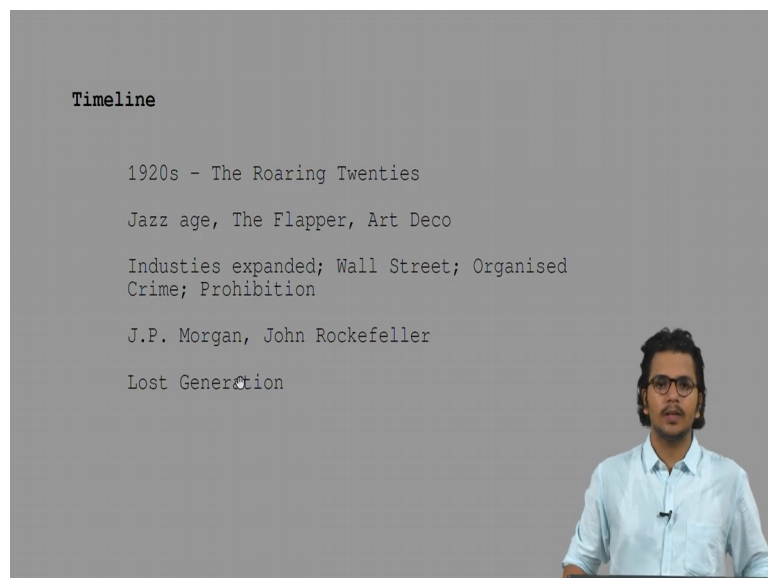
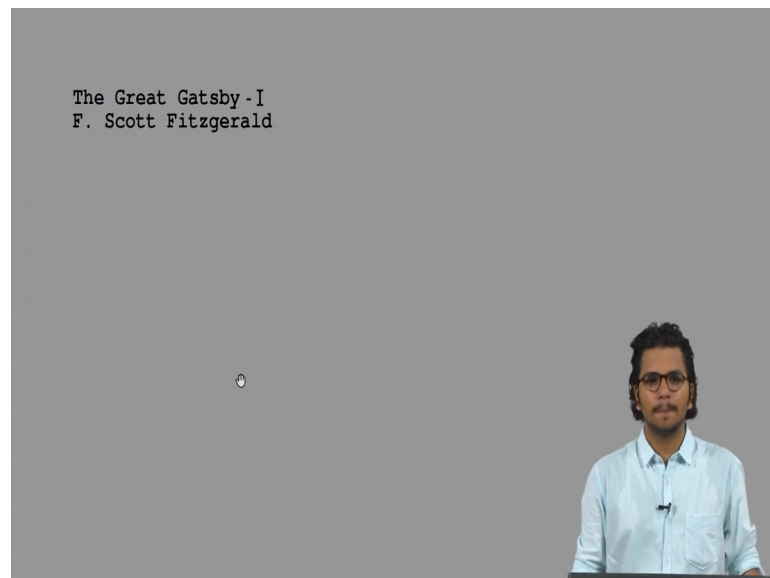


**Introduction to World Literature**  
**Indian Institute of Technology Madras**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**The Great Gatsby**  
**F. Scott Fitzgerald**

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Hello, welcome to the session on Introduction to World Literature. And in this session we will be working on The Great Gatsby, the novel by F Scott Fitzgerald. So, we will start with a brief timeline of the text and the era in which it was produced. So, the timeline is 1920s, in America, the roaring 20s as it is known. And the 1920s was an era of massive wealth accumulation in the United States, especially through stock markets and also because of the aftermaths of the First World War, because of which there were too many industries coming

up and the industrial production also contributed to the amassment of wealth in the United States.

So, these 1920s is also an era of cultural Revolution, this is that because of the coming of modernity and also because of the industrial wealth, the American population started to embrace a new culture of flamboyance. So, it is in this context that we will be studying the Great Gatsby and also this is the context in which the Great Gatsby is written. So the characters and the author himself is a product of the 1920s. So, we will be looking at the text through such a cultural and historical context.

So, what was the main theme, what were the main themes, what were the main motives of this of this roaring 20s? So, it is a jazz age, it is the age the birth of a new kind of music, the jazz music, which is a popular music, so it is the age of popular culture, the culture of mass production and of mass culture. So, apart from jazz ages, apart from being the Jazz age, it is also the age of the flapper icon. The flapper icon is a cultural icon of the 1920s, which will be very important to our reading of great Gatsby.

