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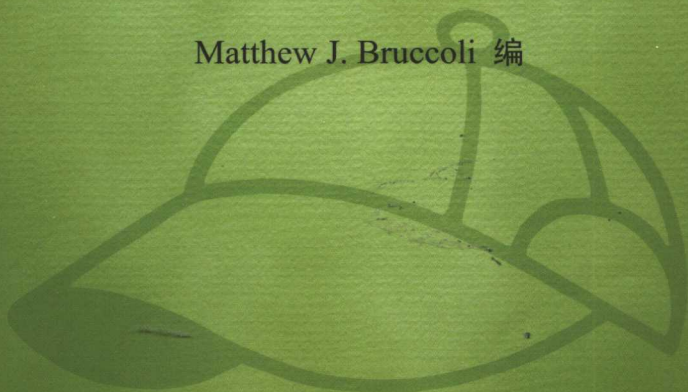
剑桥美国小说新论·15
(英文影印版)

New Essays on

The Great Gatsby

《了不起的盖茨比》新论

Matthew J. Bruccoli 编



北京大学出版社
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导 读

北京大学英语系教授 陶洁

近年来,美国文学在我国很受欢迎。大专院校英语系纷纷开设美国文学选读和专题课,学生从中学到的大部分内容是美国小说。不仅如此,在本科毕业论文、硕士论文或博士论文方面,学生所选题材也大多为关于某部美国小说或某个美国小说家。然而,我们的学生往往热衷理论而对作品或作家缺乏深入细致的了解和分析。他们往往先大谈理论规则,然后罗列一些例证,不能很好地把理论和文本融会贯通,恰如其分地结合在一起。在这种情况下,我们需要一些好的参考资料来帮助学生更好地认识和理解他们在阅读或研究的作品和作家。《剑桥美国小说新论》正是这样一套优秀的参考书。

这套丛书的负责人是曾经主编过《哥伦比亚美国文学史》的艾默里·埃利奥特教授,并且由英国剑桥大学出版社在上世纪80年代中期开始陆续出书,至今仍在发行并出版新书,目前已有五十多种,不仅出平装本还有精装本。一套书发行二十多年还有生命力,估计还会继续发行,主要因为它确实从学生的需要出发,深受他们和教师的喜爱。

《剑桥美国小说新论》的编排方式比较统一。根据主编制定的原则,每本书针对一部美国文学历史上有名望的大作家的一本经典小说,论述者都是研究这位作家的知名学者。开篇是一位权威专家的论述,主要论及作品的创作过程、出版历史、当年的评价以及小说发表以来不同时期的主要评论和阅读倾向。随后是四到五篇论述从不同角度用不同的批评方法对作品进行分析和阐释。这些文章并非信手拈来,而是专门为这套丛书撰写的,运用的理论都比较新,其中不乏颇有



新意的真知灼见。书的最后是为学生进一步学习和研究而提供的参考书目。由此可见,编书的学者们为了帮助学生确实煞费苦心,努力做到尽善尽美。

这五十多种书有早期美国文学家库珀的《最后的莫希干人》,也有当代试验小说大师品钦的《拍卖第49号》和厄普代克那曾被《时代》杂志评为1923年以来100部最佳小说之一的《兔子,跑吧!》;有我们比较熟悉的麦尔维尔的《白鲸》,也有我们还不太了解的他的《漂亮水手》;有中国学生很喜欢的海明威的长篇小说《永别了,武器》,令人想不到的是还有一本论述他所有的短篇小说的集子。有些大作家如亨利·詹姆斯、威廉·福克纳等都有两三本作品入选,但它们都分别有专门的集子。丛书当然涉及已有定论的大作家,包括黑人和白人作家(可惜还没有华裔作家的作品),但也包括20世纪70年代妇女运动中发掘出来的如凯特·肖邦的《觉醒》和佐拉·尼尔·赫斯顿的《他们眼望上苍》,甚至还有我国读者很熟悉的斯托夫人的《汤姆叔叔的小屋》。当年这部小说曾经风靡美国,在全世界都有一定的影响,后来被贬为“政治宣传”作品,从此在美国文学史上销声匿迹。70年代后随着要求扩大文学经典中女性和少数族裔作家的呼声日益高涨,人们才开始重新评价这部作品,分析它对日后妇女作家的影响、对黑人形象的塑造,甚至它在美国文学的哥特式传统中的地位等等。

