



**Modern Narrative Strategies in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby***

استراتيجيات السرد القصصي الحديث في رواية فيتزجيرالد جاتسبي العظيم

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## Authorization

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my thesis to my supportive mother without whose loving, patience and constant encouragement this pursuit of knowledge would have never born fruit.

I also dedicate this work for my lovely father, who made me what I am today, who instilled in me the appreciation of knowledge.

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### **Abstract**

This thesis deals with modern narrative theory with special concentration on Gerard Genette's contribution to narratology through his original views on three dimensions of narrative technique, namely text, focalization, and narration. Part of its aim is to explore the main differences between traditional and modern/contemporary narrative theory with a view to applying the main principles of Gerard Genette's narrative theory to the discussion and critical analysis of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*.

The major dimensions of Genette's model of narrative analysis include such concepts and narrative devices as story-time and text-time resulting in the concepts of *analepsis* (flashback) and *prolepsis* (foreshadowing), duration which focuses on the two narrative devices of *acceleration* and

*deceleration* as well as *omission* and *descriptive pause*. Closely connected with these devices are those of *scene* and *summary*, two narrative devices frequently used in traditional narrative terminology.

Another dimension which receives concentration in this thesis is focalization as it is one of the basic principles of Genette's theory that has led to making a clear distinction between two related but different activities: who speaks? And who sees? Focalization has been utilized in analyzing Fitzgerald's best known novel *The Great Gatsby* which partially derives its greatness and originality from its use of new narrative techniques. The discussion includes a variety of related issues such as types of focalization and facets of focalization, including the cognitive, the psychological and the ideological components.

The dimension of narration has also been investigated in theory and practice by applying it to the critical analysis of narrator and narrative technique in *The Great Gatsby*. Such questions as the relations between narration and story, different types of narrative levels such as "*extradiegetic*", "*intradiegetic*," "*hypodiegetic*" and "*hypo-hypodiegetic*" have also been explored and applied to the analysis of the narrative text.

Other questions related to this dimension such as types of narrators and their reliability have also been examined both in theory and in practice.

The thesis has revealed that by applying modern/contemporary narratology to the analysis of works of fiction both our understanding of the text and our appreciation of its narrative techniques will be greatly enhanced and consolidated.

**Keywords:** Modern Narrative, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

## استراتيجيات السرد القصصي الحديث في رواية فيتزجيرالد جاتسبي العظيم

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### ملخص

تتناول هذه الرسالة نظرية السرد القصصي الحديثة مع التركيز على مساهمة الناقد الفرنسي جيرارد جينيه لنظرية السرد القصصي من خلال آرائه الأصيلة حول ثلاثة أبعاد رئيسة من أساليب السرد هي: الزمن وزاوية النظر والسرد. ومن أحد أهداف هذه الدراسة هو استكشاف الاختلافات الرئيسية بين نظريات السرد التقليدية والنظرية الحديثة للسرد القصصي بهدف تطبيق مبادئ الناقد جينيت في مناقشة وتحليل رواية جاتسبي العظيم للروائي الأمريكي إف سكوت فيتزجيرالد.

تضم عناصر نظرية جينيه في السرد القصصي ثلاثة مكونات هي: الوقت القصصي والوقت السردى وما ينشأ عنهما من مفاهيم جديدة مثل التأخير والتقديم وطول الفترة الزمنية الذي يركز على طرق التسريع والإبطاء في عملية السرد بالإضافة إلى أسلوب الحذف والتوقف عن السرد. ويرتبط بهذه العناصر أساليب أخرى مثل "المشهد" و"الملخص" واللذان يعتبران من أحد أساليب السرد القصصي التقليدي.

أما العنصر الآخر الذي يحوز على اهتمام البحث فهو زاوية النظر حيث أن هذا العنصر يعتبر أحد المفاهيم الأساسية في نظرية جينيت والتي أدت إلى التمييز ما بين بعدين مترابطين لكنهما مختلفان وهما: من يتكلم؟ ومن يرى؟ وقد استخدمت زاوية النظر في تحليل رواية فيتزجيرالد جاتسبي العظيم والتي تستمد قوتها ولو بشكل جزئي من استخدامها لأساليب سرد جديدة. كما أن الرسالة تضم مسائل ذات صلة مثل أوجه زاوية النظر بما تشمله من أبعاد مثل البعد النفسي والبعد العقائدي.

كما أن البعد القصصي حظي باهتمام خاص في المناقشة من الناحيتين النظرية والتطبيقية حيث استخدم في تحليل الرواية المعنية من جهة زاوية النظر وأسلوب السرد في الرواية موضوع البحث. ومن المسائل التي يتناولها هذا الجزء من الدراسة العلاقة بين السرد والقصة وأنواع الرواة ودرجاتهم

من حيث الترتيب الطبقي مثل الراوي خارج النص والراوي من الدرجة الثانية والراوي من الدرجة الثالثة والرابعة وهكذا. كما أن المسائل ذات العلاقة مثل أنواع الرواة ودرجة مصداقيتهم قد تم بحثها من الناحيتين النظرية والتطبيقية.

وتخلص الرسالة إلى أن تطبيق أساليب نظرية النقد الحديثة تساهم في مساعدتنا على فهم النصوص السردية بشكل أفضل كما أنها تزيد وتعمق من تذوقنا لأساليب السرد .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** السرد القصصي الحديث، رواية فينيزجيرا الد جاتسبي العظيم.

## Chapter One:

### Introduction

#### 1.1. Biographical Background

**F. Scott Fitzgerald** (1896 –1940): is an American novelist and short story writer. He is widely regarded as one of the greatest American writers of the 20th century. Fitzgerald is considered a member of the "Lost Generation" of the 1920s. (Wikipedia). F. Scott Fitzgerald's novels include *This Side of Paradise*, *The Beautiful and Damned*, *The Great Gatsby* (his most famous), and *Tender Is the Night*. Fitzgerald also wrote many short stories that treat themes concerned with the Jazz Age. Fitzgerald's work has been adapted into films many times. *The Great Gatsby* has been the basis for numerous films of the same name.

The term "the Lost Generation" was introduced by Gertrude Stein, a modernist American writer who chose Europe as her dwelling place in the early decades of the twentieth century. Ernest Hemingway, one of the major writers of this group, included the term as an epigraph in his novel *The Sun Also Rises*. The Lost Generation, therefore, refers to that group of men and women who wrote most of their works during World War I and the period

following it in the 1920s and 1930s and who felt disillusioned in this unfamiliar post-war-I world.

The Lost Generation was a group of American writers most of whom immigrated to Europe and worked there from the end of World War I until the Great Depression of the 1928. Following the war and the depression, America was filled with cynical people who were uncertain about the future and so they went to the other side of the Atlantic to settle and begin writing their works. All these writers, including Hemingway and Fitzgerald felt disillusioned with life in America and chose to go to Europe to express their ideas and grievances.

