

## Structural Analysis of F. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

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### Abstract

The objectives of this research are to find out the relatedness between setting and characterization F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and to find out the relatedness between setting and plot in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. This research used library research method and used structural approach. So this only focuses on the intrinsic elements which build the story as a literary work, such as plot, character, and setting. The result of the research shows that structural elements of F. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* present a solid unity. Each element has close relation with other elements in forming the wholeness of the story. Here, there is the relatedness between setting and plot and the relatedness between plot and character in F. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

**Keywords:** structural analysis, *The Great Gatsby*, setting, character, plot

### Introduction

Literature is the expression of life in word of truth and beauty; it is the writer record of man's spirit, thought, emotions, aspirations; it is the history, and the only history, of human soul (Bradley, et al: 1962). Other definition is revealed by Kennedy (1976: V) that literature is a kind of art, usually written, that offers pleasure elimination. Thus, the researcher can conclude that literature is the author's means of expressing feeling and thought and usually written in beautiful and expressive language. By using beautiful and expressive language the author provides readers happiness and satisfaction. He also provides readers depicting of human world and life. From the depiction, readers gets understanding of human being and human experience.

Hornby (1974: 575) states that Novel is a strong in prose, long enough to fill one or more volumes, about either imaginary or historical people. It can be elaborated that novel is fictional work, long enough, and it's played by imaginary people. Kenney (1996: 103) states that novels are generally thought of as containing about forty five thousand words or more. If it is differentiated between novel and short story, novel is relatively long. Short story is normally applied to works of fiction ranging from one thousand to fifteen thousand words. (Kenney, 1996: 103).



Novel has its important elements such as theme, plot, character and setting. Theme is the meaning of the story. Theme is “the soul” of the story. It is general idea insight the entire story reveal, it means that the theme is the center and what a piece of fiction stocks up to.

Then, Plot is the arrangement of events in which characters are tanted by circumstances, challenge to change either the situation or themselves or both. (James, Miller, Walter, 1960: 23). The plot has stucture in the following term:

a. Exposition

In this section, the author must introduce the characters and explain the back ground situation. In well plotted story, the conflict begins as early as possible. Sometimes even before the exposition

b. Complication/Rising

In this section, the author creates selected incidents to demonstrate how the characters are coming to grip with their problems arise and make the story more lively.

c. Crisis

In novel, the rising action usually culminates is a single crisis. In a novel there will be series of crisis until the character faces the final crisis.

d. Climax

In this section, the crisis, especially the major crisis, is likely to be drawn out and organizing. That moment when crisis hit it’s pear of intensity is called the climax.

e. Falling Action/Denouement

Some further action after such a climax is needed to show the resolution of the hero’s situation as the result of the crisis or deal. This is often called the denouement or falling action.

Another element of novel is character. A character is a descriptive of human virtue or general type of human character, or personality as respresented or realized in fiction or drama. A character is presumably on imagined person. (Kenney, 1979:43)

According to Barnet, Berman, Brutto (1987: 71) “Character has meaning: (1) a figure in literary work, such as Hamlet, or Holden, and (2) personality, that is, the mental and moral qualities of a strong, or weak, or immoral, or whatever. Thus, in writing about: Character (a figure, whether Hamlet or Holden), you write about the character’s character (personality, traits, characteristic).”

Character is a vital and necessary elements, without character there would be no plot and no story. For most readers of fiction, the primary attraction lies in the character, in the end less fascinating collection of man and woman whose experiences and adventures in life from. We can sympathize, with some of these characters in their open enjoyment life, in their doubt and sorrows, in their loneliness and endless search for value and meaning. Other characters like are hatred and desired to revenge, or their ability to manipulate other coldly for selfish ends.

According to James, Miller, Walter in How to Write Book Report (1960: 26-29), character can be classified into following terms:

a. Major and Minor Character

Major Character



Major character is substantial part of the book, which is involved in the main plot. A major character is important and the readers usually observe him in order to grasp what the writer wants to clarify. A major character usually has particular trait, the primary character of the person, for example whether the character is emotional, stubborn. The writer of fiction usually discusses the major character in detail and the readers consider his action.

