nick Carraway has been lucky enough to hear confides from Gatsby himself about his family and origin. Apparently, he came out of a poor background and by chance met a rich man who became like his godfather. Dan Cody, Gatsby's mentor or godfather, bestowed lavishly on this young and promising man who came later to inherit him.

Nevertheless, Gatsby was in the army when he met Daisy for the first time. He appeared after some years of absence with his secret money and limitless wealth so as to retain his forgotten love-story.

Gatsby, in a sense tries to recapture the past. This is obvious when he makes a counter-journey to his ancestors' who came from Europe, the Old World, to America, the New World seeking a new way of life. However, it is noteworthy that this man made his journey looking for something spiritual, his unmistakable love for Daisy and his fantastic dreams of buying these precious moments of the past with money.

He is a self-made man, who perceives himself as the 'son-of-god' in Nick Carraway's words whose mission is to bring 'order among chaos'. Wealth is his means to this scheme of restoring the golden past. In medieval terms, he succeeded in controlling three elements out of the four from which makes the cosmos. These are Earth, Water and Air. The fourth element which could have made him a perfect and infallible god is Fire. It is out of his reach so he dies in summer when it is hot and by a shot representing 'fire.'

The contrast between Gatsby, who made his palace like Eden for everyone to come, eat, dance, and go without bothering to clear their mess after them and Gatsby who has a gardener and workers to see that everything is in its proper place after the party. This indicates that Gatsby is genetically different from other people especially those who tell jokes behind his back. Even at the end of the story, he dies as a result of something he didn't do as John Wilson mistakenly thought that Gatsby was responsible for his wife's death.

Evidently, Gatsby is someone who could not differentiate between what is fictional and what is factual. The fact is that his dream-girl got married to another callous man who wouldn't allow him to sneak out with his wife at night. Evidently, Gatsby does not want a relationship behind Tom's back, he wants to take his wife by force. Not only this but also to switch or rewind the pendulum anti-clock so as to begin from the moment when he was still with Daisy. Had he got a time-capsule, it might have been easy for him. His tragic end is due to his romantic nature which exaggerated the possibilities of success to a step further beyond the capabilities of mankind when he wanted to capture the past. Presumably, he is a small boat against the current as most people in that time seek money and physical pleasure; alone he stands like a monument waiting patiently for some mysterious conception to come true.

5.2 Essence of Gatsby's Dream

Gatsby has come to West-Egg on purpose; his journey to that place is never accidental. His life, dedicated as it is to a single elusive dream is in sharp contrast with the dwellers at the other end of the dock, the Buchanans. On one side, our protagonist Gatsby is James Gatz, 'the son of shiftless and unsuccessful farm people.' On the other, he is Jay Gatsby, the child of "his platonic conception of himself," the heir to a history almost wholly invented.⁷ In the course of his invented history, he becomes the 'protégé' of Dan Cody whose name suggests the combination of the names of the true pioneer Daniel Boone with the buffalo –slaughterer and carnival man William Cody.⁸ Thus, his personal history reveals a commitment to design from the early stage of his life to his journey eastwards. However, his status as Dan Cody's protégé does not mean that he has become another copy of that man. Our protagonist stays self-made without intervention, fictional more than factual or tangible. He has come out of the womb of the American experience represented in the immigrants who often suffer from dislocation and alienation.⁹ Gatsby is dislocated too. His character shows early symptoms of immature romanticism as he treads upon unfamiliar ways that cannot enclose the magnitude of his dream or endure his civilizing-mission project. Yet, like most immigrants, he is subject to the demands of the American experience. Most immigrants change their names and adopt new ones that do not sound odd in

⁷David L. Minter."Dream, Design and Interpretations in *The Great Gatsby*" in **Interpretations of the Great Gatsby**. P. 85

⁸Ernest Lockridge, in **Interpretations of the Great Gatsby** p.16

⁹David Minter, in p.83

their new home. Gatsby does the same. It is fair to mention that adopting a new name leads realistically to assuming a new identity as one critic points out: "One means by which new names have been supplied is by taking of shortenings and nicknames as official".¹⁰ So Dan Cody and his protégé Gatsby are conforming to that mode of attitude but the later has a dream, a mission in life i.e. to bring order to a chaotic world. His emigration and owning a mansion of West-Egg is the result of a plan that has forced him to change his name and to live up to his 'invented' history.