### **1.2. *The Great Gatsby*: Historical Context**

Published in 1925, *The Great Gatsby* is considered as one of the greatest American novels of the 20th century, especially of the 1920's, the decade often referred to as the Jazz Age. The 1920's was an era of optimism and aspiration. It seemed as if any individual could rise easily and become a member of the social and economic elite. The main themes in *The Great Gatsby* include its focus on money, the rise to power and the acquisition of wealth. The novel, therefore, embodies the American dream of becoming wealthy and powerful. The American Dream is originally about achieving

prosperity while maintaining high moral standards. However, this dream has descended into the acquisition of wealth by whatever means, regardless of ethical values. The novel shows the impossibility of achieving happiness through a dream that has lost an essential part of its two basic constituents, namely spiritual/ethical values. All characters, including Gatsby, become more interested in their material interests and gains at the expense of any moral or spiritual values to guide their actions

**1. 3. Narratology:** Before turning to the narrative strategies of *The Great Gatsby*, it may be worth defining narratology itself. Narratology might be thought of as a critical approach to literature, film, and other media that revolves around the work of some distinguished theorists including Roland Barthes, Wayne Booth, Mieke BAL, Gerard Genette and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, among many others. Narratology refers to both the theory and the study of narration and narrative structure and the ways that these affect our perception of the works of fiction. Actually, one could also trace the discussion of narrative elements back to Aristotle's writing on drama and the epic. It was Aristotle that first pointed out that there is a difference between *diegesis* (a history retold by a narrator), and *mimesis* (one which is shown in a dramatic form) (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983 p. 107).

From the beginning of the 20th century, the narrator and his/her role or degree of visibility have been prominent subjects of debate. Narratorial effacement in which the characters' features were revealed through their own behavior was seen by Henry James and Percy Lubbock as a superior mode of story-telling. In *Aspects of the Novel* (1927, p. 61), the English novelist and theoretician E. M. Forster put forward a new distinction between "story" and "plot". The narration of events with an emphasis on chronology is named by him "story", whereas the narration with an emphasis on causality is "plot". The pre-structuralist phase of narratology includes the contributions of the Russian formalists and Vladimir Propp, Norman Friedman, Wayne Booth, and others. The early twentieth-century writings of the Russian formalists, notably Vladimir Propp and Mikhail Bakhtin, both of whose works began to appear in English translation in the 1970s, are likewise vital to this subject. More recently, narratology has been strongly associated with structuralism and the structuralists' quest for a formal system of useful description applicable to any narrative content.

Actually, we now have two main types of approaches applied to the study of narration, namely traditional narrative theory and modern narratology, as will be explained in this research in due course. For the time being, it

suffices to point out that since the 1960's there has been a growing interest in narratology as manifested in the works of some theorists including Roland Barthes, Genette, ,Todorov, and others.

#### **1.4. Statement of the problem:**

Nick Caraway is the main narrator of *The Great Gatsby*. He is a first-person narrator, though he is not the center of the story. That makes him a peripheral character compared with the protagonist Great Gatsby and the antagonist Tom Buchanan. Indeed, many times Nick is someone who is on the outside looking in. He tells us at the beginning of the first chapter that he was "within and without". The nature and the function of the inside/outside narrator in this novel have provoked long critical debates about the central or peripheral role of the narrator. Still, there is need to define this role in more precise terms by looking at it from the perspective of modern narratology as it can offer new insights into the role of various types of narrators. The significance of this approach would shed light on the role and nature of the reliable/unreliable narrator as well as the concepts of point of view and narrative technique.

### **1.5. Objectives of the study:**

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explore the narrative techniques in *The Great Gatsby* by applying modern narrative theory.
2. To utilize a model of narrative analysis associated with the French theorist Gerard Genette as explained by a contemporary narratology scholar S. Rimmon-Kenan.
3. To inquire into the narrative techniques used in this classic work from the perspective of narrative discourse in order to reveal Fitzgerald's mastery in handling narrative techniques.

### **1.6. Questions of the Study:**

1. What exactly is Nick Caraway's position in the story?
2. How far is the narrator of *The Great Gatsby* a reliable narrator?
3. What can be achieved through applying modern /contemporary narratology to this novel?

### **1.7. Significance of the Study:**

With its apparent concern with narrative issues and structural matters, *The Great Gatsby* provides us with an enormous space to study and apply the modern/contemporary theory of narratology. This thesis can introduce a new approach to the analysis of narrative technique.

### **1.8. Limitations of the study:**

This study will explore the craftsmanship of Fitzgerald in handling narrative technique. As it concentrates on one specific novel, namely *The Great Gatsby*, its findings cannot be easily applied to Fitzgerald's other novels. However, such findings may apply to Fitzgerald's other works.

### **1. 9. Definition of Key Terms:**

Focalization is the angle of vision through which the story is filtered in the text. In contrast with traditional studies of point of view which treat “who sees?” and “who speaks?” as if they were interchangeable, Genette has shown that speaking and seeing (narration and focalization) may, but need not, be attributed to the same agent. Focalization can be either external or internal to the story and can take different forms. (S. Rimmon-Kenan, 1983,p. 71).

**Point of View:** is the angle of vision or the perspective from which a story is seen or narrated in narrative fiction. It is the way in which readers are able to see and hear the events. There are three main points of view: omniscient, first-person, and limited third-person. (Hawthorne, Jeremy, 1985, p. 41)

**Narratology:** Is the systematic study of narrative structure. It considers such questions as plot structure, the organization of time, the temporal and spatial representation of events, narrative methods and techniques and the different types of narrators and narratees. Generally speaking, it is the study of the logic, principles, and practices of narrative representation. (S.Rimmon-Kenan (1983

**Narrative structure:** It refers to the way/s in which both story and plot are utilized to present the narrated text. It generally describes the structural pattern that underlies the order and manner in which a narrative is presented.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Related Literature

#### 2.1. Theoretical Literature Review:

Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* (1921) is one of the first major works of literary criticism to focus on the novel as a form and on narrative technique. Lubbock concentrates on the formal techniques that hold the novel into a complete and coherent whole that has basic unity of structure and form. Lubbock's outlook in this book is an obvious extension to that of Henry James (concentration on point of view and structure). He tries to illustrate the "craft of fiction" by referring to many important and classic novels including Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Henry James' *The Ambassadors*. The book makes a clear distinction between the "pictorial" and the "dramatic" methods of narration with special praise for the dramatic method which results in eliminating the omniscient author who appears in an intrusive manner in the pictorial method.

In his *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), E. M. Forster defines plot as "a narrative of events, the emphasis being on causality". He illustrates how

“plot” differs from “story”, explaining that plot needs intelligence, careful recollection and planning. For Forster, plot should also include the element of “surprise”.

In addition to Forster’s *Aspects of the Novel*, Norman Friedman’s *Forms of the Plot* (1955) provides sample perspectives for looking at narration through his detailed discussion of types of plot and his scrutinizing categorization of narrators. Based on Friedman’s classification in particular and on the subsequent studies of the New Critics and other formalist critics and narration scholars (Surdulescu, 2002) the following types of narrators can be distinguished:

1. *Editorial omniscience or Third-person omniscient*: in which the story is told by an omniscient, intrusive narrator, who is situated outside the narrated events, e.g. Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*.

2. *Neutral omniscience or Third-person objective*: the narrator is omniscient, situated outside the events, nonintrusive, impersonal, e.g. Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*.

3. *“I” as witness or first- person- narrator observer*: the narrator is part of the narrative world, a secondary character, and has a peripheral perspective of the narrated events, e.g. Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*.

4. *“I” as protagonist or First- Person- Narrator participant*: the narrator identifies himself with the protagonist and has a central role in the events, e.g. Dickens’s *Great Expectations*.

5. *Multiple narrators*: which means a narration from the perspective of more than one character, e.g. Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*.

6. *Selective omniscience or Stream- of- consciousness technique*: the narrator, placed outside the events, affords a fixed, internal point of view, e.g. Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

7. *The dramatic mode*: the narrator, situated outside the events, has an external point of view. No information on feelings and thoughts is supplied; there appear only words, actions and settings, e.g. Hemingway’s short stories such as “The Killers”.

