The Sexual Drama of Nick and Gatsby

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Nick is our narrator in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby,* and we see pretty much what he sees. Nick sees, and we with him, that Gatsby is naive, posturing, and a little ridiculous, but also someone charged with colossal vitality and in the end morally superior to those about him because of his fidelity to his dream. Nick's summation is explicit: "No--Gatsby turned out all right in the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men."[1] Part of that foul dust is certainly the Buchanans and especially Tom. The contrast for Nick between Tom and Gatsby is stark, blunt, and uncompromising. Gatsby has "something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life" (2), and "an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person" (2), but Tom has a hard mouth and supercilious manner, two shining arrogant eyes, and a cruel body. One is sensitive and the other coarse, one idealistic and romantic and the other literal, cruel, and arrogant. One has an idealistic love, the other a dirty love; one reaches for the stars, and the other for the ash heap. Gatsby's love for Daisy may be misplaced, foolish, and unrealistic; but for Nick, and the critics, the fidelity and vitality of Gatsby's dream are not foolish. The dream for Nick is incorruptible, even if the object of the dream, Daisy, is corruptible. I know of no defense of Tom, whatever the reservations about Gatsby.[2] Yet there is something wrong with the contrast. By the end of the novel Nick's attachment to Gatsby, and ours, has reached almost heroic proportions. Gatsby sacrifices himself for his love and awaits his autumnal death with calm and dignity, while Tom, selfish and mean to the end, slinks away, almost a murderer, to continue his self-indulgent life. The contrast is too sharp and extreme, and Nick has too much at stake in making it. It is also at variance with the facts. It takes some effort to separate oneself from what Nick sees and how he sees it. He is after all our narrative voice and he seems to be sane, judicious, and fair. In the tradition of commentary on Nick, he is our "moral norm." But he seems less than fair in the contrast he makes between Tom and Gatsby.

Gatsby is, after all, a bootlegger, a criminal, perhaps even a murderer or someone who threatens murder, if Tom's report of Walter Chase's fear is accurate. Tom makes love to another man's wife, but so does Gatsby; Tom buys Myrtle for a few trinkets and Daisy for a $350,000 dollar necklace; Gatsby tries to buy her with his magnificent mansion. Tom orchestrates a rather messy party in which people get sloppy, drunk, and violent, but so does Gatsby. Only

[1]F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (New York: Scribners, 1953); all references are to this edition.

[2]The following quotation is representative: "Tom Buchanan is gross sensuality, a beast lacking in imagination, incapable of clear sight, much less vision." Kenneth Eble, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Boston: Twayne, 1963) 94.

the scale is greater. Tom may be insensitive to people, but Gatsby hardly seems to be aware that anyone other than Daisy exists. There are reasons surely to disapprove of Tom, but something more than objective approval and reliability are at work in the intense and unqualified way in which Nick approves of Gatsby and disapproves of Tom. There is ample justification for Nick to speak of others as a "rotten crowd" (154) but no justification to exonerate Gatsby. There is the possibility that Nick's defense of Gatsby and his eagerness to think the best of him and the worst of Tom, hide reasons other than those general, impersonal, and honorific reasons that Nick gives.

It can be argued--and a legion of critics following Nick have argued--that Gatsby is to be exonerated because of his "incorruptible dream," that in an age of cynicism, boredom, and unbelief, he is unique because he believes in something. No matter that the object of the dream, Daisy, is tawdry and that the means to pursue the dream sordid, the colossal freshness of his faith justifies everything. Even when a critic sees him in a harsh light, as in the following passage, he finds him "uplifted" by "the magnitude of his ambition and the glamor of his illusion." Thus, "Gatsby is a boor, a roughneck, a fraud, a criminal. His taste is vulgar, his behavior ostentatious, his love adolescent, his business dealings ruthless, and dishonest. He is interested in people--most notably Carraway himself--only when he wants to use them. His nice gestures stem from the fact that, as one character comments, 'he doesn't want any trouble with anybody.' Like other paranoiacs, he lives in a childish tissue of lies and is unaware of the existence of an independent reality in which other people have separate existences. What lifts him above ordinary viciousness is the magnitude of his ambition and the glamor of his illusion."[3] Nick and the critics have faulted Gatsby for many things, but not for his "incorruptible dream."

