

Novels Plunging a Scalpel into “Normal” America

—A Comparative Study of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Crying of Lot 49*—

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1. Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* show very similar unexpected development rapidly as they come close to the ending. Both of them refer to “America” all of a sudden, though they seem to have focused not on the country but on particular characters until then. In other words, it seems that the personal topic changes abruptly into public one. In *Gatsby*, near the end of the story, there is a reference to the Dutch sailors who had come to the island where Gatsby's mansion was built hundreds of years later (171, all the numbers in parenthesis in this article are page number of reference). It seems that Gatsby is seen in the same light with the Founding Fathers of America without few hints. Compared with *Gatsby*, the plot of *Lot 49* does not seem to develop so rapidly, since the novel deals with the theme of American history almost all through the story. Nevertheless, it still surprises the reader to hear that Pierce Inverarity's legacy, which Oedipa Maas is supposed to deal with, might be America (147). In this way, *Gatsby* and *Lot 49* have something common in theme and plot. This article compares the two novels and analyzes how “America” is treated in them. Both of them plunge a scalpel into “normal” America.

2. The Analysis of why Gatsby is “Great”

There is one clear distinction between the two novels. It is narration style. What is remarkable about *Gatsby* is that the entire story is narrated by a character, Nick. All we can know is Nick's ideas. Therefore, the Gatsby described in the novel is not the real Gatsby but the Nick's version of Gatsby. That structure is foregrounded since Nick says at the beginning of the novel: “Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book” (8). Near the end of the story, Gatsby is compared to the Founding Fathers of America all of a sudden. That is also Nick's idea. Overcome by the deep emotion on Gatsby's dream, Nick refers to the Dutch sailors who settled in New York, as if Gatsby were their descendent. In fact, it is also foregrounded that the comparison is done by Nick; he presents the comparison clearly as his own awareness: “And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes – a fresh, green breast of the new world” (171).

The comparison of Gatsby to the Dutch sailors becomes the key to the entire novel. It does not mean that what Gatsby's dream is like is made clear from that point of view. What is made clear is Nick's idea of Gatsby's dream: what Nick thinks Gatsby's dream is. Concerning Gatsby's dream, Nick has emphasized the green light which is on the deck near Daisy's house. The

meaning of the green light becomes clear in the comparison. Nick describes his first meeting with Gatsby as follows: "He stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward – and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock" (25). All through the novel, the green light seems to be presented as the symbol of Gatsby's dream since it also symbolizes Daisy. However, in the conclusion of this novel, where Nick compares Gatsby's dream to the Dutch sailors', the green light turns out to be of deeper meaning. As seen above, what excited the Dutch sailors is, Nick states, "a fresh, green breast of the new world." Then, Nick continues: "Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house" (171). Finally, Nick explains Gatsby's posture at his first meeting with Gatsby: "stretching out his arms toward the green light," in the historical context: "And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it" (171). In the long run, considering the green light as the metaphor of the green woods, the nature of the new continent, Nick compares Gatsby's desire for Daisy to the desire of the Founding Fathers of America for the Promised Land. The personal dream is turned into the historical and public American Dream all of a sudden. Defining Gatsby's dream not as mere personal one is not totally Nick's imagination but based on Gatsby's idea that Daisy's love for Tom is mere personal one: "'In any case,' he said, 'it was just personal'" (145).

The reader who has considered Gatsby's purpose as personal one, to regain Daisy, might be surprised by the rapid development. However, it rounds things off nicely to look back the whole story in terms of American Dream. Nick projects the image of ideal American hero onto Gatsby. His descriptions of Gatsby converge into the comparison of Gatsby to the Founding Fathers of America. The aspect of the American hero which Nick projects is the self-made man. It is certain that Gatsby has longed to become rich since his childhood; his desire for the success in money happens long before his knowing Daisy. The schedule and general resolves which the adolescent Gatsby creates never fail to remind people of Benjamin Franklin, who is one of the Founding Fathers of America. Refusing to accept the "shiftless and unsuccessful farm people" as his parents, James Gatz is reborn as Jay Gatsby who "must be about His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty" (95). To sum up, refusing his miserable life brought by his parents, Gatsby starts his second life. That reminds people of the Founding Fathers of America who tried to start their second life in the new continent. The idea of second life which is possible only in America has created American myth and the image of American hero, as R. W. B. Lewis states:

Unlike the Roman myth . . . the American myth saw life and history as just beginning. It described the world as starting up again under fresh initiative, in a divinely granted second chance for the human race, after the first chance had been so disastrously fumbled in the darkening Old World. It introduced a new kind of hero, the heroic embodiment of a new set of ideal human attributes. (5)

Rejecting the Old World which was created by their precursors and given to them, the Founding Fathers of America must cut their way through the wilderness of the New World for themselves. Therefore, the image of American hero becomes, in Lewis's words, "an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources" (59). For that reason, American hero becomes self-made man since whether one is successful or not depends on whether he has done well or not. Consequently, America is the Promised Land where one's fortune reflects his faculties including strong will. Idealizing this kind of self-made hero, Nick praises Gatsby while having an aversion to Tom who becomes rich by succeeding to his family's estate and looks down on Gatsby as upstart.

While it is certain that Gatsby himself has some aspects which remind people of the Founding Fathers of America, it is Nick who describes him as the descent of the traditional ideal American hero. History plays the role of Nick's last hope. After comparing Gatsby to the Dutch sailors, he concludes the novel by saying:

He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night. Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past. (171)

Nick insists that Gatsby is out of season. Though Gatsby is an ideal American hero, it is tragic for him that the times when such a kind of hero can exist are past. In other words, the America as Promised Land is past. The ideal American hero or the Promised Land used to exist. Criticizing the contemporary America, Nick idealizes the past. At a glance, *Gatsby* seems to be a kind of elegy for the good old America.

3. The Analysis of *The Crying of Lot 49* in terms of the Ideal America

The image of America as Promised Land also helps to interpret the themes of America in *Lot 49*. The Tristero is a kind of immigrants who, freeing from the tyranny of the Old World, come to the New World. Emory Brotz's explanation for the situation of Tristero's coming to America reminds the reader of the Founding Fathers: "All the Tristero refugees from the 1849 reaction arrive in America . . . full of high hopes" (143). However, Brotz's also suggests that the immigrating Tristero are different from usual American immigrants:

Only what do they find? "Trouble." Around 1845 the U.S. government had carried out a great postal reform, cutting their rates, putting most independent mail routes out of business. By the '70's and '80's, any independent carrier that tried to compete with the government was immediately squashed. 1849-50 was no time for any immigrating Tristero to get ideas about picking up where they'd left off back in Europe. So they just stay on . . . in the context of conspiracy. Other immigrants come to America looking for freedom from tyranny, acceptance by the culture, assimilation into it, this melting pot. Civil War comes along, most of them, being liberals, sign up to fight to preserve the Union. But clearly not the Tristero. (143)

At a glance, it seems that in the mid-nineteenth century, the Promised Land is not what it used to be any more; it has come to force its citizens to put preference on its rule to freedom. However, we need to pay close attention to the following part: “other immigrants come to America looking for freedom from tyranny, acceptance by the culture, assimilation into it.” Immigrating to America looking for freedom from tyranny of the Old World is exactly the image of the Founding Fathers. Since such a kind of immigrants is also to long for “acceptance by the culture and assimilation into it,” Tristero-like immigrants seem to be heresy even in early days.

In that sense, it can be said that the Tristero shows that there existed heretics ignored and suppressed even in the Promised Land which Nick idealizes. Heretic does not necessarily mean one who opposes to the government or society actively. Those whose characteristics are not accepted in the society might disobey the social rule passively consequently. Sometimes, such kinds of people are considered as dangerous and might be defined as mad or criminal. Or they might be dismissed as nonexistent. The Tristero is heresy in both of those aspects. The Tristero as the postal system has opposed to the government which forbade any postal system other than Pony Express. Moreover, the people using the Tristero system seem to be those whose characteristics can be considered abnormal and unacceptable in the society: gay people, the members of Inamorati Anonymous whose whole idea is to get people to the world where they do not need love, the children playing at midnight unable to distinguish dream and real life, a gamble addict, the believers in Alameda Country Death Cult who “choose some victim from among the innocent, the virtuous, the socially integrated and well-adjusted, using him sexually, then sacrificing him” (99), “an uncoordinated boy who planned to slip at night into a aquariums and open negotiations with the dolphins” (99), the old man suffering from delirium tremens, Chinese, Black, Mexican, or Mucho, Oedipa’s husband who used be placed in a dilemma between his duty as car salesman and the sympathy for Black, Mexican, or cracker. The history of the Tristero is the dark side of the Promised Land.