Because the flapper was a term which had too many connotations, for example. The flapper was such a woman who according to the Moral ethos of the 1920's, the Jazz age of this roaring 20s, embraced the new culture of drinking, smoking, having short hair, wearing kneelength skirts as opposed to the long flowing gowns of the previous era and it was also the age of new morality of partying, drinking, of being like men, although it is not exactly a liberated woman icon, it is also a totally different way of looking at people through a cultural context.

And it was also in age of Art deco, which started from Paris, for example the idea of fauvism, the Art moment of fauvism, which experimented with bright colors and etc. So, these themes give us an idea of how the 1920s were an emerging era of totally new cultural function. So, industries had expanded, as I have already Explain and it was also the era of stock markets, the Wall Street and organized crime as well, especially in metropolitan cities like Chicago we had organized crime syndicates, especially bootlegging.

It was also the time of liberation, where illicit liquor was widely available and it was also linked to the organized crime and also to the also to the new Moral ethos of the 1920s. So, for example we will see here JP Morgan and John Rockefeller, both very famous figures. So, this is also the time where the idea of The Great American dream actually came to its maturity.

So, for example these 2 people who were more or less the typical example of the rags to riches story, maybe not Rockefeller but JP Morgan for example and so many others who of which we will see in the coming parts.

That the self-made man, the story from rags to riches was an actual and probable event of the 1920s, that a man, even though he is from a low social class, low social setting, I can try through the social ladder by his own assistance and perseverance and hard work. So, in that sense also industries, industries as hard work is also important. And yes, the lost generation. So, a group of writers, Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Gertrude Stein for example, were referred to as Gertrude Stein herself as the lost generation, the generation of people between the interwar periods, who have seen war and have seen the destruction at closes.

Especially Hemingway and Fitzgerald, both were also conscripted in the Army. So, this is also the age of the lost generation, so this is the timeline in which we will be looking at the text. So, let us have a brief biographical note of Scott Fitzgerald himself because it through, it is also true biographical sketch of Fitzgerald we will be looking at Great Gatsby, the text itself.

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So , the one of the main figures in Fitzgerald's life was Zelda Fitzgerald, his wife and we will see a lot of parallels between Zelda Fitzgerald and the protagonist of Great Gatsby, which is the namesake Gatsby himself and also Daisy Buchanan. The idea of of the self-made man can be very much linked to Fitzgerald life itself because Fitzgerald, when he met Zelda, who was a very rich socialite, was not a well-known figure did not have so much of wealth and literary

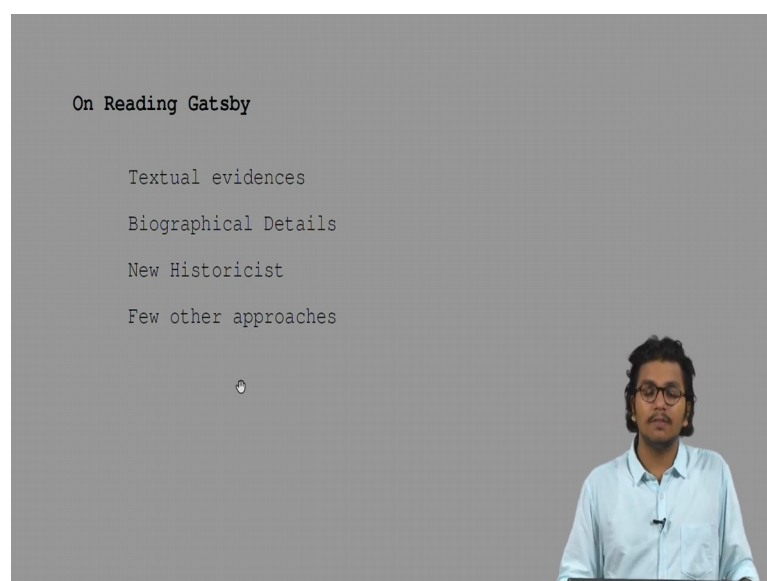
connections especially. So Fitzgerald's life through Zelda's eyes is going to be a approach to the text. So, Zelda was a socialite who was a typical flapper icon of the 1920s, an outgoing, partying girl.

So, both Fitzgerald, both Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda were fascinated by the social life of the new Roaring 20s. So, they partied, they drank, they went on trips and so on and so forth. So, Fitzgerald was motivated by fame, so for example, we will see that Fitzgerald's short stories and novels, both these genres in which Fitzgerald dealt with, he always considered his short stories to be very bad inventions, which only helped him to amass wealth. His idea was to write a novel in such magnificent way that it will give him literary fame.