But it is not easy to specify what that dream is. Lockridge calls it "a dream of human order amid chaos";[4] Marius Bewley, "the withering of the American dream";[5] Ornstein, Gatsby's "fictional past";[6] and for Trilling, Gatsby and the dream "comes inevitably to stand for America itself."[7] The novel may be all these things, but it is first and foremost about Gatsby's love for Daisy, a point that must be insisted on, because it has been regularly and summarily dismissed. Not only does the novel say this in the most direct and literal manner, but Fitzgerald himself knew it and regretted that he had not somehow elaborated the idea and explained the idea more fully. What is more it is a real love, that is, a love with a sexual basis. Lionel Trilling's remark that it was remarkable how little sex Fitzgerald puts into his stories may be asserted about *The Great Gatsby* only if one ignores much of the novel (237). Tom sleeps with a chambermaid shortly after his marriage; the Buchanans leave Chicago because of one of his flings; he fornicates with Myrtle while Nick goes out to buy a pack of cigarettes; Nick has an affair with a girl from Jersey City; and the parties Gatsby gives are whatever else, sexual orgies. When the novel is over in an image sex-

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[3]Gary J. Scrimgeour, "Against *The Great Gatsby*," Criticism, 8 (Winter, 1966): 79.

[4]Ernest Lockridge, "Introduction," *Twentieth Century Interpretations of* The Great Gatsby (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968) 11.

[5]Marius Bewley, "Scott Fitzgerald's criticism of America," *Sewanee Review* 62 (Spring 1954): 223.

[6]Robert Ornstein, "Scott Fitzgerald's Fable of East and West," *College English* 17 (1956-57): 142.

[7]Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1953) 242.

ually explicit, Myrtle kneels in her own blood with her naked breast partly severed and flapping. These examples are only the rim of the caldron. The caldron is Gatsby's love of Daisy and those relationships that Fitzgerald regretted not having explained more fully. It is Gatsby's love for Daisy that explains why Nick loves Gatsby and hates Tom.

There is of course, in the vast literature on Gatsby some noting of sexual motifs. But they have been, with few exceptions, scattered and casual. The exceptions have been pieces by Murray Levith, Patricia Pacey Thornton, and Keath Fraser. Murray Levith notes, among other things, that Fitzgerald's Long Island is phallic in description, the two eggs suggests male genitals, and Gatsby's car is "a rich cream color." He repeats Trilling's characterization of Jordan Baker as "vaguely homosexual," and takes note of McKee as "a pale feminine man." Most suggestively he calls Gatsby's romantic dream for Daisy "radically prepubescent--indeed infantile." His conclusion is that "Fitzgerald leaves us with a sterile and clearly masturbatory image: 'So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.'"[8] But the details remain details and throw no light on the larger issues of the novel.

Patricia Pacey Thornton pays the most detailed attention to sexual motifs. She notes correctly that Fitzgerald's guest list is filled with sexual hybrids: "The women are 'defeminized'--Mrs. Ulysses Swett, Francis Bull, Faustina O'Brien--and men are emasculated--Newton Orchid, Earnes Lilly, and Russell Betty." She calls Nick and Jordan "androgynous twins."[9] They "cannot properly be called opposite sex since they seem to have equally divided between them masculine and feminine genes. They are, in fact, androgynous twins, and their attraction-repulsion results from their shared and divided natures" (PT 464). Also "Nick's is a divided nature, torn between traditional and experimental, masculine and feminine, moral and immoral" (PT 466). Thornton sees Nick's masculine qualities in his ambition, desire to acquire money and power and his feminine virtues in his ability to listen to others, his providing food and nourishment to Daisy and Gatsby, and his human warmth. She has high praise for Nick, and in that sense continues the tradition of uncritical acceptance of Nick as the moral center of the novel: "Apart from Gatsby and his imagination, both sexes are intellectually barren and mindless. Nick is the only one to qualify as a thinker, as a moral philosopher" (PT 467).

She is most original in the similarities she notes between Myrtle and Gatsby. The two never meet and have nothing to do with each other until the fateful accident. She notes that the speech of both just misses being absurd, that both wear the clothes of the wealthy, and that both are ambitious. She might have summarized all this by saying what is implied, that is, that both want to leave the valley of ashes behind. What she does not say and does not suspect is a deeper relationship: in his psyche Myrtle is the sexual woman that Gatsby has left behind and is terrified of meeting again. If Daisy is the tip of

[8]Murray J. Levith, "Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*," *Explicator*, 37 (April 1979), item 7.