4. Unmasking Nick’s Tendency in terms of *The Crying of Lot 49*

Unlike *Lot 49*, *Gatsby* does not seem to describe the outcasts who are considered disobedient to the society due to their characteristics. However, Charles Baxter discusses the outcasts in *Gatsby*, comparing the two waste Americas described in these two novels. Baxter considers the America in *Lot 49* is much more aggravated than the one in *Gatsby*. Pointing out that *Lot 49* echoes *Gatsby* in many aspects, Baxter identifies the Tristero with the people living in the valley of ashes represented by George Wilson: “The Tristero is in part a vast expansion of the outcasts of *Gatsby*, who live in the ash-heaps behind the mansion” (31). Both of those peoples are forsaken in the American society. While the outcasts in *Gatsby* are confined in the deserted valley of ashes, the Tristero might be omnipresent. Therefore, Oedipa Maas becomes obsessed by the fear that so many people have communicated with each other through the Tristero system. After all, in the America described in *Lot 49*, the clear distinction between spheres of people has become ambiguous. As a result, things like the Tristero remain incomprehensible. The incomprehensibility makes Oedipa paranoid because there is no place which is surely safe from

Tristero. Baxter concludes that since the waste America described in *Gatsby* is more aggravated in *Lot 49*, as represented by the expansion of the waste land, there is no longer room for Oedipa to escape into, unlike the case of Nick Carraway:

If she escapes the fate of Pynchon's subsequent hero, Tyrone Slothrop, who is transformed into energy itself and distributed through time and space, she nonetheless has found herself lost, in the realm of "excluded middles" and "bad shit." Nick Carraway escapes with his integrity intact and his true inheritance of wisdom, back to the Midwest (or at least out of the poisonous East), but the only place Oedipa can escape to is the privacy of her own interior, in psychic withdrawal—depression. She cannot physically or rhetorically escape from the legacy—the "estate"—of wrecked and merged identities. (36)

Baxter considers the people who use the Tristero system as the descendents of the outcasts living in the valley of ashes of *Gatsby*. As seen already, the Tristero can represent those who have been dismissed as nonexistent in order to treat America as the ideal Promised Land. Though the outcasts exist in both of these two novels, they play much bigger part in *Lot 49* than in the other one. According to Baxter, that seems to be because there are much more outcasts or their power has become much stronger in *Lot 49's* America than in *Gatsby's*.

However, since the outcasts in *Gatsby* are described thorough Nick's eyes, it is possible to consider their description as the embodiment of his desire. Lois Tyson states that the people of the valley of ashes have been branded as incompetent to play the role of the ideal American hero's counterpart, and attributes that to Nick's projection of his own desire. In her book titled *Critical Theory Today*, Tyson analyzes *Gatsby* in terms of various literary critical theories, from psychoanalytic criticism to postcolonial criticism. From the viewpoint of Marxist criticism, Tyson says that *Gatsby* functions to make the reader believe in capitalism at the sacrifice of the lower class people represented by George and Myrtle Wilson. Since the lower class people are described negatively, the reader tends to think that they have brought it on themselves. Especially, Tyson's idea of how George Wilson is described is noteworthy:

We may feel sorry for George, but our sympathy is undercut by his personal fallings. That is, instead of feeling sorry (or angry at the system) that he is a victim of class oppression, we feel sorry (or angry at him) that he doesn't have what it takes to "pull himself up by his bootstraps" and better himself, as the American dream tells us he should: we blame the victim instead of the system that victimizes him. (74)

Gatsby is presented as the counterpart of Wilson. Born in lower class the same as George Wilson, *Gatsby*, who has strong energy and will to rise in the world, makes a big success. He makes a beautiful contrast with George. Therefore, the novel helps the reader to believe that everyone can make a success in America because in America whether one can be successful or not depends on himself. In fact, as seen already, *Gatsby's* dream is identified with that of the Founding Fathers of America, the expectation of the Promised Land.

However, is whether one can make a success or not always due only to their ability or ambition? Doesn't any inborn condition or luck play a part in everything? As if objecting to

Gatsby, Ann Petry's *The Street* describes a black female character named Lutie Johnson who fails to make a decent living because of her race and sex, though she works hard believing in Benjamin Franklin's insistence like Gatsby. To Petry, who is a black female herself, *Gatsby* must seem to have hidden the dark side of the Promised Land from sight with a cover.