Most of the above are mentioned in Friedman's study, but the studies of point view by other critics have added new elements to Friedman's original ideas.

*The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) by Wayne Booth is an important work in the field of narrative theory. Booth argues that all narrative is a form of rhetoric in the sense that it aims at using language effectively and persuasively. He discusses the distinction between two narrative techniques in fiction: "showing" and "telling" and maintains that authors invariably both "show" and "tell". Booth criticizes the critics who argue for the "eradication" of authorial presence and asserts that it does not matter whether an author intrudes directly in a work since readers will always infer the existence of an author behind any text they read. Booth also treats some key concepts such as "implied author" and reliable/unreliable narrators, a subject that will be referred to in this thesis.

S. Rimmon-Kenan's *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (1983) discusses in great detail the traditional and the more modern/contemporary theories of narration and narrative theory and its applications. The book incorporates a variety of literary, theoretical and other models that have transformed the field of narrative poetics in the past decade or so. *Narrative*

*Fiction* is organized around issues such as events, time, focalization, characterization, narration, the text and its reading. It addresses a host of methodologies and perspectives -- feminist, Bakhtinian, deconstructive, reader-response, psychoanalytic, historicist, rhetorical, etc. Because of its wider circulation, Rimmon-Kenan's volume will be adopted as the model of narration analysis in this research, particularly the last three or four chapters of the book.

Rimmon-Kenan's work and Mieke Bal's *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (1985; 1997) have become seminal in the area of modern and contemporary theory of narrative. Since its first publication in English in 1985, Mieke Bal's *Narratology* has become the international classic and comprehensive introduction to the theory of narrative texts. In this volume, *narratology* is defined as a systematic account of narrative techniques, methods, their transmission, and reception, and the ways in which we understand both literary and non-literary works. Furthermore, Bal later updated the book to include new sections that treat several modernist texts that pose narratological challenges.

Prominent among the theorists of narrative is Gérard Genette whose *Narrative Discourse* (1972) has been very influential. He examines such

issues as the interaction between *mimesis* and *diegesis*, the narrator and the narratee, narrative time and text time, and focalization, among several others. Genette highlights three fundamental domains of classification: order (the difference between the assumed sequence of events in the “story” and the time sequence in the plot, with such relevant techniques as *prolepsis* and *analepsis*, i.e. flash-forward (foreshadowing) and flashback), duration or the pace of narration, referring to the comparative extent in time of the events in the “story” and the amount of text allotted to them, the extreme forms being ellipsis and the descriptive pause and frequency (how often a single event is repeated in the narrative, or vice-versa. Genette speaks about extradiegetic narrators (situated outside the diegesis (i.e. story) such as impersonal third person narrators) and intradiegetic or diegetic ones (who are part of the story), homodiegetic narrators (who are characters in the events narrated by them), and heterodiegetic ones (who do not have such a role, and do not witness those events in person). According to Genette, there is often a difference between the person who tells about an event and the person who sees it. Genette proposes the term “focalization” to make a clearer distinction between these two components of narration. (Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, p.71

Jonathan Culler (2001) is one of the major critics who have contributed to narrative theory, particularly the structuralist theory. Culler's *Structuralist Poetics Structuralism, Linguistics and the Study of Literature* is one of the first introductions to the French structuralist movement available in English. In *Structuralist Poetics* Culler warns against applying the technique of linguistics directly to literature. Rather, the "'grammar' of literature" is converted into literary structures and meaning. Culler draws upon Structuralism theory resting which argued that the realization that if human actions or productions have meaning, there must be an underlying system that makes this meaning possible.

Culler also proposes that we use literary theory not to try to understand a text but rather to investigate the activity of interpretation. In several of his works and in this work in particular, he speaks of a reader who is particularly "competent." In order to understand how we make sense of a text, Culler identifies common elements that different readers treat differently in different texts.

Culler's contribution to narratology has been undercut by his view which is primarily based on the scientific principles of structuralism . Such views

have limitations as they view literature as well as literary criticism as a system of rules and established conventions.

Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts are also basic factors in contemporary analyses of the narrative. In Bakhtin's writings, texts that attempt to establish a fixed truth or that repress otherness are referred to as monological. Bakhtin attempts to overcome monologism through the recognition of plurality and otherness and through the concept of dialogism. Instead of one voice, there is Polyphony of voices engaged in an unending dialogical play.

Naturally, narration has been discussed in a good number of critical anthologies that deal with literary theory and a variety of critical approaches. Such works will be consulted for further information on the subject.

## **2.2. Empirical literature Review:**

A good number of studies have been written on *The Great Gatsby*; some of them have actually dealt with point of view in this novel, but from a largely tradition perspective. Below is a survey of the major studies on *The Great Gatsby* with some having a focus on narration.

One of the critics who have studied the novels of Fitzgerald in general and *The Great Gatsby* in particular is Arthur Mizener, Fitzgerald's biographer. In this book, *F. Scott Fitzgerald (1963)* which consists of several collected essays on Fitzgerald, Leslie Fiedler (1963) gives brief of account of Fitzgerald's contribution as a major novelist of the Jazz Age.

*The Great Gatsby* is one of the novels discussed by Richard Chase (1957). However, his discussion concentrates on the question of whether this novel is a "romance" or "a novel of manners". Although he refers to Nick Caraway, he does not deal with him as the novel's narrator.

In his paper titled "*Heart of Darkness and The Great Gatsby: A Comparative Study*" (1982) Tawfiq Yousef examines the similarities and the differences between these two novels with special concentration on narration in the two works. The roles of Marlow in the first novel and Nick in the latter are compared and contrasted to determine whether Fitzgerald was influenced by the narrative strategies employed by his precursor.

*F. Scott Fitzgerald (1957)*, a work edited by Alfred Kazin contains some short notes on the writing of *The Great Gatsby*. Among these is a note by H.L. Mencken titled "The Great Gatsby" which was written in 1925 when Fitzgerald had not yet achieved great fame. The writer points out that

Fitzgerald had some “deficiencies” in the writing of his early works: “He could write entertainingly without giving thought to form and organization” (p.91), but he adds that in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald worked laboriously to overcome such difficulties (p.91).

*The Great Gatsby* by Stephen Matterson (1990) contains a full-length study of the novel. The author explores the novel from different perspectives, one of which is the “formalist approach”. In this chapter, the author discusses relevant key issues such as point of view, and *The Great Gatsby* as a craft. The book will be very useful for the writing of this thesis, as it concentrates on Fitzgerald’s art and narrative technique. The author also shows how Fitzgerald was influenced by Joseph Conrad with regard to the framed narrative or story within story.

Speaking of the craftsmanship Fitzgerald achieved in *The Great Gatsby*, Stephen Matterson (1990) observes: “Critics felt that the success of *The Great Gatsby* partly lay in the distance Fitzgerald was able to place between himself and Gatsby. Some have indeed suggested that Carraway and Gatsby represent two parts of Fitzgerald himself” (p.14). Matterson further points out that most critics consider Nick as an apt narrator because of his ability to be involved in scenes yet objectively distant about them and that he makes a

telling comment about himself when he says that he is “within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life” (*Gatsby*, p. 42). This position, the writer adds, qualifies Carraway as a narrator by making him close to the actions he describes and at the same time be objective about them (Matterson, p. 14).