[9]Patricia Pacey Thornton, "Sexual Roles in *The Great Gatsby*," *English Studies in Canada* 5.4 (Winter 1979): 457. Subsequent references are to this edition and will appear in the text after 'PT'.

the caldron for Gatsby, Myrtle is the caldron, which is to say that Daisy and Myrtle are deeply and inextricably related in Gatsby's psyche.

Gatsby loves Daisy with an ideal love: unswerving, undeviating, and overwhelming. Gatsby must make her what she is not and must give her every perfection; his love for Daisy has to be lifted above time and reality. Gatsby is determined that the real Daisy--bored, spoiled cynical, and uncaring--must not appear, and when she does, he has to deny her. She must always be for him the Daisy of white innocence and first love. If this obsession has been called innocence and faith, it is also a compulsive and determined flight before reality and into a dream purged of change and blemish. It is a colossal faith and a colossal flight. What is he running from? The answer is everywhere in the novel. Wolfsheim tells us that he would never so much as look at another man's wife and Jordan Baker is only a name for him. Gatsby flees from Myrtle, from the women at his parties, and from the real Daisy. He flees from women and sex. Why? The perfect woman, elevated by abstraction to sainthood, the quest for whom is associated with the quest for the holy Grail, may be beautiful, but she also represents a split in his psyche and a sign of a severe psychic disorder, a nascent form of emotional suicide.

The cool unconcern of Gatsby hides rage and terror underneath. This is why everything must be reinforced; he can have no traffic with ordinary women; Daisy cannot be just wonderful but must be perfect; the car and his clothes spotless; the parties the biggest; and the house bigger and better than everyone else's. The split in his inner life is reflected in his outer life. The novel is built on a pattern of surface and underground, bright and dull, cleanliness and dirtiness, white and dark. Gatsby wears white or pink suits; his shirts are beautiful; and only the telephone calls connect him to his sleazy underground. He lives on the fringes of the Buchanan's glamorous world and moves between the glamor of East and West egg and New York. The economic underground between them is the valley of ashes, where there is dirt, junk cars, pale faces, listless people and sex. Tom has no problem in stopping off at the valley of the ashes and embracing the "dirty" woman, Myrtle, and Nick, the voyeur, has no trouble accompanying him. But Gatsby's car spreads wings when it passes the valley of the ashes and Myrtle's smouldering sensuality. He wants nothing to do with the valley of ashes or the sexual woman who lives there. Gatsby wants to climb to the secret place above the trees and "suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder" (112) where Daisy and the saintly woman lives. The image is clearly sexual, though mixed with stardust and idealism, evoking the serene and ideal moment of the child at peace on his mother's breast. Levith is right in calling the image prepubescent and infantile, but it is precisely because it is these things that it has immense significance.

One will want to object that Daisy is no mother, but the fact of the matter is that Daisy is a mother, the only mother in the novel. In Gatsby's psychic projection she is the ideal woman, fixed in timelessness and perfection and raised above the sordidness of sex. Many have remarked on the retreat of Daisy before the "raw emotion" and into phantasy and purity. Daisy is presented to us always in white, and more than once floating above the earth. Richard A. Koenigsberg was the first to discern the split in Gatsby's psyche of the de-

graded and idealized representation of the mother, and he is right when he says: "If Myrtle Wilson stands as the degraded half of this split image of the mother, then Daisy Buchanan--especially from the narrator's point of view--represents her counterpart: the unreachable, idealized mother."[10] He goes on: "For Daisy is really a first love; to which he remains so intensely faithful that we wonder if it is not some earlier woman--that *first* 'first love' of all little boys--to whom he is so fanatically devoted" (323). But Koenigsberg does not show how this split fuels his love for Daisy, and how that sexual complex explains Nick's devotion to him. Gatsby will have nothing to do with "dirty" women and everything to do with the "clean" woman, who is then raised to a saintly and perfect image.