On the other hand, Daisy's husband Tom, who was Nick's acquaintance and colleague at college, is someone powerfully built and mythically rich, spending his time and wealth on whores and shores. His wife Daisy knows his affairs, yet she is indifferent and never asks him about his telephone calls or even pretends to be jealous of his attitude. Beautifully as she is, Nick describes her in terms of the gestures she assumes and the qualities she stands for by saying that her voice is 'full of money'. Does she stand for America? Is she a gesture for the future of this young nation which has undergone so many social and economic changes in the twenties, the period of modern buccaneers and money-makers who spend their wealth on women parties with nothing in mind except passing a cozy moment? It is never evident or directly stated but it is clear that the Buchanans, Tom and Daisy, are in symmetry with Gatsby. Unlike those on the other shore he is a spirit, an idea, a level of a moment beyond what is human or realistic. Even his love for her is never stated in terms of physical pleasure or making her husband 'cuckold'. When he takes her to his house, he shows her his elegant clothes and majestic palace built in the classic tradition of the East.

What is certain is that all early Americans knew the myth about America and the fundamental materialist version of the American Dream was the rags-to-riches story. Even the early New England puritan writers celebrated versions of this fundamental common place. Cotton Mather, in his history of New England, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), has William Phips cry out: "Thanks be to God we are **made!**" When Phips discovers a treasure.¹¹

To believe in a myth as such is something quite probable in America; to carry it too far beyond its spiritual limitations will result in a tragedy. This is the major theme of *The Great Gatsby*. The author seems to approve that the "American Dream" can materialize when it is played in context, as in the case of the Buchanans who make money and enjoy themselves without paying attention to the consequences of their actions. Yet, 'the dream' might be fatally elusive, as in Gatsby's case who never escapes his 'rags'.

5.3 The Past and the Present

Historically, Columbus and early Europeans believed that the New World would be a new 'garden of Eden'. During his third voyage of exploration to America (1498-1500), Columbus thought that he had found the actual place of the terrestrial Paradise.¹² So the newcomers did not find the New World a version of the age of gold, but they rather found it a land of gold where one could farm and enjoy the fertility of the soil and the virginity of the land; though some immigrants never gave up the idea of looking for gold. Unlike in their older homeland, here in this new place they could become landlords. It is a land of so many opportunities, ripen and lying a head for those who have the spirit of adventure. Those immigrants came to America so as to escape the harsh realities of Europe, the old world which was torn with savagery and wars and ruled by feudal baronies and the gentry. Therefore, the American land held promise for all those who wanted to go up the ladder.

It is not astonishing that the companies which sponsored immigration to America promised the first settlers pieces of land as a kind of encouragement.¹³ This promise resulted in new waves of immigrants who looked upon the New World as a paradise, a refuge, a new haven and an asylum of the poor. Would they return to the Old World again? Here is a typical response of a new settler:

No, urged by a variety of motives, here they came. Everything has tended to regenerate them; new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system; here they are become men: in Europe

¹⁰George R. Stewart, "Personal Names" in *An American Grab Bag*. P. 105

¹¹ Leo Lemay. "The American Dream" in *An Early American Reader*. P.5

¹² Ibid. P. 1

¹³ Ibid. p. 4

they were as so many useless plants, wanting vegetative mould, and refreshing showers; they withered, and were mowed down by want, hunger and war; but now by the power of transplantation, like all other plants they have taken roots and flourished.¹⁴