The novel's insistence on American dream is reinforced by Nick's glorification of Gatsby. Nick glorifies or romanticizes him regardless of the way by which he has piled up a fortune. And it goes without saying that the negative image of the lower class people is described by Nick. The comparison of Gatsby's dream to American dream is done by Nick. Tyson talks about Nick's motive for the glorifying Gatsby and describing the lower class people negatively as follows:

Why should he foreground all the positive, likable qualities in Gatsby's personality and shift responsibility for the unpleasant ones onto others' shoulders? I think it is because the narrator is, himself, seduced by Gatsby's dream. At the age of thirty, and still being financed by his father while he tries to figure out what he should do with himself, it is not surprising that Nick wants to believe life still holds promise because he is afraid that it doesn't. (75)

To preserve the ideal of the Promised Land, some outcasts are suppressed also in *Gatsby*.

5. The Comparison of Nick and Oedipa in terms of Dualism

In contrast to Baxter who considers Oedipa's situation as more miserable than Nick's, Thomas Schaub insists that Oedipa comes to accept the entire America including the Tristero while Nick ends up retreating into the uncorrupted Midwest:

It is Carraway who maintains a geographical barrier between himself and Great Neck, between the facile uprightness of the Midwest and the putative degradation of the east, as if his own family wealth didn't have its origins in impossibility and corruption, as if the Republic maintained regions of varying moral fiber, as if the country were not "America" in every part. . . . Oedipa's thoughts differ markedly from his, by sharp contrast, reaching a point of view from which "there could be no barriers between herself and the rest of the land." (149)

It is true that the dissolution of the boundary between herself or San Narciso and the rest of America is declared in the novel: "As if there could be no barrier between herself and the rest of the land. San Narciso at that moment lost, gave up its residue of uniqueness for her; became a name again, was assumed back into the American continuity of crust and mantle. Pierce Inverarity was really dead" (147). The same as Baxter, Schaub defines Pierce as the descendent of Gatsby. After Gatsby's death, retreating into his ideal Midwest, Nick idealizes Gatsby. Therefore, Gatsby is not really dead; he is still alive in Nick. It is Nick who ends up retreating into the illusion. Externally, it is the Midwest, his hometown, where Nick retreats into. However, Nick has idealized the Midwest as uncorrupt to make a beautiful contrast with the East, which has disillusioned him. Nick even shows sympathy for Tom and Daisy, as if insisting that the root of any problem were the East and that himself, Gatsby, Daisy and even Tom were victimized by it: "I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all— Tom and Gatsby,

Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life" (167). By considering the East as the root of all evil, Nick is supposed to justify his returning to the Midwest. However, judging from his description of Tom and the fact that Tom has been always like what he is now in the East, Nick's accusing the East as the root of all evils is nothing more than his illusion. Therefore, his returning to the "uncorrupt" Midwest is a retreat into illusion. On the other hand, San Narciso, which is a kind of Pierce's creation and used to be of special meaning for Oedipa, stops being anything special. Therefore, "Pierce Inverarity was really dead." That is to say Oedipa looks at the reality in the face unlike Nick. Viewed in this way, concerning the fate of Nick and Oedipa, Schaub's idea is more supportable than Baxter's.

Nick resorts to dualism to insist on his ideals. Dualism functions to praise a certain thing by comparing it to the opposing thing. Nick praises Gatsby-like self-made man, the West, and the past, by comparing them with Tom-like heir to a large estate, George Wilson-like loser, the East, and the present. However, his insistence based on dualism is artificial as his returning to the "uncorrupt" Midwest is his retreat into the illusion. Though there is no definite evidence, Gatsby's ways to make money are quite possibly unbecoming for the self-made man as the ideal American hero. He has many things to do with Meyer Wolfshiem who is one of the embodiments of decadence of the present. And he seems to have done a lot of under-the table businesses, like bootlegger, illegal drugstore, or illegal bond business. Moreover, it is implied that some people are sent to jail because they corporate with and forsaken by him. After all, Gatsby is, in Tyson's words, "also the romantic embodiment of the modern world the novel condemns. . . . by romanticizing Gatsby, the novel also romanticizes the corruption that produced him, the corruption in which he willingly and successfully participates" (272). Tyson also points out the fictitiousness of Gatsby's *innocent* dream to repeat the past, by deconstructing the binary oppositions:

Clearly, *The Great Gatsby* paints a grim picture of America in the 1920s. However, the novel's representation of this culture's decadence is undermined by the text's own ambivalence toward the binary oppositions upon which this representation rests. . . . even Gatsby's singular determination to "repeat the past" is really a determination to escape the past. For the past he wants to repeat is his initial liaison with Daisy, which was built upon an invented past, a past that never existed. Thus, for the character who embodies the novel's notion of the romantic past, the romantic past is, in reality, a tissue of lies. (267-68)

In *Gatsby*, as we have discussed already, Gatsby and the people of the valley of ashes also make a beautiful contrast; the later serves as a foil for the former. Born in lower class similarly, their ability or ambition decided their fate in the Promised Land. Therefore, Gatsby and the lower class people also form binary oppositions.

In contrast, in *Lot 49*, dualism does not hold good in *Lot 49*, dualism which is based on clear boundary between things is deconstructed in the novel. It has been slightly discussed already that Oedipa becomes paranoid since there can be the Tristero anywhere. Since the boundary

between the Tristero and the other people becomes ambiguous, there seem to be no place surely free from the Tristero. Even Pierce Inverarity, who is supposed to be in striking contrast to the outcasts, might have been the original source of the Tristero, as the omniscient narrator says: “Every access route to the Tristero could be traced back to the Inverarity’s estate” (140). The typical establishment like Pierce cannot be surely separated from the outcasts. Moreover, Oedipa herself might have used the Tristero system without noticing, as Mike Fallopian says: “Maybe we haven’t found them yet Or maybe they haven’t approached us. Or maybe we are using W.A.S.T.E., only it’s a secret” (138). There cannot be clear boundary between “normal” people and “abnormal” outcasts. Therefore, opposing normal people to the abnormal outcasts who are using Tristero is no good to Oedipa.

6. The Analysis of the Outcasts’ coming to the Surface

In the context of these two novels, outcasts have existed in America from the early days as represented by the Tristero. They have been ignored or dismissed as inexistent. Since Nick is one of the majority and actively supports the traditional “orthodox” ideal American hero, the outcasts are described undesirably while Gatsby is praised. It is not impossible to define *Gatsby’s* world as similar to that of *Lot 49* narrated from the viewpoint of the Establishment or the one who adores the Establishment.

Then, it comes into question why Oedipa becomes aware of the outcasts all of a sudden after starting to work as the co-executor of Pierce’s will. John Johnston studies the topic in terms of Jacques Lacan-like idea of order and sign. Lacan compares people’s normal initiation by acquiring language to identification with the father, as Madan Sarup says:

In the second stage the father intervenes; he deprives the child of the object of its desire and he deprives the mother of the phallic object. The child encounters the Law of the father. The third stage is that of identification with the father. . . . Oedipus complex for Lacan is . . . the moment in which the child humanize itself by becoming aware of the self, the world and others. The resolution of the Oedipus complex liberates the subject by giving him, with his Name, a place in the family constellation, an original signifier of self and subjectivity. It promotes him in his realization of self through participation in the world of culture, language and civilization. (10-11)

To acquire normal language to pass as socially normal is, in Lacan’s terms, to accept the Law of father as the objective rule. It is not until the death of Pierce that Oedipa becomes aware of the post horn, the Tristero symbol. Considering the symbol as signs which consist of social order, Johnston considers Pierce as the origin of such an order. To sum up, Pierce is, according to Johnston, like the father in the symbolic order in Lacan’s idea. Pierce, who has been the representative ideal winner in America the same as Gatsby, selects signs which are convenient to him. Those signs become social order and form correct language. The excluded signs are dismissed as nonexistent, and cannot help existing as abnormal. While Pierce was alive, Oedipa had internalized his symbolic order which could be equated with the official American discourse. That is why Oedipa are faced by the Tristero symbols, the excluded signs, with Pierce’s death as

turning point, as Johnston says:

As she later acknowledges, Oedipa has been blind to what official discourse (sanctioned reason, approved forms of sanity, the "common sense" of the dominant political order) and its communication channels exclude and repress, even though this other reality has always been present, easy to see "if only she'd looked." Oedipa's previous "buffering" thus takes on a political meaning, and Pierce's inability to rescue her from it is easily explained: the two are defined by and share the same white, male-dominated, middle-class, corporate American "reality." With Pierce's death . . . official reality begins to come apart. (70)