Gatsby suffers from a "madonna complex," that use of the idealized perfect woman to keep at bay, in the psyche, the pain and terror of the "sordid" or sexual woman. Such a flight from the "dirty" woman to the clean woman is a form of homosexuality. Homosexuality? Freudian reasoning may lead us there, but does the text. There is more than a hint of it in Gatsby's distaste for women. We are told that on Dan Cody's yacht women spoiled Gatsby early and he contracted a contempt for them; and at Gatsby's parties, where sex swirls about him, "no French bob touched his shoulder" (50). There is more than a hint, too, in that series of surrogate fathers Gatsby has sought out to compensate for the weak and ineffectual actual father, the first of which, Dan Cody, dresses him and employs him in a vague and unspecified capacity. Later he will do the same with Klipspringer, who is everywhere present in Gatsby's house, and who seems to be employed in a vague and unspecified capacity and has the air of a kept guest. The most telling evidence of Gatsby's repressed homosexuality comes from Nick himself, as do the reasons why Gatsby is so important to Nick, important enough to give up his "girl" and to stand with Gatsby against the world in the crisis days of Gatsby's life. At the end of the novel, it is Gatsby and Nick against the world. I am suggesting that the reason Nick feels sympathy for Gatsby and distaste for Tom has less to do with what Gatsby and Tom are in themselves and everything to do with Nick's psychological needs. Nick favors Gatsby because he favors what Gatsby is, feels so intensely for Gatsby because he feels what Gatsby feels. Put bluntly we are confronted with the sympathy of one homosexual for another. Is there anything in or text to support this. Yes, rather blatantly so.

Nick shows something of his homosexual leanings in the distaste that he registers for the aggressive masculinity of Tom and the repugnance he feels for Tom's dirty love. But these proclivities become overt at the party in Tom and Myrtle's apartment and in his relationship to Mr. McKee. According to Nick, Mrs. McKee is shrill, languid, and horrible; Catherine is rather grotesque with her sticky bob of red hair, her rakish eyebrows, and blurred expression on her face. Mr. McKee, on the other hand, is respectful to everyone, and Nick notices the intimate detail of lather on McKee's cheekbone. Nick is tender and attentive to his effeminate gentleman, who is in the artistic game. So attentive that when McKee leaves, he leaves with him, and as subsequent events show, for a

[10]Richard a. Koenigsberg, "F. Scott Fitzgerald: Literature and the Work of Mourning," *American Imago* 24 (1967): 323.

purpose. It is McKee who suggests to Nick to come and have lunch with him "anywhere," and it is the elevator boy who--and in this context the image must be sexual--orders McKee to take his hands off the lever. And it is we who read after three dots about Nick standing beside McKee's bed and McKee apparently sitting up between the sheets clad in his underwear. The last paragraph of Chapter II has Nick half asleep in the cold lower level of Penn station waiting for the four o'clock train.

How strange that in the vast critical literature of commentary on *The Great Gatsby*, there is hardly a mention of this scene![11] Keath Fraser in "Another Reading of *The Great Gatsby*" is almost alone in pointing to the sexual implications of the scene that ends Chapter II, but concludes that one doesn't quite know how to read the scene. Nick is less straightforward than he puts himself forth for Fraser, and he plays with the sexual ambiguities of Nick's character and behavior.[12] He is especially acute in his analysis of Nick and Jordan Baker's relationship. But he never brings his excellent perceptions to bear on the central issues of the novel: he has nothing to say about Nick and Gatsby's relationship and Gatsby and Daisy's love. He is too timid, also, in my view in making firm and definite Nick's homosexual proclivities. I do not know how one can read the scene in McKee's bedroom in any other way, especially when so many other facts about his behavior support such a conclusion. The ties he feels to Gatsby explain not only his overt defense of Gatsby, but his bahavior in the novel with other people. Like Gatsby he acts out something of the same kind of pattern of flight and defense. We have to remind ourselves that he has come East not only to sell bonds, but also to flee from a romantic entanglement, and later he flees the entanglement of the brief Jersey City affair. Most clearly, however he imitates Gatsby's love for Daisy by his love affair with Jordan. Jordan has something of the same brand of sophistication as Daisy. We are introduced to both in images of sensuous purity; both are dressed in white and so free of earthly dross that they seem to float in the air. They passed their youth together; they have the same friends, move in the same circles, have something of the same brittle beauty and insouciance, and if Nick is a little in love with his cousin, he is a little more in love with Jordan Baker. Gatsby, to be sure, "idealizes" Daisy and one cannot stretch Nick's interest in Jordan to idealization. He is intrigued by her: by her dishonesty and carelessness, and also by the world of beautiful, wealthy, and glamorous people she moves in. Yet this difference aside, Nick chooses Jordan for some of the same reasons Gatsby chose Daisy. Daisy is Gatsby's defense against women, and Jordan is Nick's against women. It cannot escape our attention that Jordan has the body of a boy and that she has qualities of character that are conventionally considered to be masculine. She is aggressive, cynical, and engaged in sports at a time when few women were. She wears all her clothes as if they were sport clothes, and walks as if she had learned to walk on a golf course. When she