On the other hand, Matterson points out that although some view *Gatsby* as a “perfect narrator,” there are others who cast doubts on Nick’s alleged honesty. R. W. Stallman, for example, is cited as saying that Nick’s supposed honesty must be questioned... and Nick becomes an ambivalent narrator” (qtd. in Matterson, p. 15). Other critics have also noted that “the attraction which Nick feels toward *Gatsby* also affects the narrative, resulting in the bias that he shows” (p. 15).

In addition to the above mentioned works, there are some online articles that study narrative technique in *The Great Gatsby*. One interesting online article titled “The Narrative Techniques in *The Great Gatsby*” views *The Great Gatsby* as “a perfect work of modern narrative art”. (Unidentified writer, Web.)The author of the article concentrates on Nick Caraway as a narrator, the spatio-temporal structure of the novel, and on the narrative

method employed by Fitzgerald. Narrative time also receives extended discussion.

In his book *A Cultural History of the American Novel* (1994) David Minter discusses some narrative strategies used in Fitzgerald's novel. He refers to *The Great Gatsby* in general but does not discuss questions related to narration technique. However, he emphasizes the importance of history in this novel.

In his Online article titled "A Fragment of Lost Words: Narrative Ellipses in *The Great Gatsby*", Matthew J. Bolton (2009) argues that *The Great Gatsby* gathers force and power not only from what it says but also from what it chooses not to say. He adds that the narrative elisions which take place in the text where Nick omits important information or jumps over some event in Gatsby's life or his own might draw the reader's attention to the process of selection that is at work in the novel as a whole. He also maintains that every narrative has elisions.

The above studies have dealt with narrative technique in *The Great Gatsby* from a conventional viewpoint. However, the current study will concentrate on this dimension from a modern or contemporary perspective.

## Chapter Three

### Methods and Procedure

Based on traditional narrative theory (Lubbock, Brooks, and Booth) and on contemporary/modern theory of narrative (Genette, Rimmon Kenan and Bal), this thesis examines the narrative structure of *The Great Gatsby*. Special concentration is laid on such questions as: time, focalization and voice/narration as presented in Rimmon-Kenan's book *Contemporary Poetics* (1983) which will be used as the main model of analysis in this research. Below is a quick review of such questions and how they are to be utilized in the discussion in the next chapter.

**Time:** As illustrated in Rimmon-Kenan's book, time is a constituent factor of both story and text. Accordingly, "time in narrative can be defined as the relations of chronology between story and text" ( Rimmon-Kenan, 1983, p.44). Story-time is conceived of as a linear succession of events; text-time is a spatial, not a temporal dimension. Time in fictional narrative is viewed by Gerard Genette in three different respects: *order* (first, second), *duration* (minute, hour) and *frequency* (number of times).

*Order:* The main types of discrepancy between story-order and text-order are traditionally known as “flashback” or “retrospection” on the one hand and “foreshadowing” or “anticipation” on the other. Genette calls them “analepsis” and “prolepsis” respectively (46). Thus, analepsis is a narration of a story-event at a point in the text after later events have been told. By contrast, prolepsis is a narration of a story-event at a point before earlier events have been mentioned (p.46). Analepsis involves a narration of previous past events that had already happened while prolepsis involves a telling of future events before their due time in the text.

*Duration:* is the ratio between story-duration and text-duration (or length). Duration in the story is measured in minutes, hours, days, months, years and the length of the text is measured in the lines and pages (space) given to it. Accordingly, the ratio between story-duration and textual length can take two forms of relationship: *acceleration* and *deceleration*. Acceleration is produced by devoting a short segment of the text to a long period of the story. Deceleration is produced by devoting a long segment of the text to a short period of the story. These are conventionally reduced to *summary* and *scene* respectively. In *summary*, the events are told or summarized through textual condensation of a story-period into a relatively short statement of its

main features, resulting in acceleration. In *scene*, story-duration and text-duration are considered almost identical. The purest scenic form is manifested in dialogue. The maximum speed is *ellipsis* (or omission) where zero textual space corresponds to some story duration. On the other hand, the minimum speed is realized as a *descriptive pause* where some segment of the text corresponds to zero story duration (pp.52-54).

*Frequency* is the number of times an event appears in the story and the number of times it is narrated (or mentioned) in the text. Repetition-relations between story events and their narration in the text can take the following forms: *Singulative*: telling once what happened once, which is the most common narrative form. *Repetitive*: telling number of times what happened once; the same event is narrated several times, sometimes with, sometimes without, changes of narrator. *Iterative*: telling once what happened number of times, like narrating repeated activities only once (Rimmon-Kenan, pp.56-58).

**Focalization**: is the angle of vision through which the story is filtered in the text. It is the term that Genette uses and, in effect, Rimmon-Kenan adopts, in his discussion of “perspective” or “angle of vision” from which the story is narrated. Rimmon-Kenan substitutes the word “focalization”

for the traditional “point of view” for more than one reason. First, it helps “avoid the specifically visual connotations of ‘point of view’”. Second, it has “the great advantage of dispelling the confusion between perspective and narration which often occurs when ‘point of view’ or similar terms are used” (71). Rimmon-Kennan agrees with Genette’s opinion that most studies of point of view such as Friedman (1955) Brooks and Warren (1959), and Booth (1962) treat two related but different questions as if they were interchangeable. These two questions are: “who sees?” and “who speaks?” She asserts that the two activities (focalization and narration) may, but need not, be attributed to the same agent; the one who sees is not necessarily the one who speaks (72).

**Types of Focalization:** These can be categorized according to two criteria: position relative to the story and degree of persistence. According to the first criterion, focalization can be either external or internal to the story. External focalization is often manifested in stories told by an omniscient author and is therefore called “narrator-focalizer”. Internal focalization is realized inside the represented events and often takes the form of “character-focalizer”. Just as the focalizer can be external or internal to the represented events, so the focalized can be seen either from “without” or from “within”.

in other words, an external focalizer can see an object either from without or from within. In the first case, only the outward manifestations of the object or person are presented; in the second case, the focalized is seen from within, penetrating inner feelings and thoughts. According to the degree of persistence criterion, focalization may remain fixed throughout the narrative, but it can also alternate between two predominant focalizers or shift among several focalizers(74-76).

**Facets of Focalization:** external/internal position of the focalizer takes different forms according to the following three facets: the *perceptual*, the *psychological*, and the *ideological*. The perceptual facet is determined by two main factors: space and time. With regard to space, external/internal position of the focalizer takes the form of a bird's-eye view vs. that of a limited observer. In the first form, the focalizer is placed far above the focalized yielding either a "panoramic" view or a "simultaneous focalization of objects". Spatial focalization may change from a panoramic view to that of a "close-up" or limited observer (77-78). With regard to time, "external focalization is panchronic in the case of an unpersonified focalizer, and retrospective in the case of a character focalizing his past". By contrast, internal focalization is "synchronous with the information regulated

by the focalizer”. While an external focalizer has at his disposal the past, the present and the future, an internal focalizer is limited to the present moment. In principle, the external focalizer (or narrator-focalizer) knows everything about the represented world. (78).

While the perceptual facet has to do with the focalizer’s senses, the psychological facet is concerned with his mind and emotions. Thus the determining factors in this case are the cognitive and the emotive attitudes of the focalizer toward the focalized. While the external focalizer has unrestricted knowledge (knows everything), the internal focalizer has limited knowledge of the focalized objects. In the emotive component, the “external/internal” opposition yields “objective (neutral, uninvolved) vs. “subjective” (colored, involved) focalization (79-80).

