

“IT’S A MAN’S BOOK”:
 FITZGERALD’S DOUBLE VISION AND NICK
 CARRAWAY’S NARRATIVE/GENDER PERFORMANCE IN
THE GREAT GATSBY

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Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s female characters became more and more important as his career went on. In his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, “The leading character,” as its unpublished preface reads, “loved many women, and gazed at himself in many mirrors” (qtd. in Perosa 19–20): women are the mirrors to reflect Amory Blaine’s character. *The Beautiful and Damned* features Gloria Gilbert as the privileged object of Anthony Patch’s desire. In *The Great Gatsby* (hereafter *Gatsby*), Jay Gatsby is obsessed with Daisy Buchanan, who is presented as a symbol of the lost dream in the narrative of Nick Carraway, who is himself involved with Jordan Baker. In *Tender Is the Night*, femininity’s inscrutability is represented through Nicole Warren’s “schizophrenia,” with which Dick Diver struggles as her husband/doctor; his decline is witnessed by Rosemary Hoyt. And in the unfinished last novel, the narrator Cecelia Brady loves Monroe Stahr, though Monroe falls in love with Kathleen Moore, who reminds him of his late wife.

This simple sketch of the male-female relationships portrayed in Fitzgerald’s works shows that the rise of importance of his female characters parallels their transformation from the object/observed to the subject/observer. Although he might be regarded as a sexist from today’s standard, trying to “masculinize” art as a typical Modernist (Kerr 405–09), Fitzgerald said in 1935 to his secretary: “I don’t know what it is in me or that comes to me when I start to write. I am half feminine — at least my mind is” (qtd. in Turnbull 267). While this remark can be (and has been) interpreted as indicative of his (and Modernism’s) gender

trouble or male anxiety, it also shows his self-consciousness about the existence and significance of the feminine viewpoints in his fiction. For Fitzgerald, the feminine perspective is an aesthetic issue as well as a personal matter as an artist/individual.

With this background in mind, let us consider in this paper the representation of *Gatsby's* female characters as a matter of aesthetics, whereas critics have often examined Fitzgerald's heroines from historical and biographical perspectives (see, for instance, Fryer). In other words, my argument aims to complement the rich heritage of Fitzgerald studies on his female characters by analyzing *Gatsby's* aesthetic achievement in relation to his treatment of the gender/sexuality issues, which recent critics have well explored in the text's cultural contexts. In doing so, let us pay special attention to Nick's narrative strategy. For critics have agreed that Fitzgerald's use of this self-conscious character-narrator in the story of *Gatsby* as a romantic hero was crucial to his "double vision" ("[Fitzgerald] is romantic, but is also cynical about romance; he is ecstatic and bitter; lyrical and sharp" [Wilson 24]): the author learned to control and relativize his romanticism without damaging its attraction thanks to the dichotomy *Gatsby* and Nick represents in *Gatsby*. My working hypothesis is that if *Gatsby* was a breakthrough in Fitzgerald's career at least partly because of his creation of Nick, the analysis of Nick's treatment of gender/sexuality issues might help us understand why female characters became more important as Fitzgerald's career went on.

By briefly considering Nick's position as a character-narrator, it will be clarified that Fitzgerald's double vision is observed not so much in the *Gatsby*-Nick dichotomy itself as in the strategy Nick employs in his narrative of *Gatsby*. Nick, "a man of romantic irony," uses the story of his friendship with the mythologized *Gatsby* to secure his own romantic vision. As is shown in the second and third parts of this essay, which discuss why and how Nick attempts to repress sexuality in his narrative, Nick succeeds in desexualizing Daisy and Myrtle Wilson to place them as symbols in the myth of *Gatsby*, whom Nick takes as the model of masculinity to repress his own male anxiety or masculinity complex. Jordan, however, subverts Nick's mythopoesis because of her personal involvement with Nick, and this is when the author's double vision most clearly demonstrates itself on the level beyond the *Gatsby*-Nick dichotomy, relativizing not only *Gatsby's* romanticism but also Nick's

romantic irony. By reading *Gatsby* as a drama of Nick's narrative/gender performance, let us shed new light on Fitzgerald's double vision, foregrounding the importance of the feminine perspective in his work.

I

William Troy writes: "[In *Gatsby*] 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 . . . , in the person of the legendary Jay Gatsby" (226). To my knowledge, most critics have implicitly accepted this remark and claimed that Fitzgerald oscillated between subjectivity (obsession/romanticism) and objectivity (irony/detachment) and that he attained the artistic balance between the two in *Gatsby*.