#### Minor Character

Minor character is the character role in the story. Minor character is less important to total significance of the work. A minor character is varies in number, enters, and departs from and in action with considerable frequency. In fiction, a minor character appears as connector between major character and although they are not very important, they are extremely functional in terms of the developing the plot.

#### b. Round and Flat Characters

A more critical way of classifying characters is that introduced by the famous English Novelist E.M. Forster. In his aspects of the novel, he divides fictional people into round and flat characters:

##### Round Character

A round character is so called, because he has depth. The author's characterization is complex and dynamic; that is the character changes and the accounted for.

##### Flat Character

By contrast, the flat character is known to us only from one side that he presents to the main characters. The flat character is static and simple.

The next element of novel is setting. Sometimes the setting is lightly sketched presented only because the story had to take place somewhere and at time. The history of story is not only the physical locale but also the time of day or year century, may or may not be symbolic. We must know where the story is taking place somewhere and we must know when the story is happening. That elements of fiction which reveal to us the where and when of events according to Kenney (1996: 38) is called setting.

The setting can be concerned with a place in which place they live. It has a great effect upon the personalities, action, and character. In other words, setting in the place of time and atmosphere in which the story occurs.

Based on the statement above, researcher decides to make a research on one of forms of fiction namely novel, by making an analysis on its elements. So the researcher chooses the title "Structural Analysis of F. Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby."

## Method

Researcher used a structural approach or library research for this research. Structural approach is an approach which studies literature as a work autonomous, self dependent, free from outside external background. Structural approach sees a literary move as a result of work without considering aspects out of it. If merely



considers the elements or parts of structure or intrinsic aspect which built the story of literary work, such as: theme, plot, character, and setting (Kenney, 1996: 3).

Plot, character, setting, point of view, and theme are some small elements or structures from a story. (Kenney, 1996: 8). A description in each component of the story is necessary to discover every unit which builds up the story. The principle of structural analysis is to explain inter relation in detail and involvement to all components and the exhaustive mean the notion of the novel.

The purpose of structural approach is to describe and explore in detail, accurately, and deeply of tightness and relatedness of structural element informing the whole story of literary work. Structural approach is approach in intrinsic elements like: plot, character, theme, setting, point of view, etc.

This research was also applied qualitative research attempts to describe the intrinsic elements which build the story as a literary work, such as plot, character, and setting. This research used literary research method and used structural approach.

## Findings and discussion

### The Structure of Plot in “*The Great Gatsby*”

#### 1. Exposition

As an exposition in this story is begin from: Nick Carraway, a young man from Minnesota, moves to New York in the summer of 1922 to learn about the bound business. He rents a house in the West Egg district of Long Island, a wealthy but unfashionable area populated by new rich, a group who made their fortunes too recently to have established social connections and who are prone to garish displays of wealth. Nick’s next-door neighbor in West Egg is a mysterious man, named Jay Gatsby, who lives in a gigantic Gothic mansion and throws extravagant parties every Saturday night.

Nick is unlike the other inhabitants of West Egg; he was educated at Yale and has social connections in West Egg, a fashionable area of Long Island home to the established upper class. Nick drives out to East Egg one evening for dinner with his cousin, Daisy Buchanan, and her husband, Tom, an erstwhile classmate of Nick’s at Yale. Daisy and Tom introduce Nick to Jordan Baker, a beautiful, cynical young woman with whom Nick begins a romantic relationship. Nick also learns a bit about Daisy and Tom’s marriage. Jordan tells him that Tom has a lover, Myrtle Wilson, who lives in the valley of ashes, a gray industrial dumping ground between West Egg and New York City with Tom and Myrtle. At a vulgar, gaudy party in the apartment that Tom keeps for the affair, Myrtle begins to taunt Tom about Daisy, and Tom responds by breaking her nose.

#### 2. Complication or Rising

Complication in this story is in Gatsby’s lavish parties. As the summer progresses, Nick eventually garners an invitation to one of Gatsby’s legendary parties. He encounters Jordan Baker at the party, and they meet Gatsby himself, a surprisingly young man who affects an English accent, has a remarkable smile, and calls every one “old sport”. Gatsby asks to speak to Jordan alone, and, through Jordan, Nick later learns more about his mysterious neighbor.