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[11]Henry Idema III in *Freud, Religion, and The Roaring Twenties* (Savage, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 1990) notes the scene in the railway station and considers briefly the possibility that Nick is a homosexual, but does not go into the effect of this upon his relationship with Gatsby. He is careful to note also that he has taken the idea of homosexuality from a class he took from me at the University of Chicago.

[12]Keath Fraser, "Another Reading of The Great Gatsby," *English Studies in Canada* 5.3 (Autumn 1979): 330-43.

perspires the suggestion of a moustache appears on her upper lip. Nick doesn't have to feel the emotions one usually feels for a woman: tenderness, affection, love. Jordan protects him from these by her cynicism and proud and haughty face. He can participate with impunity in that dishonesty, cynicism, and carelessness which he energetically excludes from his characterization of himself. It is as if the insensitivity and homosexuality hidden in Gatsby's love of Daisy is partially revealed in Nick's "love" for Jordan. It is not without significance that when Gatsby is abandoned by his love, Daisy, Nick abandons his love, Jordan. It is easier for Nick to give up Jordan than for Gatsby to give up Daisy. The screen is thinner, the flight more obvious, and the repression less deep. Nick acts out his homosexuality and Gatsby does not. Gatsby's is shielded by the intensity and energy of his idealistic love and his incorruptible dream. At the end it is Nick and Gatsby alone against a cold and uncaring world. The fidelity that Gatsby had shown to Daisy, Nick shows to Gatsby, rationalized, of course, by Nick as basic human decency.

If Nick's feelings for Gatsby are intense, they are equally intense for Tom. And they are intense for the same reason. Tom pursues the coarse sexuality, which Gatsby has excluded from his consciousness by idealization and repression. Tom, too, in his compulsive and promiscuous sexuality enacts a flight from real love as much as does Gatsby. Gatsby will have nothing to do with real women and Tom will have nothing to do with them. Gatsby divides women into pure and dirty, and Tom divides women into pure and dirty. But Tom acts out what is deeply hidden in Gatsby's psyche. Tom embraces the dirty women and Gatsby keeps her at bay with idealization. Is it any wonder that they both love the same woman, Daisy. She is sufficiently removed from reality to meet the needs of both. Despite his aversion to Tom's aggressive masculinity and primeval thinking, Nick accompanies Tom on his rounds, participating vicariously in his sexual exploits, even to the point of providing Tom and Myrtle with the time and space to complete their fornications. Indeed, in what appears to be almost a primal scene, he is just outside the door where Tom and Myrtle effect their sexual union. And he is just outside the door when Daisy and Gatsby celebrate their "idealistic" union. Nick is the enabler and observer in both unions. For Nick, Gatsby and Tom seem to function somewhat like good and bad fathers. Tom is called paternal more than once by Nick, and he seems to have a kind of power and authority over Nick. Nick does pretty much what he is told, Tom has all the attributes that one associates with the hated father: he is authoritative, opinionated, domineering, and very much the no-sayer. In fact it is he who says no to both Gatsby's bid to claim Daisy and Myrtle's bid to replace Daisy. If Gatsby deep in his psyche has identified Daisy with the first love, where he had sucked "on the pap of life" (112) and gulped "down the incomparable milk of wonder" (112), Tom is the hated father, who denies him that love.