Fitzgerald's "double vision," however, is more complicated than this Gatsby-Nick dichotomy could explain, for the Gatsby-Nick relationship is not symmetrical. Nick, for instance, survives and narrates the story about Gatsby. Moreover, Nick is himself "romantic" not only in the ordinary sense but also in that he wants to put "things in order" (185) to the extreme extent that he "wipe[s] out from [McKee's] cheek the remains of the spot of dried lather that had worried [him] all the afternoon" (41). On his last night in the East, Nick finds "an obscene word" and "erased it" (188) just as another romantic admirer of Gatsby, Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* does. "When I came back from the East," Nick says in the beginning of his narrative, "...I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever" (6). It is important that he behaves actively in his imagination: "I liked to . . . pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that . . . I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove" (61). Nick is a romantic who loves only something static and unchangeable: "It is invariably saddening," he says, "to look through new eyes at things upon which you have expended your own powers of adjustment" (110-11).

When such a person becomes a narrator, it is little wonder that his narrative tends to repress the "other" to keep his world undisturbed. In fact, asserting that "life is much more successfully looked at from a single

window" (9), Nick justifies his own romantic/monologic perspective. It might be safe to call such a romantic an "unreliable" narrator, but this label has been used too easily by the critics who presuppose the abovementioned Gatsby-Nick binarism. Wayne Booth's definition of the term is: "I have called a narrator *reliable* when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work (which is to say, the implied author's norms), *unreliable* when he does not" (158–59). If one assumed that the implied author intends to present Nick as a detached observer or moral center (as opposed to Gatsby), its corollary would be: "To many readers . . . the hopelessness of Nick's final vision seems . . . to betray his story" (Cartwright 219).

Nick's narrative, however, is not out of "accordance with the norms of the work," for the implied author (whom I call "Fitzgerald") presents how the character Nick becomes such a narrator as he is. Nick might be an unreliable narrator in his own narrative in which he asserts that he is "inclined to reserve all judgements" (5), but we should not be satisfied to interpret his deceiving self-image (he actually "judges" everyone, as Scott Donaldson points out ["Trouble" 132]) as reflection of his ambivalence between romanticism and detachment, or of the author's double vision.

From a structural viewpoint, reading *Gatsby* as Nick's story is not very different from reading it as Gatsby's, for, basically, Gatsby is to Nick what Daisy is to Gatsby. Gatsby was a disillusioned young man when he met Daisy, as Nick is so when he meets Gatsby: "[Gatsby] knew women early and since they spoiled him he became contemptuous of them, of young virgins because they were ignorant, of the others because they were hysterical about things which . . . he took for granted" (104–05); "I can't describe to you," says Gatsby to Nick, "how surprised I was to find out I loved [Daisy]" (157). As Daisy blew off Gatsby's detachment, "Gatsby who represent[s] everything for which [Nick] ha[s] an unaffected scorn . . . turn[s] out all right at the end" (6). This parallelism makes it possible for Nick to use the story of Gatsby's tragic love for Daisy as a self-justifying parable of his friendship with Gatsby.

Nick, however, cannot be a tragic character like Gatsby: Nick survives. Even if the character Nick experiences the loss of a dream as Gatsby does, the narrator Nick begins his story with the premise that he is different from Gatsby. The narrator Nick cannot be romantic in the naive way whereas Gatsby remains so. To understand Nick's romanti-

cism, we might call here to our assistance Amory in *This Side of Paradise*, who says: "the sentimental person thinks things will last — the romantic person has a desperate confidence that they won't" (229). This "romantic" belief is actually what we should rather call "romantic irony." According to Kojin Karatani, the person of romantic irony

does not do anything on the basis of certain meaning or ground. His stance . . . is not nihilism, either. On the contrary, he finds out some meaning in his self-consciousness that he dares to be serious to play around with something which he knows is meaningless. There cannot be any defeat here, for the attitude premises the defeat from the start. (167, my translation)

Nick knows that the dream Gatsby represents has been lost; *therefore* he commits himself to the lost dream. By taking this defeatist stance, Nick keeps his romantic world stable, his self-consciousness unharmed.

If Nick's romantic irony prevailed, *Gatsby* would become a sentimental story. *Gatsby*, however, subverts Nick's totalizing vision, as Fitzgerald's design to foreground Nick's status as a narrator suggests: Nick rereads what he has written and expresses his concern about the impression his story might give (60–61). This metafictional presentation of the narrator highlights the difference between author and narrator, and it is this gap which reflects Fitzgerald's double vision. Fitzgerald is self-conscious not only of Gatsby's romanticism but also of Nick's romantic irony. We should not establish the Gatsby-Nick dichotomy when we read this polyphonic novel, for Gatsby's romanticism and Nick's romantic irony do not conflict each other in Nick's monologic narrative.