In fact, most of them would have given the same answer if they had other soft options than the aura of the new experience and the promise of oppression and hardships in their home countries. Their minds had been preoccupied with the idea of a new world better than that theirs in versions of religion since the Greek and Roman times. They were seeking 'the promised land' where food is abundant, man is faithful and innocent, equality is in the air they breathe, freedom and peace are facts of life, and none is holier than his countrymen. They wouldn't go back to tyranny, landlords, servitude, and lack of opportunity, terror and war again. So most of their letters and messages to their relatives in Old World were descriptive and optimistic about a golden future for all the newcomers. Yet, this early literature of America was exaggerated and not ultimately right as it only sought to draw more immigrants to that place. In fact, so many people suffered in their journey across the ocean and they either died or got somewhere else than they had intended. Assuredly, many of the new settlers suffered from hunger and diseases after their arrivals to the shores. Evidently, not most of the stories were happy-ending though immigrants and dreamers from all over the world continued to come and they still, holding affirm belief in the success-story. This is why one can say that in the American experience the past shaped the present but 'the promise' stayed the same. One can hardly differentiate between the response of an immigrant in our modern times from that of a first-generation immigrant's. For both the vision of a land of opportunity lies ahead, typically like in Michael Drayton's poem "To the Virginia Voyage":

And cheerfully at sea,
Success you still entice,
To get the pearle and gold,
And ours to hold
VIRGINIA,
earth's only paradise.¹⁵

It was due to this promotional literature of a period marked by exaggerated celebration of the attractions of westward emigration's that most of the dreamers came running to this place. Some of the dream-seekers were not even well-equipped to this journey so most of their stories were tragic but the literature of the period neglected this side of the coin. Presumably some immigrants wished they had returned back, others like the slaves wanted to go back. Some of the immigrants who came without their families, wanted only gold in order in order to lead decent lives in their mother countries. So Gatsby is in line with those whose journeys eastwards are meant to make up for spiritual emptiness. Even his manner of taking a wife from her husband is consistent with the first settlers who took land and gold from the natives so as to build their own homes and families.

As stated above, the writers of that early period succeeded in creating a myth that continued to hold the breath, the aspirations and dreams of the Americans to an extraordinary level so that some could not see the existing boundary between reality and illusion. Horatio Alger's the rags-to-riches hero flirted the minds of a whole generation. It is noteworthy, however, that the idea of a dream so massive and deluding to those who have 'an extra sense and sensitivity towards the promises of live' like our tragic hero Gatsby is romantic. The Puritans, from whom he is a descendant, believe in the success story and the sacredness of work as a kind of grace.¹⁶ Evidently, they have the lion's share in shaping the American character. They brought with them to the west the respect of the individual as a creature of god made in his own image, the idea of a government by the

¹⁴St. Jean de Crevecoeur."What is an American?" in *The American Tradition in Literature*. Sculley Bradely *et al.* (Washington D.C: U.S.I.A, 1986) p. 155

¹⁵ Leo Lemay. P.4. Michael Drayton (1553 – 1631) mingled in this poem the idea empire and heaven with a vision of a land of gold in this poem. Immigrants who come to America in our modern times are dreamers in the same way though the idea of America as a land of gold is 'buried and forgotten' but the place still holds 'the promise' of material success to the majority if not all of them.

¹⁶Ibid.p.5

people and for them, reasoning and affinity to principles rather than persons. This double nature is obvious in Gatsby who is like a 'materialist' working on 'matter,' though his wealth is only a means to an end.

6. Discussion, Analysis and Interpretations

Gatsby's immature dream of attaining spiritual satisfaction is in contrast with the carelessness of those who care only about materialistic success represented by the valley of ashes where Tom's mistress survive, the Buchanans who use money lavishly on useless things, and those who come to his parties but are not aware of his existence as someone against the current mode of existence. As they tread upon his 'garden', fill the place with 'waste matter', drink, dance, gossip and weave fake stories about him, and go without even acknowledging his existence as a human being. All except him are engaged in a dance, hearing only the music of their time as in W. B. Yeats' poem "Sailing to Byzantium":

That's no country for old men

The young in one another's arm
The birds in the trees
Engaged in that sensual music
Those dying generations.

Gatsby wants to sail to Byzantium so as to make up for the spiritual vacuum which surrounds him and gives him internal restlessness. Had he danced with the 'gatecrashers' or enjoyed the moment like Tom, or let his soul be shaped by environment like the Wilsons, he would never have suffered or cried out for a moment beyond his reach. It is interesting to consider the 'foul dust' in his dream represented by the three categories the Buchanans, the Wilsons and the uninvited guests.