这样的例子还有很多,例如威廉·迪恩·豪威尔斯和他的《赛拉斯·拉帕姆的发迹》。以前人们只肯定他在发展现实主义文学和理论方面的贡献,对他的作品除了《赛拉斯·拉帕姆的发迹史》评价都不太高。但在这本新论文集子里编者对已有定论进行挑战,强调豪威尔斯的小说、他的现实主义跟当时的社会经济文化现状有很大的关系。他的小说既有其文学形式,又是一种社会力量。另外一位19世纪新英格兰作家萨拉·奥尼·裘威特过去一向被看成是乡土作家,现在学者们用女性主义观点强调她的《尖枞树之乡》对美国文学的贡献,分析当年的种族、民族主义和文学市场对她写作的影响。用封底宣传语言来说,这本集子对美国文学研究、女性主义批评理论和美国研究等方面都会引起很大的兴趣。

还有一本书似乎在我们国家很少有人提起过——亨利·罗思的《就说是睡着了》。此书在 20 世纪 30 年代曾经风靡一时,此后长期销声匿迹,60 年代又再度受到推崇。现在这部小说则是上面提到的《时代》杂志 100 部优秀小说中的一部,被认为是上个世纪头 50 年里最为出色的美国犹太小说、最优秀的现代主义小说之一。评论家认为集子里的文章采用心理分析、社会历史主义等批评方法探讨了有关移民、族裔和文化归属等多方面的问题。

这套集子里还出现了令人信服的新论点。很长时间内海明威一直被认为是讨厌女人的大男子主义者。但在关于他的短篇小说的集子里,作者通过分析《在密执安北部》,令人信服地证明海明威其实对妇女充满同情。不仅如此,这一论断还瓦解了海明威在《太阳照样升起》中充分暴露他的厌女症的定论。

然而,作者们并不侈谈理论或玩弄理论名词,所有的论断都是既以一定的理论为基础,又对文本进行深入的分析;既把理论阐述得深入浅出,又把作品分析得丝丝入扣,让人不由得不服。他们能够做到这一点完全是因为他们了解学生的水平和需要。

我认为《剑桥美国小说新论》是一套很好的参考书。北京大学出版社购买版权,出版这套书是个有益于外国文学研究教学的决定。

Series Editor's Preface

IN literary criticism the last twenty-five years have been particularly fruitful. Since the rise of the New Criticism in the 1950s, which focused attention of critics and readers upon the text itself – apart from history, biography, and society – there has emerged a wide variety of critical methods which have brought to literary works a rich diversity of perspectives: social, historical, political, psychological, economic, ideological, and philosophical. While attention to the text itself, as taught by the New Critics, remains at the core of contemporary interpretation, the widely shared assumption that works of art generate many different kinds of interpretation has opened up possibilities for new readings and new meanings.

Before this critical revolution, many American novels had come to be taken for granted by earlier generations of readers as having an established set of recognized interpretations. There was a sense among many students that the canon was established and that the larger thematic and interpretative issues had been decided. The task of the new reader was to examine the ways in which elements such as structure, style, and imagery contributed to each novel's acknowledged purpose. But recent criticism has brought these old assumptions into question and has thereby generated a wide variety of original, and often quite surprising, interpretations of the classics, as well as of rediscovered novels such as Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, which has only recently entered the canon of works that scholars and critics study and that teachers assign their students.

The aim of The American Novel Series is to provide students of American literature and culture with introductory critical guides to

American novels now widely read and studied. Each volume is devoted to a single novel and begins with an introduction by the volume editor, a distinguished authority on the text. The introduction presents details of the novel's composition, publication history, and contemporary reception, as well as a survey of the major critical trends and readings from first publication to the present. This overview is followed by four or five original essays, specifically commissioned from senior scholars of established reputation and from outstanding younger critics. Each essay presents a distinct point of view, and together they constitute a forum of interpretative methods and of the best contemporary ideas on each text.

It is our hope that these volumes will convey the vitality of current critical work in American literature, generate new insights and excitement for students of the American novel, and inspire new respect for and new perspectives upon these major literary texts.