“Good morning, old sport, you’re having lunch with me to day and I though we’d ride up together,” (Chapter IV: 64)

“Don’t talk so much, old sport,” commanded Gatsby. (Chapter V: 96).

Gatsby tells Jordan that he knew Daisy in Louisville in 1917 and is deeply in love with her. He spends many nights staring at the green light at the end of her dock, across the bay from his mansion. Gatsby’s extravagant lifestyle and wild parties are simply an attempt to impress Daisy.

“We’ve met before.” Muttered Gatsby. (Chapter V: 87).

He wants Nick to arrange a reunion between himself and Daisy, but he is afraid that Daisy will refuse to see him if she knows that he still loves her. Nick invites Daisy to have tea at his house, without telling her that Gatsby will also be there. After an initially awkward reunion, Gatsby and Daisy establish their connection. Their love rekindled, they begin an affair.

“She’s not to know about it. Gatsby doesn’t want her to know. You’re just supposed to invite her to tea.” (Chapter IV: 81).

### 3. Climax

The climax of the plot is the confrontation between Gatsby and Tom in Plaza Hotel in Chapter VII. After a short time, Tom grows increasingly suspicious of his wife’s relationship with Gatsby. At a luncheon at the Buchanan’s house. Gatsby stares at Daisy with such undisguised passion that Tom realizes Gatsby is in love with her. Though Tom is himself involved in an extramarital affairs, he is deeply outraged by the thought that his wife could be unfaithful to him. He forces the group to drive into New York City, where he confronts Gatsby in a suite at the Plaza Hotel. Tom asserts that he and Daisy have a history that Gatsby could never understand, and he announces to his wife that Gatsby is a criminal-his fortune comes from bootlegging alcohol and other illegal activities. Daisy realizes that her allegiance is to Tom, and Tom contemptuously sends her back to East Egg with Gatsby, attempting to prove that Gatsby cannot hurt him.

“Your wife doesn’t love you,” said Gatsby. “She’s never loved you. She loves me.”

“You must be crazy!” exclaimed Tom automatically. (Chapter VII: 131).

I found out what your ‘drug stores’ were.” He turned to us and spoke rapidly. “He and this Wolfsheim bought up a lot of side-street drug stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. That’s one of his little stunts. I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him, and I wasn’t far wrong.” (Chapter VII: 134).



#### 4. Falling

The falling action of this story is when Daisy rejects Gatsby and Gatsby's murder. When Nick, Jordan, and Tom drive through the valley of ashes, however, they discover that Gatsby's car has stuck and killed Myrtle, Tom's lover. They rush back to Long Island, where Nick learns from Gatsby that Daisy was driving the car when it stuck Myrtle, but then Gatsby intends to take the blame.

The other car, the one going toward New York, came to rest a hundred yards beyond, and its driver hurried back to where Myrtle Wilson, her life violently extinguished, knelt on the road and mingled her thick dark blood with the dust. (Chapter VII: 138)

The next day, Tom tells Myrtle's husband, George, that Gatsby was the driver of the car. George, who has leapt to the conclusion that the driver of the car that killed Myrtle must have been her lover, finds Gatsby in the pool at his mansion and shoots him dead. He then fatally shoots himself.

A small gust of wind that scarcely corrugated the surface was enough to disturb its accidental course with its accidental burden. The touch of a cluster of leaves revolved it slowly, racing, like the leg of transit, a thin red circle in the water. (Chapter VIII: 163)

It was after we started with Gatsby toward the house that the gardener saw Wilson's body a little way off in the grass, and the holocaust was complete. (Chapter VIII: 163)

Nick stages a small funeral for Gatsby, ends his relationship with Jordan, and moves back to the Midwest to escape the disgust he feels for the people surrounding Gatsby's life.

But I wanted to leave things in order and not just trust that obliging and indifferent sea to sweep my refuse away. (Chapter IX: 178)

### **The Analysis of Character in “*The Great Gatsby*”**

There are four major characters in “*The Great Gatsby*”. They are Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway, Daisy Buchanan, and Tom Buchanan. And there are several minor characters, they are: Jordan Baker, Myrtle Wilson, and George.