The ideological facet is concerned with the “norms” or values of the text, usually those of the narrator-focalizer. If other ideologies emerge throughout the text, they become subordinated to those of the dominant focalizer. Consequently, all other ideologies are evaluated from the authoritative ideological position of the narrator-focalizer (81).

**Narration:** According to Rimmon-Kenan narrators may be distinguished in the following respects:

Extradiegetic narrators (outside the story), diegetic narrators (inside the story), hypodiegetic narrators (third level) and hypo-hypodiegetic narrators (fourth level), etc. This technique corresponds to narratives within narratives in traditional narrative terminology. Homodiegetic narrators are involved in the story; heterodiegetic narrators are not. Relations between narration and story can take three different forms: 1. ulterior narration: telling events after they happen; 2. anterior narration: tends to appear in narratives in the form of prophecies using the future tense or prolepsis; 3. simultaneous narration: the reporting is simultaneous with the action as in diary entries or in narratives within narratives.

A reliable narrator is one whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an authoritative account of the fictional truth. An unreliable narrator is one whose rendering of the story and/or comments on it the reader has reasons to suspect. There can be different degrees of unreliability (89-94).

## Chapter Four

### **The analysis of *The Great Gatsby***

This chapter focuses on the three main respects we have already explained in the previous chapter namely, narration, focalization and time. In other words, the chapter will analyze *The Great Gatsby* from the perspective of modern/contemporary narratology with specific reference to Gerard Genette's and Rimmon-Kenan's views as already illustrated.

#### **Narration:**

As mentioned earlier, when analyzing narration in a work of fiction, there are various factors to take into consideration such as levels of narration, degree of perceptibility, extent of participation, types of narrators, etc. As explained earlier in Chapter Three, there are various levels of narration and narrators. Narrative levels include extradiegetic, diegetic/intradiegetic, hypodiegetic and hypo-hypodiegetic. In the extradiegetic type, the narrator is above the story such as the omniscient author or the unidentified narrator in a framed narrative. In the diegetic/intradiegetic or second-degree, the narrator narrates part of the events which he or she observed or took part in them. In the hypodiegetic (or third-degree) type, the narrator is subordinate

to the previous type and his story is narrated to a narrator in a superior position to him; and finally, hypo-hypodiegetic or fourth-degree narrators are subsumed to the hypodiegetic level and so on. (Rimmon-Kenan, pp. 94-97).

As Rimmon-Kenan explains, the extradiegetic level is the highest and most superior narrative level (p.94). Immediately subordinate to the extradiegetic level is the diegetic/intradiegetic level. The next level that can be subsumed under the diegetic/intradiegetic level is the hypodiegetic narrator, who gets information from another character. Nick is a diegetic/intradiegetic narrator when he becomes part of the events he narrates. But he becomes a hypodiegetic narrator when he is told by Tom some events that Wilson had told him about the car accident in which Myrtle was killed and more specifically the news that the car involved in the tragic accident belonged to Gatsby. In the fourth level of narration the hypo-hypodiegetic narrator gets information from a character that has already got information from another character. This is the case when Jordan Baker told Nick about Tom's relationships with Myrtle and Daisy because she got this information either from other characters or from other more general sources such as gossip or rumors.

Gatsby is a narrator of some of the events. For example, he narrates to the principal narrator his love story with Daisy. In this kind of narration, Gatsby becomes a homodiegetic narrator since he is telling his own story (an event that he was involved in). Daisy also becomes a hypodiegetic narrator when she tells the main narrator Nick about her previous life and her relationship with Gatsby. Jordan Baker also is a hypodiegetic narrator when she tells Nick about Tom's affairs and about Daisy's and Gatsby's relationship. Thus, we see each narrative subordinated to another higher narrative and so on.

For the greatest part, *The Great Gatsby* is narrated in the first-person narrator. Nick Carraway is the main narrator in this novel. Throughout the novel, Nick uses the first person when he is the narrator-focalizer. However, he sometimes uses the third-person narrative method when he refers to the other characters as well as the objective dramatic mode when he almost disappears from the scene and lets the characters engage in lengthy conversations (or dialogue).

As stated above, there is more than one narrator in this novel. Though Nick is the most important narrator-focalizer in the novel, he is not the only narrator in the story which he tells and in which he takes a major role. In addition to Nick, there are other narrators such as Jordan Baker, Daisy and

Jay Gatsby who narrate parts of the story, especially those events which the major narrator did not witness or take part in such as those which happened prior to the main events of the story which takes place in the summer of 1922, almost 5 years after the earlier events had happened (1917). As narrators, Jordan's, Daisy's and Gatsby's position in the story are secondary to that of Nick; they all relay their stories to the principal narrator, Nick Carraway. In other words, their stories are narrative-within narrative in traditional narration. According to Rimmon-Kennan's discussion of narration, Nick, Daisy, Jordan Baker and Jay Gatsby narrate stories of which they are a part and can therefore be considered as intradiegetic narrators. On the other hand, such characters as Michalis in this novel can be considered hypodiegetic or third -level narrator as his role is subsidiary or just an observer or witness to the events.

Additionally, a character who does not participate in the story is called "heterodiegetic" whereas the one who takes part in it is "homodiegetic" (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 95). Since the intradiegetic narrators we have referred to, namely Nick, Daisy and Gatsby are participants in the stories they narrate, they are intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrators. However, in the stories where any of them is only a narrator without being a participant in the story, he/she

would be called intradiegetic-heterodiegetic. A good example of this type of narrator is Jordan Baker. She is intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator when she speaks about herself and an intradiegetic-heterodiegetic narrator when she is telling the love story of Daisy and Gatsby and how they first met five years ago and in which she was only an observer, not an active participant.

Nick is both intradiegetic and extradiegetic, “within and without”. Sometimes, he is narrating events in which he was a participant and sometimes he is narrating events which he only observed. In the first case, he is intradiegetic while in the second, he is extradiegetic. For instance, when he is telling what he saw between Tom and Myrtle, he is intradiegetic, but when he tells the reader about Gatsby’s death which he heard about from other witnesses, he is extradiegetic. Nick is the one who speaks and sees and tells the story of every character and is endowed with almost full knowledge of the characters and the events. Therefore, he can easily become a third-person focalizer-narrator, a kind of omniscience similar to that we find in traditional narrative techniques where the omniscient author is supposed to know almost everything regarding the story he narrates. Nick represents the diegetic narrator when he is involved in the events of the story but he is also considered an extradiegetic narrator because he knows almost every aspect

about each character and event especially in the parts in which he is the main narrator and which he both narrates and focalizes.

Generally speaking, Nick is a kind of good narrator. Though he plays a secondary role in the novel, he seems to know almost everything that is needed after he is told by the other characters all that he did not see or hear. Nick is close to the characters and this qualifies him to know about them and tell their stories from within. He is trusted by all the characters and is closely related to some of them. For instance, he is the cousin of Daisy; the close neighbor of Gatsby and the university colleague of Tom Buchanan with whom he studied at Yale. Nick also prides himself on his good morals and high ethics. For example, right from the beginning he tells us:

In my younger years and more vulnerably years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

'Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone,' he told me, 'just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.'(5)

He further adds that “in consequence, I’m inclined to reserve all judgements”, a quality that he regards as one of the “fundamental decencies parcelled out unequally at birth” (p. 6). He also says: “I am one of the few honest people I have ever known” (p.37). In other words, he is supposed to be a reliable narrator.