Emory Elliott
Princeton University

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Introduction

MATTHEW J. BRUCCOLI

THE charge that F. Scott Fitzgerald was an irresponsible writer is refuted by the compositional history of *The Great Gatsby*. He began planning the novel during the summer of 1922 as a work set in the Midwest and New York at the end of the nineteenth century. At that time he announced to Maxwell Perkins, his editor: "I want to write something *new* – something extraordinary and beautiful and simple + intricately patterned."¹ He started writing an early version of the novel in the summer of 1923 at Great Neck, Long Island, the locale for the published novel, but serious work did not commence until the summer of 1924 on the Riviera. The typescript was sent to Perkins in November. Prompted by his editor's response, Fitzgerald rewrote and restructured the novel in galley proof during January and February 1925 in Rome.²

The rewritten proofs were dispatched to Perkins with Fitzgerald's report that he had solved the problems that bothered both of them:

- (1.) I've brought Gatsby to life
- (2.) I've accounted for his money
- (3.) I've fixed up the two weak chapters (VI and VII)
- (4.) I've improved his first party
- (5.) I've broken up his long narrative in Chap. VIII³

Gatsby achieved its greatness in proof. Fitzgerald's principal concern was to improve the existing narrative plan by shifting the pieces of Gatsby's biography: Gatsby's revelation to Nick of his love for Daisy (originally in Chapter Seven) and the account of Dan Cody and Gatsby (originally in Chapter Eight) were incorporated



into Chapter Six. The novel is a work of genius, but it is equally a triumph of craftsmanship.

2

In 1925 Fitzgerald's short novel about a flamboyant racketeer's attempt to recapture the upper-class girl who threw him over seemed an unlikely candidate for masterpiece or world-classic stature. It was a commercial disappointment when it was published in April 1925; the two printings that year totaled 23,870 copies. (*This Side of Paradise* had sold 41,075 copies in 1920.)* Yet the reviews included the warmest Fitzgerald had received – along with some opaque dismissals. Gilbert Seldes announced that “Fitzgerald has more than matured; he has mastered his talent and gone soaring in a beautiful flight, leaving behind him everything dubious and tricky in his earlier work, and leaving even farther behind all the men of his own generation and most of his elders.”⁴ This review appeared late in *The Dial*, a small-circulation literary journal. In January 1926, Seldes complained in the English *New Criterion* that the reviews had not been sufficiently enthusiastic, saying that Fitzgerald “stands at this time desperately in need of critical encouragement.”⁵ Among the prominent receptive critics were William Rose Benet in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, Laurence Stallings in the *New York World* (after an earlier unsigned *World* review was headlined “F. Scott Fitzgerald's Latest a Dud”), Herbert S. Gorman in the *New York Sun*, Harry Hansen in the *Chicago Daily News*, Carl Van Vechten in *The Nation*, and Herschel Brickell in the *New York Evening Post*. Probably the review that most concerned the author was H. L. Mencken's long piece in the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, which expressed reservations about the novel while recognizing Fitzgerald's development as a writer:

*The best-selling novels of 1925 were *Soundings* by A. Hamilton Gibbs, *The Constant Nymph* by Margaret Kennedy, *The Keeper of the Bees* by Gene Stratton Porter, *Glorious Apollo* by E. Barrington, *The Green Hat* by Michael Arlen, *The Little French Girl* by Anne Douglas Sedgwick, *Arrowsmith* by Sinclair Lewis, *The Perennial Bachelor* by Anne Parish, *The Carolinian* by Rafael Sabatini, and *One Increasing Purpose* by A. S. M. Hutchinson.

The story is obviously unimportant . . . it is certainly not to be put on the same shelf with, say, *This Side of Paradise*. What ails it, fundamentally, is the plain fact that it is simply a story – that Fitzgerald seems to be far more interested in maintaining its suspense than in getting under the skins of its people. It is not that they are false; it is that they are taken too much for granted. Only Gatsby himself genuinely lives and breathes. The rest are mere marionettes – often astonishingly lifelike, but nevertheless not quite alive.