Fitzgerald's handling of the narrator with romantic irony is closely and critically related to the romantic tendency in Modernist poetics which tries to put "things in order." Fitzgerald gives unity to *Gatsby* thanks to Nick's romantic irony, in which sense *Gatsby* is a well-made work from a Modernist standard, as his contemporary writers' admiration for it indicates (see *Crack-Up* 308–10). This masterpiece, however, also relativizes Nick's romantic irony. There are some elements the narrator Nick cannot sublimate into his mythopoeia, and Fitzgerald's double vision emerges itself when Nick tries to repress those excessive factors to keep unity of his narrative. Reality always breaks down our romanticism — if this precept sounds banal, the fact remains that Nick's narrative cannot

control the hard reality given by Fitzgerald. Nick cannot change what happens, what characters say, or what relationships the characters are engaged in. He can only use the reality in favor of his vision to mythologize Gatsby. Even if his romance seems flawless, Nick *is* a character in a novel.

Nick uses Gatsby's love for Daisy to justify his friendship with Gatsby. It might be possible to enumerate various narrative strategies Nick employs to conceal the gap between the Gatsby-Daisy relationship and the Nick-Gatsby one. Considering that the early-twentieth century was the time people feared gender trouble or male anxiety in America, however, I problematize the particular fact that love is desexualized in the process of Nick's beautification of Gatsby's aspirations. The Gatsby-Daisy relationship, furthermore, is one of the numerous sexual relationships in *Gatsby*: Daisy-Tom, Tom-Myrtle, Myrtle-George, and Nick-Jordan. Nick's mythopoeia, in this light, represses sexuality in cumulative ways. Since the relationships among characters and the existence of sexuality in those relationships are the given conditions beyond Nick's control, we can regard the sexuality issue as the reality Fitzgerald gives to the narrator, who tries to repress it to achieve romantic unity of his narrative. This conflict between reality and romanticism is what I will observe in what follows. The basic questions are: how does Nick repress sexuality?; and how does Nick's attempt fail? To work on these questions, however, I must discuss first *why* Nick represses sexuality. This preliminary question is crucial to appreciate the dynamics of this well-organized novel, for the romantic narrator Nick's desexualizing tendency is originated in the character Nick's realistic problems with the gender/sexuality issues, which is why Nick's narrative is "real" despite its unreliability.

II

Some critics have paid attention to the problem of sexuality in Nick's narrative. Keath Fraser, for instance, writes: "What . . . is [Nick] hiding? An uncertain sexuality becomes an unavoidable conclusion" (68). Developing Fraser's groundbreaking argument, critics such as Edward Wasiolek and Frances Kerr insist that Nick is homosexual. We may be able to acknowledge the existence of homosexual desire in Nick, but it seems to

me far-fetched to call him a homosexual. First of all, there is no personal or aesthetic reason that Fitzgerald makes him a homosexual. Second, Wasiolek and Kerr, probably because of their intention to confirm Nick's homosexuality, commit the same misreading: they mistake the "certain girl" with "a faint mustache of perspiration [which] appeared on her upper lip" for Jordan (*Gatsby* 64; Wasiolek 19–20; Kerr 418). It seems obvious to me that the girl is Nick's girlfriend in the West and that his comment on her perspiration reveals his distaste for the unsophisticated country girl, rather than his homosexual desire for the mustached and therefore — according to their logic — masculine woman. Jordan's "unfeminine" appearance, furthermore, was regarded as feminine in the twenties, as is the case with Brett Ashley in *The Sun Also Rises*.

The reason I mention these misled critics is that we can take their mistake as a lesson. That is, given that their mistake stems from their neglect not only of the author's artistic design but also of gender trouble in early twentieth-century America, I propose that we should consider Nick's treatment of sexuality as his gender performance. It is of course debatable whether we should regard sexuality as a gendered concept. When dealing with an unreliable narrator like Nick in such a polyphonic novel as *Gatsby*, however, I find it dangerous to discuss sexuality in terms of essentialism.