There is another side to the story. Nick is not a reliable narrator after all. For instance, at first, he tells us he reserves all judgements (p. 1). However, he later makes judgements on almost every character and every single event. For instance, he describes Tom as arrogant, Daisy as materialistic through saying that her voice is full of money and he describes Jordan as a careless person. Though he describes himself as one of the few honest people he has ever known, he goes secretly to other houses and lies to Daisy about Gatsby being in the house. Such acts reflect signs of immorality. Though he says he doesn’t drink, we see him drinking more than once. Above all he has a suspicious relationship with Jordan Baker who is generally known for her immorality and cheating.

In his narration of the story, the author uses a mix of different tenses including present and past tense. According to Genette, narration can have several temporal relations with the events of the story: ulterior narration

(narrating events after they happen as in most narratives), anterior narration (narration which precedes events, as in prophecies), and simultaneous (narration that is simultaneous with the action, as in diaries). (Rimmon-Kenan, pp.90-91). If we use Genette's terms about the temporal relation, we can say that the narration is predominantly ulterior, that is, the occurrence of events precedes narration; narration happened after the occurrence of events. However, sometimes the events are narrated while they are taking place (simultaneous), as when the narrator is viewing a character or an event from within.

### **Focalization:**

Following Rimmon-Kenan's illustration of modern narratology as shown before, we can say that as a narrator, Nick is an internal, intradiegetic narrator- focalizer that is, one who sees and speaks in a story in which he is both a participant and an observer. For example, in this typical passage, Nick is the narrative agent who sees and speaks, simultaneously the focalizer and the narrator:

I have been drunk just twice in my life, and the second time was that afternoon; so everything that happened has a dim hazy cast over it, although until after eight o'clock the

apartment was full of cheerful sun. Sitting on Tom's lap Mrs. Wilson called up several people on the telephone; then there were no cigarettes and I went out to buy some at the drugstore on the corner. (93)

Obviously, Nick is an observer who is relaying to the reader the details of what he is able to see or perceive. He also speaks directly to the reader, using his own way of communication and expression.

Genette classifies narrators-focalizers into two types: external and internal to the story. An external focalizer often occurs in the case of traditional narratives where the narrator is the omniscient author who is situated above the events and expected to know, see, speak and judge almost without restrictions. An internal focalizer, on the other hand, is located inside the represented events (i.e. intradiegetic) and his degree of perception is somewhat limited (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 74). As a "diegetic/intradiegetic" narrator who is a participant in the story, Nick is considered an internal focalizer. Additionally, the objects the focalizer sees, ( i.e. the focalized), can be viewed either from within or from without. In the first case, "the outward manifestations of the object (person or thing) are presented.... In the second case, the external focalizer (narrator-focalizer) presents the

focalized from within, penetrating his feelings and thoughts” (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 76). Though Nick is often presented as an internal focalizer seeing his focalized objects from without, he is sometimes made to see them from within, as we can notice in this short passage which reflects the internal feelings of Gatsby:

‘I’m going to make a big request of you today,’ he said, pocketing his souvenirs with satisfaction, ‘so I thought you ought to know something about e. I didn’t want you to think I was just some nobody. You see, I usually find myself among strangers because I drift here and there trying to forget the sad things that happened to me.’ He hesitated. ‘You’ll hear about it this afternoon’. (66)

Obviously, Nick’s use of internal focalization reveals Gatsby’s inner state of anxiety to Nick and restlessness. And so we notice the novelist using external focalization to describe external manifestations and internal focalization to reveal the inner life and feelings of the focalized.

As was stated earlier, the external/internal position of the focalizer takes the form of either a bird’s-eye view or that of a limited observer. These correspond to the position of narrator-focalizer, yielding either a panoramic

view or a close-up focalization of things. The two perspectives are interchangeable at any moment in the narrative (Rimmon-Kenan, p.77). For example, Gatsby's view of the green light at the end Daisy's dock reveals a panoramic view when he looks at it from a distance. On the other hand, his description of Tom's and Daisy's home would reveal a close-up viewpoint.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. (12)

Temporally, external focalization yields a panchronic view where the focalizer "has at his disposal all the temporal dimensions of the story (past, present and future) whereas an internal focalizer is limited to the 'present' of the characters (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 78). In *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator is an internal focalizer, and so he has to depend on other narrators to relay to him their own observations. This situation reliance on retrospection and flashback as will be explained later. Additionally, his knowledge of the story is restricted in contrast with an external focalizer whose knowledge is

unrestricted (p.79). Although Nick seems to be familiar with the characters and their emotions and inner feeling and main concerns and hidden problems, he doesn't know everything about the characters' past history. Thus, we notice gathering information about Gatsby-Daisy relationship from Jordan Baker and Daisy and Gatsby themselves. Even though Nick ultimately manages to know many things about the characters whose story he is focalizing, he does not does not possess all the qualities of an extradiegetic focalizer.

According to Rimmon-Kenan, an external focalization is expected to yield an objective viewpoint in contrast with internal focalization which is often expected to reflect a subjective view of the story and the characters (p. 80). Because of this constricted position in the story, the diegetic narrator (the narrator-focalizer) tends to be subjective or involved and easily affected or prejudiced in his judgements by his closeness to or degree of intimacy with the focalized objects. For example, we see Nick sympathizing with Gatsby and preferring him to all the characters: “‘They’re a rotten crowd,’ I shouted across the lawn. ‘ You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together.’” (p. 147). Even though Nick asserts that “it was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I disapproved of him from beginning

to end” (p.146), he still almost turns a blind eye to Gatsby’s involvement in illegal trade and immoral bootlegging as well as to his association with such infamous and despicable figures such as Wolfsheim . Indeed, he is less objective than we would have thought that the beginning after he told us about himself that he is a fair and nonjudgmental person. Consequently he becomes subjective and his narrative is colored rather than objective and detached.

Because of Nick’s position in the story as the principal narrator-focalizer, we tend to rely on his own evaluation and judgements. In other words, the ideological facet of the focalization used in this novel is that of the narrator-focalizer. However, Gatsby’s perspective is not the only one employed in the novel. As has been indicated, other characters such as Gatsby, Daisy, Jordan Baker, Michaelis, and Tom also have their own stories to focalize and to tell. Nevertheless, the final impressions and views we get are largely influenced by Nick’s set of values. As Rimmon-Kenan explains, “The ideology of the narrator-focalizer is usually taken as authoritative, and all other ideologies in the text are evaluated from this ‘higher’ position (p. 81).

Most of the events take place in 1922 in America in places such as East Egg, West Egg, the valley of ashes, and New York, etc. These details ar

related as I shall explain to Genette's spatial and temporal dimensions of the story. Time in narrative is a combination of story and text, or text-time and story-time

**Time:**

To better explain the representation of time in *The Great Gatsby*, it is appropriate to give a brief summary of the main events in this novel with special concentration on their time sequence, chronological order, duration and frequency. This summary is followed by a discussion of the three major aspects of time as already explained in the previous chapter with some more references to the model of narrative analysis adopted in this thesis.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Nick Carraway, a young man from Minnesota and a Yale University graduate, moves to New York in the summer of 1922 to learn about the bond business. He lives in the West Egg district of Long Island. Nick's neighbor is the mysterious Jay Gatsby. One evening, Nick goes to East Egg, a fashionable area, in order to have dinner with his cousin Daisy and her husband Tom, a former classmate of Nick. There he is introduced to Jordan Baker, an attractive young woman with whom Nick later develops a romantic relationship but soon drops. During this visit, Nick learns from Jordan Baker a bit about Daisy and Tom's marriage as well as

about Tom's affair with Myrtle Wilson, a woman who lives with her husband in an area called the valley of ashes, a desolate and grim place.