First, both Nick and Gatsby agree that Daisy's voice is 'full of money'. Being sophisticated as she is, most of her responses are typical of someone for whom appearance is more significant than essence. She admires Gatsby's possessions but cannot understand or share his spiritual experience. She is not 'part' of his commitment although she likes his tools to the degree of crying with joy when she 'feels' his majestic clothes in his wardrobe. She expresses delight when she sees an actress posing with a director in Gatsby's palace but when they kiss each other she is offended. Therefore, 'gestures' count for her but 'passion' is nonsensical. When it came to choice in the confrontation scene between her husband and Gatsby, she chose her husband announcing our tragic hero clinically dead by putting an end to his scheme. However, what is quite sure is that Daisy loves what Gatsby stands for only in terms of his huge wealth but she hasn't got the stamina to follow his 'dream' to the end or to betray her callous nature. As Gatsby is blind to the demands of the 'new way of life,' or music of the period, she is also blind to the essence of his dream. In the end when she kills a woman in a car-accident, Gatsby has to take the blame. Indeed, for the Buchanans other people must clean 'their mess' as something quite normal.

Daisy's husband Tom, on the other hand, is in the same streak. He is wealthy, callous and trapped in the sensual music of the age. Nick refers to his early purchase of a string of Polo ponies from Lake Forest when he was a student as something only befitting a very wealthy man. "It was hard to realize a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that," Nick says. Yet, this vast wealth and superficial sophistication are accompanied by emptiness and racial prejudice in Tom's case. "It is up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out or else other races will have control of things," he says in a shrewd moment. At that moment the narrator feels that what he has described as the 'world of fundamental decencies' is shattering to pieces. Being as such, he feels quite in place when he takes Myrtle Wilson, the inhabitant of the ash valley, as a mistress. His mistress is like him described in terms of her sensual body. In fact Fitzgerald is matchless in employing symbolic gestures and terms so as to convey his message. One feels that there is no difference between the 'she-dog' of Mrs. Wilsons' and the woman herself. She is the product of her environment. Her 'cuckold' husband is grey like the walls in that morbid place. Tom's frank corruption is not in manner with Gatsby's attempt to buy the past. They are different in every aspect. Tom, the hulk, the football player is living the dream without questioning it. Gatsby is deluded but he is committed to his delusion to a dream, in Nick's terms, justified by its quality as being purified from any personal interest. "The delusion is the vision of Gatsby's life with Daisy, and the purposes are his need for money and social position to make himself worthy

of her ... Gatsby acts for a good he conceives, almost absurdly as being beyond personal interest."¹⁷ In this sense our tragic hero ceases to be a personal character and become mythical since his dream transcends the historical moment. His impersonal scheme, romantic as it is, should be looked upon as the embodiment of the existing and far persisting dilemma of the conflict between illusion and reality at the heart of the American experience i.e. Calvinism in its broad sense and anti-Calvinism.

7. CONCLUSION

When the material and the spiritual are confused and/or the dividing line between reality and illusion is blurred a tragedy becomes a matter of time. Gatsby wants to play out a frontier when the game has already been over. His clothes are hanging in his wardrobe and he stays with the rags of the past forever. He drifts like a leaf on the stagnant water of his swimming pool which is corrupted by his guests who never look back after the mess they make. Gatsby is great in the sense that he lived up to his ideals and died a firm believer in his mission. Yet, the frontier is over; it cannot be played again and in cities. This is why his tragic end is unavoidable in the light of his inability to control his elusive vision of life. End of a journey made opposite to his Dutch grandfathers who sailed west, whereas he sailed east like a boat against the current. However misguided he is, he dies a believer, waiting mysteriously for a Mr. Wilson to declare his tragic end. His body is floating over water; a light wind could move it here and there. In the meantime, Dr. Eckleburge's eyes brood on the valley of ashes where dull shades of people move unnoticed. Except for Nick Carraway, the narrator, who question Gatsby's mission, other people are sharing the Buchanans' idea of 'live and forget.'

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¹⁷ Thomas A. Hanzo "The Theme and the Narrator of the Great Gatsby" in *Interpretations*. P.66