The character Nick's passive attitude proves the connection between narrative structure and gender performance in this novel. A run-through of the novel's plot reveals how passively Nick behaves until he feels attached to Gatsby: Nick comes to the East partly to avoid the gossip about his engagement; he happens to live next to Gatsby's mansion because his coworker finds the place; it is evident that the Buchanans invite him for dinner (chapter one); Tom forces him to see Myrtle and to go to their apartment (chapter two); Nick goes to Gatsby's party because he was "actually" invited, as he self-consciously notes (45; chapter three); Gatsby takes him to have lunch, and, through Jordan, asks him to invite Daisy to tea (chapter four); Nick is asked to come to Gatsby's place with Daisy (chapter five); at the party Daisy visits, Nick stays until late at Gatsby's request (chapter six); and Nick is asked to visit Daisy's house with Gatsby, and taken to the Plaza Hotel (chapter seven). The main plot is developed toward the climax with the repeated passive figure of Nick.

In the subplot which presents his relationship with women, Nick also

remains passive. He breaks with a woman just because “her brother began throwing mean looks in [his] direction” (61); he shows no resolute attitude toward a woman in his hometown until his relationship with Jordan deepens. Moreover, it is Jordan who develops their relationship, as is clear in the way Nick writes, “she had deliberately shifted our relations, and for a moment I thought I loved her” (63). “Unlike Gatsby and Tom Buchanan,” Nick states, “I had no girl whose disembodied face floated along the dark cornices and blinding signs and so I drew up the girl beside me, tightening my arms. . . . I drew her up again, closer, this time to my face” (85). Nick apparently behaves passionately here, but this action is likely inspired by Jordan’s romantic story of Gatsby and Daisy (Scrimgeour 79); besides, this quotation suggests that his relationship with Jordan is compromise. All these examples are symbolized in the fact that he does not drive in the fictional world filled with “careless drivers.” The only occasion on which we are sure he drives is his first visit to the Buchanans, but Fitzgerald avoids using the word “car,” which appears in the earlier version of the novel (*Trimalchio* 19). Since the act of driving often carries sexual connotations in *Gatsby*, Nick’s name “car-away” is appropriate, whereas Jordan, whose name combines “the two of the best-known trade names in motoring” (MacPhee 212), “drives” their relationship single-handedly. Nick is not only “full of interior rules that act as *brakes* on [his] desires” (63–64, my italics); he is too “careful” to drive.

Nick’s passivity in the first half of the story gives a dramatic effect on the text which “picks up speed” (Eble, “*Great*” 94) when he starts behaving actively for Gatsby. More important to my argument, however, is that his passivity, which results in his breaking with Jordan, gives the impression of his lack of masculinity in the narrative in which many couples appear. The biggest reason that Nick is appropriate for the narrator/observer in this novel is that his reserved attitude “has opened up many curious natures to [him]” (5), but this aptitude for the narrator/observer makes him look non-masculine. In other words, his apparent lack of masculinity is essential for his position in *Gatsby*. It is not rare that a “first-person” novel employs a passive narrator. *The Blithedale Romance* and *My Ántonia*, for instance, present unreliable, romantic, and rather effeminate narrators. Nick’s passivity, however, differs from Miles Coverdale’s or Jim Burden’s in that the quality is endowed with affirmative value in relation to the theme of his narrative.

Nick's relationship with Tom Buchanan is worth consideration here, for Tom is contrasted with Nick's hero in the text in which "the male characters struggle toward manhood . . . by fighting for possession of women" (Paulson 80). Tom is introduced as a hyper-masculine character: "Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body" (11). His harming Daisy's finger and adultery foreground his excessive masculinity. Tom's masculinity clearly annoys and threatens Nick: "[D]on't think my opinion . . . is final," [Tom] seemed to say, "just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are" (11). At the same time, however, Nick regards Tom's masculine power as outdated: "Tom would drift on forever seeking a little wistfully for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game" (10). Christian Messenger, viewing the image of the Ivy League athletes in early twentieth-century America, indeed concludes: "For *Gatsby's* readers, Tom Buchanan was already an anachronism" (407). Unlike Jake Barnes in *The Sun Also Rises*, Nick does not praise such old-type masculinity: Nick makes the masculine Tom a cuckold. Since "[t]hroughout the novel Nick holds the masculine forms of Gatsby and Tom in sharp contrast" (Fraser 62), Nick's "pimping" for Gatsby suggests that he chooses Gatsby as the model of masculinity.