In the midsummer of the same year, Nick gets an invitation to one of Gatsby's parties where he again meets Jordan Baker and his mysterious neighbor, Gatsby. Gatsby speaks to Jordan Baker who later relays what she has heard from Gatsby to Nick Carraway. From Jordan Baker, Nick learns that the story of Daisy-Gatsby love relationship started five years ago (in 1917) and that Gatsby is still in love with her. Gatsby spends much of his time staring at the green light close to Daisy's residence along the bay and throws parties to attract Daisy to his mansion. Gatsby asks Nick to arrange a reunion with Daisy. Later, Nick invites Daisy to his house where she meets Gatsby, and their love affair is renewed. After a short time, Tom realizes that Gatsby is in love with Daisy. At an hotel in New York, Tom informs Daisy that Gatsby is a criminal and that his wealth comes from bootlegging and other illegal activities. Daisy announces her allegiance to Tom who defiantly sends Daisy back to East Egg with Gatsby.

When Nick, Tom and Jordan Baker pass through the valley of ashes they discover that Gatsby's car has hit and killed Myrtle, Tom's lover. When Nick meets Gatsby again he tells him that Daisy was driving but he intends

to take the blame. Early next day, Tom tells Myrtle's husband, George Wilson that Gatsby is responsible for Myrtle's death as he was the driver of the car that struck her. Wilson goes to the pool where Gatsby is swimming and kills him and himself as well. Nick arranges a small funeral, meets Gatsby's father, breaks with Jordan and moves back to the Midwest to escape the moral corruption he has witnessed.

The above overview of main events in *The Great Gatsby* reveals that Gatsby first met Daisy back in 1917, almost five years before the beginning of the actual events which started in late summer of 1922. Until 1917 Gatsby was a military officer but he left Louisville in the same year to fight in World War I. Daisy promised to marry him when he came back but in 1918 she met a rich man named Tom Buchanan and married him while Gatsby was still studying at Oxford.

Obviously, these are pivotal events in the story that centers on the love affair between Daisy and Gatsby and Daisy-Tom married life. However, the author delays telling us about the earlier events until fairly late in the novel, after the first three or four chapters of the novel. Though Gatsby's name is mentioned in the first chapter, he does not appear in a speaking role until the third chapter. Actually, the first three chapters mark Nick's visit to his

cousin Daisy and her husband Tom, his trip to the valley of ashes with Tom and his first attendance of one of Gatsby's parties where he meets Daisy and Jordan Baker again. But so far, there has not been any mention of Gatsby-Daisy love affair which preceded these events by almost five years. It is only in chapter four that the real reference to Gatsby's earlier life and his love affair with Daisy are really introduced. Gatsby begins first by telling Nick about his origin, his family background, his education, and his heroic achievements in the war and his inheritance of a great wealth, most of which are lies or exaggerated details (pp. 64-66). Naturally, such details about Gatsby's early life pertain to the past and could have been mentioned earlier in the novel. However, the novel begins with Nick talking about his life and business career in the year 1922 and his new visits and acquaintances with such characters as Daisy, Tom, Jordan Baker and Myrtle Wilson.

Drawing upon what was said in the previous chapter about the relationship between text-time and story-time, we can notice that the narrative technique used here is what Genette calls "analepsis", that is mentioning events that happened earlier at a later stage in the text. One may also add that the author has delayed the appearance of the hero and the revelation of his earlier love in order to surround his hero with a sense of

mystery, a narrative strategy that he seems to be adopting throughout the novel.

As Rimmon-Kenan explains, analepsis can be of two kinds: “external analepsis” which evokes a past which preceded the starting point of the first narrative and “internal analepsis” which occurs after the starting point of the first narrative (p. 48). A good example of the first kind is Jordan’s narrative about Daisy’s wedding in chapter four (p. 74), while a representative example of the second kind is the biographical account given by Gatsby’s father about his son as a “young man” in chapter nine (pp. 160-161).

In the same chapter, Gatsby Tells Nick that he has an interesting story to tell about his own life and a bitter memory that still troubles him: “ ‘I drift here and there trying to forget the sad things that happened to me .’ he hesitated. ‘You’ll hear about it this afternoon.’” (p.66). In this quotation, we can see a clear use of another narrative device called “prolepsis” by Genette and “foreshowing” by traditional theory of narration. Other examples of prolepsis can be seen in the Nick’s warning to Gatsby: “ ‘You can’t repeat the past’” (p. 106). In these words, Nick is foreshadowing the failure of Gatsby’s objective to get Daisy back and consequently the failure of his dream that occurs towards the end of the novel . Another example of

prolepsis is when Nick was with Tom and Jordan Baker returning from New York and Nick says: “So we drove toward death through the cooling twilight” (p. 130). Here, the act of death is mentioned before it occurs. This is also followed by some details about the testimony that the young Greek, Michaelis, gave as the principal witness at the inquest (p. 130). In other words, details of the tragic accident which preceded this trial are given later though the accident preceded the inquest.

As mentioned earlier, prolepsis is realized when a later event is mentioned in the text before earlier events have been mentioned in the text. Again, we might say that the author is using this narrative device for the sake of arousing the reader’s curiosity and interest in the events ahead and a kind of preparing the reader for such important events. In this way, the writer maintains the reader’s sustained curiosity and willingness to know more about the story events and characters.

In chapter four, Gatsby introduces Nick to his infamous friend Mr. Wolfshiem about whom we learn that he “fixed the World’s Series back in 1919” (72). As the chronological of events clearly indicates, this mention of this information at this stage in the text is also another example of analepsis or retrospection. In chapter four as well, Jordan Baker begins telling Nick

some details of the love affair that happened in 1917 between Daisy and Gatsby (pp.73-76). Actually, Jordan Baker summarizes the events first of 1917 when Gatsby left Daisy to go the war and the period from 1918-1922 when Daisy met Tom and the two got married and had a child. According to Jordan, Daisy never heard of Gatsby until six weeks ago when Jordan asked Nick if he ever knew the man called Gatsby in West Egg (p. 76).

The significance of Jordan Baker's narrative lies in its brevity and the useful information it provides about the two most important characters in the novel, Daisy and Gatsby. Here we notice the author using another narrative device which Genette and Rimmon-Kenan, like other narration theorists such as Percy Lubbock and Wayne Booth, call "summary". As Rimmon-Kenan puts it, "in *summary*, the pace is accelerated through a textual 'condensation' or 'compression' of a given story-period into a relatively short statement of its main features" (p.53). The effect produce by the use of such narrative device is called "acceleration" whereby a "short segment of the text is devoted to a long period of the story, relative to the 'norm' established for this text" (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 53).

On the other hand, we find a different narrative techniques used in the first three chapters which are used mainly for introducing background

information and some detailed descriptions of place and setting without speeding up the main action. As the narrator himself realizes, he finds himself slow in disclosing information about some other more important details than the accounts he has given thus far:

Reading over what I have written so far, I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary, they were merely casual events in a crowded summer, and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs. (56)

In the above quotation, we find that almost one third of the novel has been devoted to the events of three nights in a story that covered events that happened over many years. Clearly there is a slowdown in the pace of the narrative. The effect of this technique is called “deceleration”. As Rimmon-Kenan observes: “The effect of deceleration is produced by the opposite procedure, namely devoting a long segment of the text to a short period of the story” (p. 53).