In this research, the researcher wants to discuss only main character, Jay Gatsby. He is a young man, around thirty years old, who rose from an impoverished childhood in rural North Dakota to become fabulously wealthy. However, he achieved this lofty goal by participating in organized crime, including distributing illegal alcohol and trading in stolen securities. From his early youth, Gatsby despised poverty and longed for wealth and sophistication he dropped out of St. Olaf's College after only two weeks because he could not bear the janitorial job with which he was paying his tuition. Though Gatsby has always wanted to be rich, his main motivation in acquiring his fortune was his love for Daisy Buchanan, whom he met as a young military officer in Louisville before leaving to fight in World War in 1917.





Gatsby immediately fell in love with Daisy's aura of luxury, grace, and charm, and lied to her about his own background in order to convince her that he was good enough for her. Daisy promised to wait for him when he left for the war in an attempt to gain education. From that moment on, Gatsby dedicated himself to winning Daisy back, and his acquisition of million of dollars, his purchase of a gaudy mansion on West Egg, and his lavish weekly parties are all merely means to that end.

As the summer progresses, Nick eventually garners an invitation to one of Gatsby's legendary parties. He encounters Jordan Baker at the party, and they meet Gatsby himself, a surprisingly young man who affects an English accent, has remarkable smile, and calls everyone "old sport".

Jay Gatsby is as aloof, enigmatic host of the unbelievably opulent parties thrown every week at his mansion. He is the subject of a whirlwind of gossip throughout New York and is already a kind of legendary celebrity. Distant impressions of Gatsby strike quite a different note from that of lovesick, naive young man who emerges during the latter part of the novel.

There was music from my neighbor's house throughout the summer night. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the champagne and the stars. (Chapter III: 39)

Gatsby is contrasted most consistently with Nick. Critics point out that the former, passionate and active, and the latter, sober, and reflective. Additionally, Gatsby is a loyal and good-hearted man. Though his lifestyle and attitude differ greatly from those of George Wilson, Gatsby and Wilson share the fact that they both lose their love interest to Tom.

### **The Description of Setting in "The Great Gatsby"**

Setting is where and when the story takes place. It is the environment of the story (Kennedy, 1998: 39). There are three kinds of setting, firstly setting of place, secondly is setting of time and thirdly is atmosphere.

In the novel, the setting of place takes in Long Island, New York. It is a big town. Many facilities of life and lifestyle can be found in New York So, New York is a place for rich person for having fun. It has a big population from different ethnic. New York City, the uninhibited, amoral quest for money and pleasure. Additionally, the East is connected to the moral decay and social cynicism of New York, while the West (including Midwestern and northern areas such as Minnesota) is connected to more traditional social values and ideals.

The setting of Time in this novel is summer, 1922. In the 1920s, America as a whole, in particular the disintegration of the American dream in an era of unprecedented prosperity and material excess. America in the 1920s is an era of decayed social and moral values, evidenced in its overarching cynicism, greed, and empty pursuit of pleasure. It is the reckless jubilation that led to decadent



parties and wild jazz music. The American dream was originally about discovery, individualism, and the pursuit of happiness.

The atmosphere in *The Great Gatsby*, there is glamour in Gatsby's parties all throughout the summer, and unfailingly matches the emotional and narrative tone of the story. Gatsby and Daisy's reunion begins amid a pouring rain, proving awkward and melancholy; their love reawakens just as the sun begins to come out. Gatsby's climactic confrontation with Tom occurs on the hottest day of the summer, under the scorching sun (like the fatal encounter between Mercutio and Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet*). Wilson kills Gatsby on the first day of autumn, as Gatsby floats in his pool despite a palpable chill in the air—a symbolic attempt to stop time and restore his relationship with Daisy to the way it was five years before, in 1917.

### **The Relatedness between Setting and Plot**

Setting of place supports the plot and progress. Setting supports the plot to resolution. A good story must have a structure which has consist of some elements like plot, setting, character, theme, and point of view. One element cannot stand without others, and one has no significance by itself. Those elements are related and support each other.