However, if Tom's masculinity is anachronistic (Tom is a person who "made a stable out of a garage" [125]), what about the masculinity of Gatsby, who desperately attempts to "repeat the past" (116)? Gatsby, wearing a pink suit, does not look masculine. H. L. Mencken calls Gatsby "a young man with . . . the simple sentimentality of a somewhat sclerotic fat woman" (89). "His romantic dream for Daisy and himself," Murray Levith also observes, "is radically pre-pubescent — indeed, infantile" (8). Gatsby's talk about his personal problems violates the Hemingwayesque masculine code. His helplessness in the Plaza Hotel is pathetic. "Take what you can get, Gatsby," Nick even preaches in *Trimalchio*, "Daisy's a person — she's not just a figure in your dream" (90). In short, as long as we take Gatsby as a life-sized human being, it is impossible to regard him as an exemplar of masculinity Nick could admire.

Viewed in this light, Gatsby, as the novel's hero, *must* be mythologized to be opposed to Tom, we should say. Fitzgerald must have been aware of this, for Gatsby's impressive smile, which "give[s] Gatsby substance without destroying his necessary insubstantiality" (Eble, "Craft" 91), is

absent in the original text. The masculinity Gatsby represents is not positive in itself but valuable only in Nick's mythopoeia, which is also his apologia about his (lack of) masculinity. Nick cannot accept Tom's masculinity; so he finds a "new" type of masculinity in Gatsby. Gatsby's masculinity is only representable when opposed to what Tom represents, which, ironically, reveals that Gatsby's masculinity is dependent on Tom's. "[Gatsby's] obsession with Daisy," Ross Posnock argues, "... is founded on her mediated value, a value... confirmed by her marriage to a multimillionaire... Tom, Gatsby's hated rival, is also a model" (207). This fact is inconvenient for Nick, so he insinuates anachronicity in what Tom represents, as well as mythologizes Gatsby as a self-made man, a "son of God" (104).

Kerr asserts: "Tom Buchanan represents the new American upper class, whose members value money and material possessions, not the development of character and taste. The kind of interior riches cultivated by the old aristocracy had acquired effete, effeminate connotations in the new century" (420). This is a reasonable remark on the newly rich, but Sergio Perosa is more convincing about Tom's class: "Tom is opposed to Gatsby as a rich man by birth and tradition who hates and holds in contempt the lack of manners of the newly rich" (69). Tom never talks about money; he does not have to. We do not know the source of his income, which characterizes the old rich. Kerr's assertion is a groundless deduction from Tom's masculine image, or she is deceived by Nick's strategy to conceal his inferiority complex about his class. Contrary to Kerr's conclusion, furthermore, we can smell the "effete, effeminate connotations" in Tom's lack of occupation in modern America, where "[t]he new middle-class won, and its ideology of manhood as competitive individualism... pervades American life" (Leverenz 3): "It was hard to realize," Nick says, "that *a man in my own generation* was wealthy enough to [bring down a string of polo ponies]" (10, my italics).

The relation of class and gender in *Gatsby* is not so simple as Kerr assumes it is, for Nick's viewpoint permeates the narrative. Nick's disapproving view of Tom seems to come from his snobbism, but this aristocratic attitude reflects his own inferiority complex about his class. It is Nick, not Tom, who behaves like a *nouveau riche*. It is not decent of Nick to boast: "My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this middle-western city for three generations" (7). His reference to "a tradi-

tion that [his clan is] descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch" (7) is ostentatious if self-mocking. After all, the Carraways' wealth depends on "the wholesale hardware business" (7), and Nick is the person who notes twice his rent (8, 10) and dreams of making money by buying "a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities" (8).

Nick (as well as Gatsby), however snobbishly he behaves, cannot belong to Tom's class; and he (as well as Gatsby) cannot approve of Tom's masculinity. His affiliation to Gatsby, so considered, is not contradictory, nor is his mythologization of Gatsby. What Tom represents is positive and excessive, so Nick values the negative and passive, which are emblemized in Gatsby's romantic failure. Gatsby vainly attempts to copy Tom, while Nick cannot do so. So Nick romanticizes Gatsby's splendid failure from a transcendental viewpoint with romantic irony. This scheme depends on what Tom represents; therefore Nick mythologizes Gatsby's romanticism as precious in itself. Nick knows that he cannot "repeat the past," and that is fine with him. All he wants to do is to make Gatsby's romanticism mythical and asexual, so that he can suggest self-justifyingly that Tom's masculinity is anachronistic. "Nick's mythopoesis is . . . retribution," Kerr writes, "a way for Fitzgerald to criticize what Tom Buchanan represents. As the competitive, brutal man of financial and physical sport, Tom Buchanan will always rough-shoulder the man of imagination, the artist" (422). Probably so, but the artist with a double vision provides a viewpoint that relativizes/deconstructs the dynamics of this "retribution" itself. My argument so far on Nick's masculinity complex or gender trouble is to clarify Fitzgerald's double vision. In what follows, I will show how Nick tries to put feminine sexuality in order.