What gives the story distinction is something quite different from the management of the action or the handling of the characters; it is the charm and beauty of the writing.⁶

Charles Scribner's Sons made a strong effort to promote the book. It was packaged in a striking dust jacket by Francis Cugat, but the jacket copy conveys the impression that the publisher was uncertain about the nature of its product: "It is a magical, living book, blended of irony, romance, and mysticism." The seven ads in *The Saturday Review of Literature* from April to June indicate that Scribners allocated a generous advertising budget to *The Great Gatsby*. The second ad (April 25) was captioned "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Satirist," indicating that the publisher was still looking for the right handle.⁷ The fifth ad (May 23) announced:

"Mencken is
right:"

says JOSEPH
HERGESHEIMER

"it is beautifully
written and satu-
rated with a sharp,
unforgettable emo-
tion. It gathers up
all his early prom-
ise surprisingly
soon, and what he
subsequently does
must be of great
interest and importance."⁸

The English impact was negligible. The 1926 Chatto & Windus printing did not sell well, although the reviews were better than those Fitzgerald's previous novels had received in England. The *Times Literary Supplement* called it "undoubtedly a work of art and

of great promise"; Edward Shanks in the *London Mercury* commended the author's control over his material. Conrad Aiken, writing in *The New Criterion*, praised the form and originality of the novel but stated that it is not "great," "large," or "strikingly subtle." L. P. Hartley called it "an absurd story" in the *Saturday Review*.⁹

The novel was dead in the market before the end of 1925, even though *The Great Gatsby* achieved exposure through the 1926 dramatization by Owen Davis that ran for 112 performances on Broadway and the 1926 silent movie based on the play. This publicity did not sell the book. Copies of the August 1925 second printing were still in the warehouse when Fitzgerald died in 1940. There was one more American printing during the author's lifetime, the 1934 Modern Library volume – discontinued for lack of sales. This reprint added Fitzgerald's introduction replying to the charges of triviality brought against his work in the proletarian thirties: "But, my God! it was my material, and it was all I had to deal with."¹⁰ The only other republications of *Gatsby* during Fitzgerald's lifetime were in two pulp magazines: *Famous Story Magazine* serialized it in 1926, and the English *Argosy* ran it in one 1937 issue.

Fitzgerald's newspaper obituaries revealed no awareness that *The Great Gatsby* was more than a period piece. The *New York Times* devoted a paragraph to the novel:

The best of his books, the critics said, was *The Great Gatsby*. When it was published in 1925 this ironic tale of life on Long Island at a time when gin was the national drink and sex the national obsession (according to the exponents of Mr. Fitzgerald's school of writers), it received critical acclaim. In it Mr. Fitzgerald was at his best, which was, according to John Chamberlain, "his ability to catch . . . the flavor of a period, the fragrance of a night, a snatch of old song, in a phrase."¹¹

The next day, an editorial stated: "It was not a book for the ages, but it caught superbly the spirit of a decade."¹² James Gray wrote "A Last Salute to the Gayest of Sad Young Men" for the *St. Paul Dispatch* in which he ventured the "heresy" that the Nobel Prize had been awarded to writers who had not produced anything as brilliant as *The Great Gatsby*: "Perhaps some day it will be re-

discovered."¹³ *The New Yorker's* comment on the obituaries described *Gatsby* as "one of the most scrupulously observed and beautifully written of American novels."¹⁴

The 1941 assessments and tributes generally played it safe by viewing Fitzgerald as a writer who had failed to fulfill his promise. Even in the series of reminiscences that appeared in two 1941 issues of *The New Republic*, John Peale Bishop's elegy lamented Fitzgerald's failure. The other contributors included Malcolm Cowley, John Dos Passos, John O'Hara, Budd Schulberg, and Glenway Wescott. Dos Passos challenged the nostalgia or period-flavor critical approach to Fitzgerald and declared that *Gatsby* was "one of the few classic American novels."¹⁵

Fitzgerald's death triggered a *Gatsby* revival – which triggered the Fitzgerald revival. Unlike the Melville revival, which was the work of academics, the Fitzgerald revival was a popular response resulting from reader demand in the forties. Critical reassessment of the novel was mainly a process of the fifties.¹⁶ During the forties no article devoted to *The Great Gatsby* was published, but there were appraisals or reappraisals of Fitzgerald that singled it out for praise. In 1945 William Troy identified *Gatsby* as Fitzgerald's only completely successful novel, and in 1946 John Berryman declared it a "masterpiece."¹⁷

Publishers did more than the critics for Fitzgerald. Between 1941 and 1949, seventeen new editions or reprints of *The Great Gatsby* were published. The key event was the inclusion of *Gatsby* with *The Last Tycoon* in 1941, for the respectful posthumous attention attracted by the unfinished novel carried over to *Gatsby*. In 1942 Scribners brought out a small reprint of *Gatsby*.