In this search, the researcher wants to analyze the relatedness between the setting and the plot in *The Great Gatsby* of F. Fitzgerald. *The Great Gatsby* is takes place over a mere few months during the summer of 1922 and is set in circumscribed geographical area in the vicinity of Long Island, New York. *The Great Gatsby* is a highly symbolic meditation on 1920s America as whole, in particular the disintegration of the American dream in an era of unprecedented prosperity and material excess.

Fitzgerald portrays the 1920s as an era of decayed social and moral value, evidenced in its overarching cynicism, greed, and empty pursuit of pleasure. The reckless jubilation that led to decadent parties and wild jazz music—epitomized in *The Great Gatsby* by the opulent parties that Gatsby throws every Saturday night—resulted ultimately in the corruption of the American dream, as the unrestrained desire for money and pleasure surpassed more noble goals.

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer night. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars. (Chapter III: 39).

"The piece is known," he concluded lustily," as Vladimir Tostoff's *Jazz History of the World*." (Chapter III: 50)

When World War I ended in 1918, the generation of young Americans who had fought the war became intensely disillusioned, as the brutal carnage that they had just faced made the Victorian social morality of early-twentieth-century America seem like stuffy, empty hypocrisy. The dizzying rise of the stock market in the aftermath of the war led to a sudden, sustained increase in the national wealth and a newfound materialism, as people began to spend and consume at





unprecedented levels. A person from any social background could, potentially, make a fortune, but the American aristocracy-families with old wealth-scorned the newly rich industrialist and speculators. Additionally, the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919, which banned the sale of alcohol, created a thriving underworld designed to satisfy the massive demand for bootleg liquor among rich and poor alike.

“I found out what your ‘drug stores’ were. He turned to us and spoke rapidly. “He and this Wolfsheim bought up a lot of side-street drug stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. That’s one of his little stunts. I picked him for a bootlegger the first time I saw him, and I wasn’t far wrong.” (Chapter VII: 134).

Based on the explanation above, it can be seen that there is a close relatedness between the setting and the plot.

### **The Relatedness between Plot and Character**

The character support to the plot, and from the kind of the characters, the plot can exist. A good story must have a stucture which consist of some elements like plot, setting, character, theme, and point of view. One element cannot stand without others, and one has no significance by itself. Those elements are related and support each other.

Plot and character are two sides of the same coin. Plot is sequence of events that challenge the character to grow, plot and character are two elements that cannot be separated.

There is relatedness between the plot and character, plot in what character do. In *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby is main character; he does the action in this story. He also faces the problem that is developed through the plot. The exposition and the cause of the problem are told in the beginning. Then followed by the rising action, the conflight until its climax.

Here, Jay Gatsby tells Jordan Baker that he knew Daisy in Louisville in 1917 and he deeply in love with her. Gatsby’s extravagant lifestyle and wild parties are simply an attempt to impress Daisy. The rising action is Gatsby’s reunion with Daisy. And the climax of the plot is the confrontation between Gatsby and Tom in the Plaza Hotel. And the falling action or denouement is Daisy’s rejection of Gatsby, Myrtle death, and Gatsby’s murder

### **Conclusion**

The researcher would like to summerize what he has written the previous to answer the questions in the statements of the problems. Based on the story in *The Great Gatsby* the plot of the story is kind of progressive plot. The criteria which is used to determine progressive plot is the event which is arranged chronologically. The arrangement: exposition, complication, and rising, climax, falling action or denouement.



The writer analyzed only the main character in *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby. Jay Gatsby is a young man, around thirty years old, who despised poverty and longed for wealth and sophistication—he dropped out of St. Olaf’s College after only two weeks because he could not bear the janitorial job with which he was paying his tuition. Though Gatsby has always wanted to be rich, his main motivation in acquiring his fortune was his love for Daisy Buchanan, whom he met as a young military officer in Louisville before leaving to fight in World War in 1917. Gatsby is a loyal and good-hearted man.

The structural elements in *The Great Gatsby*, such as plot, character, and setting are integrated and related each other in building the whole meaning of the story. These elements cannot be separated one to the others. They have tight relation in forming the unity of literary work. And there is a close relatedness between setting and plot and relatedness between plot and character.

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