III

Since the central topic in Nick's narrative is the romantic relationship between Gatsby and Daisy, let us consider Daisy first among the three main female characters. Despite his own assistance in the adulterous relationship between Gatsby and Daisy, the narrator Nick tries to exclude sexual connotations from their romance. In contrast to his realistic depictions of the voluptuous figures of Tom and Myrtle, for instance, there is almost no physical description of Gatsby or Daisy (see their first

appearances: Gatsby stands in the darkness; Daisy's features are not described while Nick is busy in presenting Jordan). Another conspicuous example is that Nick writes, "[Gatsby] *took* Daisy" (156, my italics), when implying their sexual act in the past. This euphemism might have stemmed from historical restrictions, but we may surmise that Nick makes the most of the decency of censorship. To mythologize Gatsby, Nick must desexualize Daisy.

Nick's desexualization of Daisy is observed most clearly in his responses to her voice. He mentions the voice many times, but the first instance suffices to show his attraction to it or, more precisely, to Daisy with the voice: "I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming" (13). Although his passivity prevents him from forming a close connection to her, he finds her sexual attraction in the voice. Dan Coleman argues that for Daisy "conversation is not mostly a means for talking about the 'real world' that exists outside of conversation; the words [she] speak[s] are themselves as real as it gets" (57). Daisy's voice, as it were, has materiality as substantiation of her sexual charm: "The exhilarating ripple of her voice," Nick reports, "was a wild tonic in the rain. I had to follow the sound of it for a moment, up and down, with my ear alone before any words came through" (90).

"The spell Daisy casts with her voice," however, "has been broken when Gatsby can say bluntly to Nick, 'Her voice is full of money'" (Giltrow and Stouck 479). When Nick agrees with Gatsby completely ("That was it" [*Gatsby* 127]), her voice's materiality becomes abstract and its attraction desexualized. Nick hesitates when he attempts to describe her voice ("She's got an indiscreet voice. . . . It's full of —' / I hesitated" [127]) perhaps because he tries to avoid the words which have overtly sexual connotations. To see it differently, his failure in finding the proper explication of her voice suggests that Daisy's sexuality is more "real" than his narrative can handle. Through Gatsby's interpretation, however, Nick "understands" her voice as irrelevant to sexuality and puts it in order — as one pole of the rich-poor binary.

I consider Myrtle next, who "is a double of Daisy, [because] she, too, has a floral name" (Long 109). Myrtle is a very sexual woman, cheating on her husband as a "courtesan in a cosmopolitan court of love" (Bufkin 523). One reason that the Tom-Myrtle relationship is juxtaposed with the

Gatsby-Daisy one is that the "purely physical" (Long 110) relationship of former makes the latter look less realistic and more romantic. Because the two adulterous couples are connected in this mirroring fashion, however, the desexualization of Daisy affects the nature of Myrtle. When the class issue is introduced into the Gatsby-Daisy relationship, we are compelled to see the Tom-Myrtle relationship from the same perspective. Myrtle, wishing to marry Tom, becomes a counterpart of Gatsby rather than of Daisy or Tom: Gatsby and Myrtle "both die trying to imitate the Buchanans" (Lhamon 172). For Myrtle, her affair is not purely based on her sexual desire. Regretting her marriage, she tries to "repeat the past" through her relationship with Tom. "Myrtle," as E. Bufkin observes, "exists in the novel as a major instrument that . . . mirrors . . . the real nature, the . . . unattractive essence, of Gatsby" (523). This Gatsby-Myrtle parallelism, appearing in the process of desexualization of Daisy and Myrtle, exposes a gender problem in Nick's mythopoeia: Gatsby can be "great" thanks to his gender. Nick does not want to develop the Gatsby-Myrtle parallelism, which demystifies the "greatness" of Gatsby. This is why Nick expresses no feeling toward Myrtle's death, which functions to emphasize Gatsby's chivalry when Gatsby tells Nick that he is going to say that he was the driver (151).