Three years later, the novel became widely available and widely sold – the surest gauge of a book's influence. In 1945 there were five new editions or reprints – as well as *The Crack-Up*, with its section of letters about *Gatsby* from Edith Wharton, T. S. Eliot, and Gertrude Stein. That year the *Tycoon/Gatsby* edition went into a second printing, the Armed Services Edition was published, the *Viking Portable* Fitzgerald (which included *Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*) was published and required a second printing, and the twenty-five-cent Bantam paperback was released. It is impossible to determine the effect of a book giveaway program, but publish-

ing historians have credited the 155,000 copies (nearly eight times the 1925 first printing) of the Armed Services Edition distributed to military personnel with creating a new readership for *The Great Gatsby*.

In 1946 the Bantam paperback was reprinted twice, New Directions published *Gatsby* in the New Classics series – with an introduction by Lionel Trilling – and *Gatsby* was included in *Great American Short Novels* (four printings in the forties). The *Portable* went into third and fourth printings in 1949, and that year Grosset & Dunlap brought out a tie-in printing for the Alan Ladd movie version.

Before *The Great Gatsby* became a required textbook in the fifties and sixties, some half million copies were in the hands of readers who were reading it because they wanted to read it.

3

For a long time, *The Great Gatsby* was classified as “a book about the Roaring Twenties.” It is one of those novels that so richly evoke the texture of their time that they become, in the fullness of time, more than literary classics; they become a supplementary or even substitute form of history. It is surprising that this statement should apply to a work by F. Scott Fitzgerald, for in certain ways the historiographer of the Jazz Age (which he named) was ill-equipped for the task.

He was not a documentary writer. John O’Hara paid him the tribute of declaring: “He always knew what he was writing about. . . . Scott Fitzgerald had the correct impressions because, quite apart from his gifts, the impressions were not those of a man who’s never been there.”¹⁸ Although O’Hara carefully repeated the word “impressions,” the implication that Fitzgerald was a master reporter is overgenerous. His control of detail was never as sharp or comprehensive as O’Hara’s. The most famous car in American fiction is never identified. Fitzgerald may have felt that to stipulate its make would render the “circus wagon”/“death car” less extraordinary – it would have become just a Pierce-Arrow or Stutz or Duesenberg. Instead, he treated the vehicle impressionistically: “It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel,

swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool boxes, terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns" (p. 77).† He relied on style to evoke a car appropriate for *Gatsby*. (Note Fitzgerald's characteristic use of the surprising adjective in "triumphant hat-boxes.")

The Great Gatsby provides little in the way of sociological or anthropological data. Three cars are identified: Gatsby's Rolls-Royce (not his personal car), Nick's Dodge, and the Ford in Wilson's garage. Three celebrities are named: Joe Frisco, Gilda Grey, and David Belasco – all from show business. Two criminals – Charles Becker and Herman Rosenthal – are mentioned. Yet Fitzgerald's invented list of the attendees at Gatsby's party has become a source for students of Prohibition society. The laureate of the Jazz Age had little interest in jazz. His music was the popular songs of the era, six of which are mentioned in the novel: "The Sheik of Araby," "The Love Nest," "Ain't We Got Fun?" "Three O'Clock in the Morning," "The Rosary," and "Beale Street Blues" (a 1917 jazz work by W. C. Handy that was a popular dance tune).

Although he had a keen sense of history, Fitzgerald was indifferent to many of the causes and activities of the twenties. Despite his call for political and social change annexed to *This Side of Paradise* (1920), he soon abandoned that concern. He ignored the Sacco and Vanzetti case, which enlisted his literary friends. When Fitzgerald came to write his 1931 postmortem, "Echoes of the Jazz Age," he observed: "It was characteristic of the Jazz Age that it had no interest in politics at all."¹⁹ This generalization doesn't hold, but it applies to Fitzgerald. His claim that he had been influenced by *The Decline of the West* – "I read him [Spengler] the same summer I was writing *The Great Gatsby* and I don't think I ever quite recovered from him"²⁰ – does not bear scrutiny. *The Decline of the West* was not available in English in the summer of 1924.

Another subject of general interest in the twenties that Fitzgerald was ignorant of was the stock market. Nevertheless, he was able to convey the Eldorado mood that provides the back-

† All quotations from *The Great Gatsby* in this volume are cited from "The Cambridge Edition of the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald," ed. Bruccoli.