It is certain that whether the Tristero really exists or not rocks her view of the world to its foundations:

Either Oedipa in the orbiting ecstasy of a true paranoia, or a real Tristero. For there either was some Tristero beyond the appearance of the legacy America, or there was just America and if there was just America then it seemed the only way she could continue, and manage to be at all relevant to it, was as an alien, unfurrowed, assumed full circle into some paranoia. (150-51)

The Tristero which is the origin of the symbols plays a kind of regime which forms society and even Oedipa herself. Therefore, the Lacanian idea of signs, which considers an order of signs as the foundations of society, is worth referring to. The appearance of the Tristero's symbols is the result of the change of regime. By applying Johnston's idea, it can also be explained why the outcasts are taken lightly in *Gatsby* where Pierce Inverarity is still alive as *Gatsby*.

7. The Protagonist's Insistence and the Novel's Insistence

It is possible to read the extension of the outcasts' power, or the protagonist's becoming unable to believe in the ideal America, into the change in the treatment of outcasts between *Gatsby* and *Lot 49*. In other words, by comparing these two novels, the reader can learn that the outcasts had become unable to be bypassed and the American Establishment's dominance had gotten weaker in the 1960s compared with in the 1920s; the world of *Lot 49* is the postmodern world where to draw a distinction between normal and abnormal is difficult. Whether it is because the revitalized Tristero became unable to be overlooked or because Oedipa's eyes unconsciously adjusted to such a new era, the outcasts are foregrounded in *Lot 49* where "Pierce is dead." Most critical essays on *Lot 49* deal with the Tristero mainly, while the people of the valley of ashes of *Gatsby* are seldom looked into deeply. Viewed in this way, the difference in the treatment of the outcasts might reflect the change of the real American society between the 1920s and the 1960s.

However, what must be remembered is that these two novels' narration style is contrastive as emphasized repeatedly. As discussed already, *Gatsby* is narrated by a character whose desire seems to affect the description of the outcasts or America. On the other hand, *Lot 49* is narrated from the omniscient viewpoint. The character-narrator like Nick not only describes but also is described simultaneously; his act of narrating is always seen by the reader. To put it in another

way, Nick's narrating the story is foregrounded since the narrator himself is watched. That is why Nick's desire, which might have affected his narration, can be discussed. If anything, what can be discussed concerning *Gatsby* is the narration rather than what is described, like Gatsby, Daisy, Tom, or the people of the valley of ashes, since everything described in the novel is Nick's idea. To put it strongly at its most extreme, *Gatsby* presents not Fitzgerald's idea but Nick's. The idea of the outcasts described in *Gatsby* is not the novel's idea but Nick's. Therefore, treating the outcasts lightly can be discussed as Nick's attitude toward them rather than their position in the novel. On the other hand, the narration of *Lot 49* is not foregrounded. Since the narrator never appears in the novel, the reader cannot discuss the narration as human act unless he discusses Thomas Pynchon by considering the omniscient narrator's voice as the author's. Then, as long as discussing novels as independent from the author, the reader cannot help accepting what is written in *Lot 49* as facts in the textual context. To sum up, while not the characters but the narrator is foregrounded in *Gatsby*, not the narrator but the characters are foregrounded in *Lot 49*.

8. Conclusion

At a glance, *Gatsby* is an elegy for the good old America, while *Lot 49* points out that it is an illusion. Above, I have said that *Gatsby*'s world is similar to that of *Lot 49* narrated from the viewpoint of the Establishment or the one who adores the Establishment. Lois Tyson, as seen already, points out that *Gatsby* helps the reader to believe in the traditional American ideals which are convenient to the Establishment. In terms of Tyson, *Gatsby* functions to maintain or even reinforce the dominance of the current Establishment which has stabilized the American society at the sacrifice of the outcasts. However, thinking that the narration is foregrounded, we can consider that the novel points out the Establishment's struggle to preserve their status by showing the narrator-character's endeavor to create an ideal hero, "great" Gatsby, disregard of negative aspects. In other words, the novel can be defined as the display of how the traditional American ideal, which has been considered as universal, is created and maintained. Viewed in this way, *Gatsby* functions in not so different way with *Lot 49* which shows the possibility of another alternative America. Both of these two novels foregrounds that the America, which has been accepted as "normal," is created and given that status by people.

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