Myrtle is Tom's dirty woman and as the image of underground and dirty sex, she embodies what Gatsby has repressed in his consciousness and symbolizes what Gatsby has attempted to kill in himself. It is no accident, then, that Myrtle mistakes Gatsby for Tom the the fateful night of her death. Gatsby has the "pure" woman, Daisy, by his side, and the "dirty" woman appears out of the dark in the light of the vehicle guided by Daisy. The "pure" woman brings

her out of the dark and kills her, and as at the parties, Gatsby sits passively by her side. Myrtle kneeling in her own blood, her dress ripped and her breast flapping helplessly is an image of sex punished and punished by the pure woman, with the instruments of Gatsby's power. Gatsby protects the ideal woman and flees from the sexual woman. This climactic scene reenacts the drama of Gatsby's psychic structure. Deep in his psyche he had killed the dirty woman in himself by giving all his power to the pure woman, and by doing so he had killed himself. Gatsby is mistaken by Wilson to be the murderer of Myrtle, but in a psychoanalytic sense it is not a mistake. The keeper of the "dirty" woman, Wilson (Gatsby), kills the keeper of the clean woman Gatsby. The psychic suicide is corroborated by the actual murder-suicide. When it is all over and only Nick remains, the dirt that has been kept at bay returns: an obscene word is found scrawled on the sidewalk before the house, and Nick finds dust (from the valley of ashes?) settling over the furniture in Gatsby's house.

Nick, of course, loves Gatsby and hates Tom, but this is so because Gatsby throws a veil of glamor and fateful romance over his displaced homosexuality, while Tom reveals it in a vulgar irredeemable form. The same split of dirty and clean woman exists in Tom, too, and his exaggerated masculinity is as much a sign of his homosexuality as is Gatsby's idealism. But Tom exposes the dirty woman by seeking her out and embracing her, and it is the exposure that Nick finds intolerable, especially in such a vulgar and naked form. Tom acts out what Gatsby is terrified of. Gatsby's dirty woman is deeply repressed and surfaces in his consciousness in the sexual violence he orchestrates but does not participate in at his parties. These parties have a dreamlike quality to them, and Gatsby's part in the parties are analogous to the distancing of responsibility in repression. Nick is in the psychic drama what he has been in the economic drama: the voyeur timidly playing all bases and striving to have it both ways, while elevating this strategy to honesty and good sense. Perhaps it is good sense, but it is not honest. His bourgeois background where the family fortune has been put together by small economics and few risks has served him well. In the end Nick is cowed by the hated father and the seigneur of the castle, and shakes hands with him, all rationalized, of course, as largeness of spirit.

It may be objected that a psychoanalytic reading of the novel diminishes the significance of the hero, and that it gives him a less lofty part than he has an an embodiment of the American dream. It certainly makes Nick something other than that impartial observer and objective reporter that he puts himself forth as, and that a tradition of criticism has taken at face value. It does not and should not exclude from our readings and understandings other Gatsbys. There is no doubt that Gatsby enacts a social and economic drama of mythic proportions. He is the selfmade man who rattles the doors of the rich and almost makes it to the castle's center. He is Nick's economic and social phantasy, as well as his psychological phantasy. Fitzgerald knew that in his attempts to seize and hold what America and his age meant to him, he had to struggle with destructive urges that overwhelmed his mind and spirit. Fitzgerald's descent from *This Side of Paradise* to *Tender is the Night* can be looked at as a progressive sweeping of the romanticizations of love and a franker and deeper examination of sex. The incest motive that lies beneath Gatsby's idealization of

Daisy is addressed in *Tender is the Night*, where Nicole sleeps with her father and Dick sleeps with his surrogate daughter, Rosemary.

If Daisy is Gatsby's dream, and Gatsby is Nick's dream, both of them are Fitzgerald's dream. If Freud is right that we are all the actors in our dreams, then Fitzgerald is all the actors in *The Great Gatsby* . As he had to be. We know enough about his love life to know how destructive and futile it was, how desperately and emptily he slept with whatever came his way; and if there was no overt homosexuality--and there probably was--there was enough in covert fantasy to fuel his destructive loves. Sex was frightening to Fitzgerald and he tempted and confronted his fears by laying them bare in the novels; and because he was human, very human, he kept his fears at bay by hatred and repugnance. And for a while it worked. The controlled fantasy of art helped him keep his life under control. But when the art was gone, so was the life.