Myrtle being presented and killed contributes to Nick's romanticization of Gatsby. In this sense, it would be unsatisfactory to say only that "Myrtle is what Gatsby would have been had his dream not been immaterial, for it is because Gatsby's dream is essentially immaterial that he turns 'out all right at the end' and it is precisely because Myrtle's dream is merely material that she fails" (Gross 57). Although no main character cares about Myrtle's death, her corpse with "her left breast . . . swinging loose like a flap" (145) symbolizes the brutal exploitation of her sexuality in Nick's mythopoeia. "If ever there was an object that resisted idealization," Judith Fetterley writes, "it is Myrtle" (91). Nick, however, achieves the idealization by mentioning "the old island . . . that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes — a fresh, green breast of the new world" (189). "[T]he fresh green breast of the new world that turns pander to men's dreams," Fetterley argues, "turns tragic symbol in the ripped-off breast of Myrtle" (92). Be that as it may, Myrtle's abundant sexuality is desexualized in favor of Nick's mythopoeia.

Nick desexualizes Daisy's voice and Myrtle's body, turning feminine

sexuality into the objective correlative of the theme (e.g., the lost dream) of his romance. Richard Godden ascribes this dynamics of symbolization of feminine sexuality to Nick's misogyny: "'Woman as male nemesis' joins 'tragedy' and 'romance.' . . . Daisy's 'carelessness,' Jordan's 'lies' and Myrtle's body are at least partially generated by Nick's distaste for women" (97). This observation seems plausible, given Nick's passive attitude toward women. Godden, however, oversimplifies Nick's narrative in regarding the "distaste" as what "displaces social division into sexual division" (97). It should be argued in the opposite way: Nick changes "sexual division" into "social division." Nick's "misogyny" is originated in (or at least interwoven with) his gender trouble or masculinity complex. He is attracted to women, but must desexualize them to secure his masculinity. In short, his "misogyny" is a performance, not a cause. To essentialize his misogyny, therefore, is to ignore the novel's aesthetic/cultural complexities. Stressing this point, let us discuss Jordan, who is Nick's girlfriend but loses that position because of his friendship with Gatsby.

First of all, let us consider Jordan's narratological function: she is the helper for Nick's relationship to Gatsby. Without Jordan, Nick could not become close to Gatsby: she introduces Gatsby's name in the story; she first talks with Gatsby and arouses Nick's curiosity; through her mouth Gatsby asks Nick to invite Daisy to tea; she talks to Nick about the past of Gatsby and Daisy; and finally, she calls Nick at the office on the day after the accident as if to wake him up to call Gatsby. Thus Fitzgerald keeps presenting Jordan when Nick becomes familiar with Gatsby, and this narratological importance of Jordan leads us to notice the thematic importance of her: Jordan exists in Nick's "reality," as opposed to Daisy or Gatsby. Nick thinks on the way back from the Plaza Hotel: "there was Jordan beside me who, unlike Daisy, was too wise ever to carry well-forgotten dreams" (143). His ambivalence between detachment/passivity and romanticism/commitment is also his oscillation between Jordan and Gatsby.

Critics have regarded Jordan as masculine or non-feminine, but the historical context testifies that she is a sophisticated New *Woman*. She obviously attracts men: "there were several [men] she could have married at a nod of her head" (185-86). The reason that Nick is attracted to her, however, is not only her sophistication, but also her "complete self

sufficiency" (13). This characteristic of Jordan makes him comfortable because it means that she demands nothing. Dating such a woman, Nick can justify his passivity and forget his lack of masculinity. He is so happy with the relationship she develops that he says: "Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply—I was casually sorry [about the rumor that she cheated in a game], and then I forgot" (63). He, of course, does not forget (because he narrates it); it is simply that "He makes love to her *and* he criticizes her at the same time" (Stallman 8). Jan Hunt and John Suarez, their evaluation of Jordan put aside, are persuasive in claiming that "Nick must feel assured from the beginning of their relationship that there is no possibility—or no threat—of loving such an amoral woman" (161).

Nick's passivity, in this light, should be called insincerity. He needs his categorization of Jordan as a dishonest woman for his self-protection against reality. Let us examine the scene in which he gets upset with her:

Jordan put her hand on my arm.

"Won't you come in, Nick?"

"No thanks."

I was feeling a little sick and I wanted to be alone. But Jordan lingered for a moment more.

"It's only half past nine," she said.

I'd be damned if I'd go in; I'd had enough of all of them for one day and suddenly that included Jordan too. (149–50)

Nick tries to fool us by his moral judgment, but Jordan (who, after all, is about twenty-one) has every right to ask her boyfriend to be with her after a tough day. She wants Nick, but he deserts her. More precisely, he feels betrayed because she wants him: she upsets his image of her as a self-sufficient woman. "[P]ersonality is an unbroken series of successful gestures" (6) for Nick, so he does not care what "the bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed" (62). Naturally, "[Jordan's dishonesty] made no difference to [Nick]" (63). What Nick wants from his girlfriend is only the image he has in his mind.