As a matter of course, we do not expect a writer to tell us all the details of the narrative. Rather, the novelist may leave many details incomplete or omitted so that he would be able to engage the reader's attention by making him try to figure out the events which haven't been mentioned or elaborated. For example, at the end of Gatsby's party in chapter three, Nick finds himself surrounded by Gatsby's great attention and high respect. On leaving the place, Gatsby is seen still standing without any more information being given about what happened after Nick's departure. Indeed, there is a clear blank at the end of the text to suggest the omission of some information (p.56) The same device is also used after Nick leaves Daisy and Gatsby together after their first meeting at the end of chapter five. Such narrative device is frequently used in this novel to mark the omission of some information or keeping it from the reader. In this way, an effect of "acceleration" is produced. As Rimmon-Kenan clarifies, "The maximum speed is *ellipsis* (omission) where zero textual space corresponds to some story duration" (p. 53).

Apart from the above mentioned narrative techniques regarding the relationship between story-time and text-time, that is the occurrence of events in the story in terms of their temporal happening and their spatial

mention on the pages of the work, there is the device of ‘scene’. “In *scene*...story-duration and text-duration are conventionally considered identical” (Rimmon-Kenan, p. 54). Put simply, the purest scenic form is “dialogue” where writing looks like a scene from a play rather than a segment from a fictional narrative. This method is frequently used in the novel and constitutes the bulk of the whole text. Of course, this does not mean that such segments of the narrative are written exclusively in dialogue; they are often actually interspersed with some authorial commentary and generalizations.

One of the most important events in the novel, the reunion between Gatsby and Daisy, seems to be appropriately positioned at the beginning of chapter five, almost in the middle of the novel of nine chapters. In this encounter as well as in most of the following encounters between the characters such as the confrontation scenes between Gatsby and Tom in Chapters six and seven, the pace of the narrative seems to slow down (scene) as the writer resorts more to dialogue and conversational and descriptive scenes. For example, the scene where Gatsby is trying to impress Daisy with his wealth is given in elaborate details (88-90).

On the other hand, some events are given in the form of “summary”. These include details about Gatsby’s past given by the narrator in chapter six and by Gatsby’s father in chapter 9 and by Nick details of the car accident given by Michaelis in chapter seven. Of course, summary result in accelerating the pace of the narrative. A good example of this is noticeable in representing Gatsby’s life, his success as a man and how he became rich in a relatively segment of the text without giving many details about all these things happened. On the other hand,

deceleration is achieved in *The Great Gatsby* when Nick is talking about the parties which Gatsby threw in a chapter or two resulting in devoting a long segment of the text to a short period of events.

### **Frequency:**

So far, we have discussing the dimension of time in *The Great Gatsby* with reference to two of its main components, namely *order* and *duration*. In addition to these, there is the third component which Genette calls *frequency*, a component that is greatly neglected in traditional narrative theory. According to Rimmon-Kenan, “*Frequency*, a temporal component not treated in narrative theory before Genette, is the relation between the number of times an event appear in the story and the number of times it is

narrated (or mentioned) in the text” (p. 56). Accordingly, repetition-relations between story-events and their narration in the text can take one of the following forms: *Singulative* (telling once what happened once); *repetitive* (telling number of times what happen once); and *iterative* (telling once what happened number of times) (Rimmon-Kenan, pp. 57-58).

Examining the novel, we find that the singulative form is the most frequently used one in this novel as indeed is the case in most novels. For instance, the scene of the reunion between Gatsby and Daisy which happened once is also narrated one time.

Repetitive form occurs in some parts of the novel such as the love story between Gatsby and Daisy where it is mentioned a number of times although it happened once. Thus, it is reiterated in three different accounts by Jordan Baker, Daisy and then by Gatsby himself perhaps to draw attention to its significance and to give the reader a better and more comprehensive understanding of this relationship. Repetition techniques also occurs when the car accident which resulted in Myrtle’s death is told by three people in three separate times, first by Nick the narrator, then by Michaelis, a witness to the accident and later by Gatsby himself. This repetition would help the reader understand the death of myrtle from different points of view.

The iterative technique is also used throughout this novel. For example, Gatsby's parties which occurred several times as they were thrown every Saturday over several weeks are mentioned only once by Nick. Thus, we are told: "There was music from my neighbour's house through the summer nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went..." (p. 40). In other words, what happened several times is mentioned only once in the text. We are also told that:

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York – every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves....

At least once a fortnight a corps of caterers came down with several hundreds of canvas and enough colored lights to make a Christmas tree of Gatsby's enormous garden. (p. 40).

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The previous discussion has concentrated on the analysis of Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* from the perspective of modern/contemporary narrative theory, with special reference to Gerard Genette's narrative theory as illustrated and expounded by S. Rimmon-Kenan in her book: *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (1983). The discussion has focused on three main dimensions of Genette's model of narratology, namely time, focalization, and narration. As a result of this study, the following can be considered as the main conclusions that the research has arrived at.

First, the research has shown that modern narratology has a great importance in the analysis of works of fiction. Undoubtedly, our understanding of the narrative techniques employed by Fitzgerald can enhance our general appreciation of the novel because we will be better aware of the intricacies and the subtleties of the narrative method or methods that the writer has utilized in writing his novel.

Second, as a result of utilizing Genette's model of narrative analysis we become aware of new approaches to works of fiction. For example, Genette

introduces some new concepts which were not used in traditional narrative theory as expounded in the studies of some prominent theorists and scholars of narrative such as E. M. Forster, Percy Lubbock, Cleanth Brooks and Wayne Booth. There is no doubt that the model of analysis which Rimmon-Kenan has developed on the grounds laid down by Gerard Genette mark a further advance on the notions of narrative technique prior to the structuralist theory of narrative which came up with new ideas about the analysis of narrative. First and foremost among these theorists is Gerard Genette who has been influential in the field of modern narratology.

One the new concepts ushered in by Genette and further developed and illustrated by Rimmon-Kenan is the concept of focalization. Traditional narrative theory, as we have seen, has treated two related but different activities as if they were interchangeable. These questions are: Who sees? and who speaks. Our analysis of the selected novel has shown that these two dimensions are really different though they sometimes become identical. When the principal narrator, Nick Carraway tells us something it is not invariably a direct reflection of his own views. Rather, the views may be those of the character under consideration but the words are those of the writer. Thus, the new concept of point of view in narrative theory leads us to

make a distinction between focalization and narrating, between seeing and speaking. The researcher has tried to adopt and follow this approach as much as possible as it yields better understanding of the events as well as the characters and even more a better appreciation of the writer's narrative technique and his narrative writing skills.

Third, the research has revealed that some important concepts of narratology have not been treated or at least fully treated in traditional narrative theory. One of these concepts is the dimension of frequency which seems to have been largely ignored in traditional studies of fiction. By drawing upon Genette's new and original concepts, our analytical and interpretive capacities are further enriched and more enlightened.

Fourth and finally, we have seen that the novel's narrator Nick Carraway is not that reliable narrator as a good number of previous studies of point of view and narrative technique in *The Great Gatsby* seem to suggest. Rather, Nick makes statements and judgements which he soon contradicts. Consequently it is wrong to accept his views and conclusions at face value. And instead of relying of one narrator, we are given the opportunity of making use of a multiplicity of narrators, a technique that is now considered more advanced than the traditional omniscient narrator whose

generalizations are expected to be true and valid as they form the moral and ethical norms of the work as a whole.

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