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Honors English 3

4/21/2015

The Great Gatsby: Nick Carraway's Realization of the Falsity Jay Gatsby's Idealism

Although Jay Gatsby carries great thematic significance as the titular character of F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 great American novel *The Great Gatsby*, the novel's protagonist is Nick Carraway, as he is the novel's first-person narrator. How Carraway conveys his observations and experiences says more about his psyche than it does about Gatsby's state-of-mind. This is most significant in the concluding passage of the novel's fifth chapter in which Carraway describes Gatsby's expectations of Daisy at a crucial moment in the development of plot and character. In this passage, Carraway begins to realize Gatsby is a hopeless dreamer who is dismissive of reality, which is Carraway's first real realization that awakens him to the true nature of his surroundings with the wealthy elite. In this sense, Gatsby functions as a mirror reflecting Carraway's psyche. Therefore, when Carraway notes Gatsby's "expression of bewilderment" (101), he is really describing his own naivety that has blinded him to reality up to this point. It is Fitzgerald's diction choices that convey Carraway's sense of doubt, his development of details that illuminate character uncertainty, and his choice to utilize a first-person perspective for this novel, as it is relevant specifically to the conclusion of Chapter 5, that reveal this implication.

- I. **TOPIC SENTENCE 1:** *Nick Carraway's word choice describing the both the literal and figurative sense of doubt that he sees in the scene before him in the conclusion to Chapter Five, especially in the face of Gatsby, illustrates the uncertainty that all of the characters in the scene feel in this moment.*

- A. Analysis and discussion regarding the effect of Carraway's direct and literal (denotative) use of the word "doubt."
- B. Analysis and discussion regarding the effect of Carraway's indirect and figurative (connotative) use of the terms synonymous with "doubt."

II. TOPIC SENTENCE 2: *Carraway's word choice develops a sense of doubt within this concluding passage from Chapter 5, which allows the narrator to demonstrate each characters' sense of uncertainty within this moment and which develops the incongruity that exist between the idea of the situation and its reality.*

- A. Analysis and discussion of the characterization of Gatsby as a character in denial of the reality of the passage's situation.
- B. Analysis and discussion of the characterization of Carraway as a who clearly sees the reality of the passage's situation.
- C. This contrasts between the depiction of reality in the face of its denial affects the development of an incongruity illustrating that reality is no meeting the expectations of reality.

III. TOPIC SENTENCE 3: *Finally, the novel's narrative perspective – a first-person account of events years removed from the moment portrayed in the concluding passage of Chapter 5 – frames the incongruent contrast between reality and idealization in an ironic way, suggesting that Carraway has made a realization about the falsity of idealism that would be apparent to him only in hindsight.*

- A. Elaborate on the topic sentence and prove its validity directly in one paragraph.