So considered, Jordan's notorious dishonesty is worth reconsideration. Does she really deserve the harsh judgment? She *might* cheat in a golf game or tell a lie about a borrowed car (62), but she is never dishonest about her relationship with Nick.

"[D]o you remember . . . a conversation we had once about driving a car?"

"Why, — not exactly."

"You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver? Well, I met another bad driver, didn't I? I mean it was careless of me to make such a wrong guess. I thought you were rather an honest, straightforward person. I thought it was your secret pride."

"I'm thirty. . . . I'm five years too old to lie to myself and call it honor."

She didn't answer. (186)

Fetterley writes: "Jordan invokes the . . . driving metaphor in the hope of gaining a final advantage, only to have it backfire. . . . Nick . . . has the last word, and that last word . . . is the ultimate lie, for Nick implies that out of her sense of disadvantage Jordan stoops to the slander of calling him dishonest" (90). Fetterley perceives Nick's trick, but accepts his evaluation of Jordan. Jordan, however, does not hope to gain "a final advantage." She is just honest, for the central issue here is that Nick does not propose to her after taking sexual advantage (Matterson 40–41). Jordan, who has developed their relationship single-handedly, gets hurt because she has "carelessly" believed in Nick's "honesty."

In this dialogue, Jordan's word "careless" means "honest" in a love relationship. She uses the word differently in the earlier conversation ("I hate careless people. That's why I like you" [63]), but the fact remains that she honestly talks about her love when she uses the word. For her, the word "carelessness," as well as "a bad driver," has nothing to do with the moral problem with which Nick associates the East. Since the word is first used in the conversation by which "she had deliberately shifted [their] relations," it originally bears sexual connotations. Nick the narrator, however, represses the connotations, "establish[es] bad driving as a measure of moral irresponsibility" (MacPhee 207), and attributes his "carefulness" to his hometown with good implications whereas he labels Jordan as a dishonest, "bad driver." He desexualizes her word to establish the ethic which gives unity to his story and conceals his own insincerity: "They," he concludes, "are careless people, Tom and Daisy" (187). Everything put in order, Nick closes his beautiful romance of his friendship with Gatsby.

This is how Nick tries to repress Jordan's sexuality as well as Daisy's and Myrtle's. His repression of Jordan's sexuality, however, fails because of his personal involvement with her. Although he skillfully narrates his

story to justify himself, his relationship with her subverts his narrative. However "carefully" he exercises his privilege as a narrator, the fact remains that he cannot answer Jordan's question, "I met another bad driver, didn't I?" If he answered, it would spoil his romance in which everything should be in order. Therefore he uses Jordan's word "careless" as *his* keyword, as if it meant an untouchable truth, with which he produces binary oppositions. Nick's self-justifying handling of this word embodies the dynamics of his narrative.

Therefore Jordan is the character who refuses to be used as a symbol. Unlike Daisy or Myrtle, Jordan bears no symbolic association with Gatsby. She is neither rich nor poor. She does not have to be a trophy wife, thanks to her career. Jordan is singular: she cannot be paired with others — except with Nick. She, in this sense, is the double of Nick and the absent center of his romance about Gatsby. Fitzgerald wrote to Maxwell Perkins: "Jordan . . . was a great idea . . . but she fades out" (*Letters* 173). Jordan "fades out" because she does not fit Nick's romance to mythologize Gatsby. Exactly because of her incompatibility with Nick's project, however, she remains the "other" to Nick's narrative. Nick's forced/unsuccessful attempt to put her in order in his mythopoeia turns *Gatsby* from Nick's monologic romance into Fitzgerald's polyphonic novel.

Fitzgerald might not have acknowledged the significance of Jordan when he wrote, "she fades out." This statement, however, implies that Fitzgerald, who called *Gatsby* "*a man's book*" (*Letters* 173), found it necessary to create a female character who would not "fade out." In fact, we might evaluate his late novels in this light. In his late works, he did not present female characters like Daisy. Nicole, Rosemary, Cecelia, and Kathleen are all, like Jordan, financially independent and refuse to be the object of male fantasy. Fitzgerald faced greater difficulties in achieving unity when he wrote novels in which women would not fade out, but he was "honest" enough to present these independent women as subjects in his late works. *Gatsby* is a landmark in his career not simply because it gives a shape to the romanticism-detachment dichotomy, or not even because it represents his self-consciousness about the binarism, but because it illuminates the possibilities of his double vision, which enabled him to encounter the "other" even beyond his self-conscious binarism.

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