So in that sense he yearned for literary fame and considered all that he wrote as Short stories was trash, although they were quite popular and they even gave him an opportunity to gain a lot of wealth. So he was preoccupied by the objects of his desires. So, Zelda is one of those objects and the other is his literary fame. So, for Fitzgerald to marry Zelda, Zelda was not ready to marry Fitzgerald, until and unless Fitzgerald actually roars in the social strata.

So, Fitzgerald wrote his 1st Novel and got it published and it was only after that Fitzgerald could marry Zelda. So, these ideas of fame and of achieving a higher social class, important of Fitzgerald and thus will be important to us also, while we are looking at Great Gatsby. Now, we will go on to read great Gatsby and we will look at the text through which the text presents to us and also we will go through some of the biographical details of Scott Fitzgerald as I explained in the previous slide.

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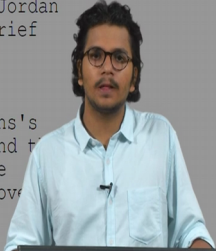


**Outline: Story and Characters**

Nick Carraway; First Person Narrative; Nine Chapters.

Jay Gatsby; his love for Daisy (Buchanan), who is married to Tom Buchanan, a wealthy East Egg (Long Island) polo player; a series of adulteries. Myrtle Wilson, married to George Wilson, and who is the mistress of Tom; Jordan Baker, a wealthy golf player who has a brief affair with Nick and is also a friend of Daisy's are the other characters.

Gatsby's singular obsession, the Buchanans's carelessness, the callous Jordan Baker and the fate of the Wilsons tell the story of the Great American Dream, of decadence, of love of shallowness and of duplicity.



And primarily we will be looking at a new historicist perspective of reading great Gatsby and also we will look at a few other approaches through critical theory. But the special focus will be on the new historicism because the idea of including Great Gatsby which is a classic text in American literature in a course on world literature is that when we situate it in the cultural and historical context, we will see that how it captures the ethos of a nation, a nation which is not isolated but which also spread to other cultures.

So it is in this perspective that we will be focusing today. So, it is almost impossible to understand a critical approach to Great Gatsby unless we are very familiar with the plot. So, it is a 1st person narrative told to us by Nick Caraway, a friend of Gatsby, written through 9 chapters. So, we start the novel with Nick Caraway moving from the Midwestern United States to the East coast, Long Island, to the fictional village of West Egg, which is separated by another place called the East Egg by a bay.

And Nick Caraway arrives in West Egg and tries to build his life there as a person dealing with wants and right next to the Nick Caraway's cottage, there is a huge mansion and Nick Caraway does not know who's this mansion is. And coincidentally, Nick Caraway's cousin, distant cousin Daisy Buchanan lives across the bay in the village of East egg. And Daisy Buchanan is married to Tom Buchanan, a millionaire, a wealthy millionaire and who is also one of those people whose richness came through inheritance.

So, the inhabitants of East egg were Tom and Daisy Lewis, he is one of those inhabitants whose wealth is not produced because of the hard work but because of the family inheritance. And in the West Egg, where Nick Caraway lives, it is the place of the nouveau rich, the new

rich, who symbolises the self-made man of American 1920s. So, and Nick Caraway gets invited to his home for dinner and he meets Jordan Baker in Tom's house. So, Jordan Baker is a golfer, is a kind of Introverted, but also symbolises the decadence of the 1920s, of the Moral and spiritual decadence, which is also symbolised by Tom and Daisy themselves.

So, after this we see Nick and Tom heading for a party in the New York City and they go through a place called the Valley of Ashes, which is an industrial dumping ground and there is a garage owner there called George Wilson, whose wife Myrtle Wilson is the mistress of Tom and Tom and Nick meet Myrtle in the Valley of Ashes, takes her into an apartment in the city and they have a very vulgar party, very bizarre party in the apartment. And so now we get an idea of how Tom's life is, Tom's infidelity is.

And then we go back to the village of West Egg and in that huge mansion where parties are held every weekend, Nick Caraway also gets invited to the party by the host, who is none other than the Great Gatsby, Jay Gatsby. And Nick Caraway attends the dinner along with Jordan Baker and Gatsby introduces himself for the 1st time in the novel to Nick Caraway. And slowly they get along and they become good friends. And one day Gatsby asks Nick to invite Daisy for an afternoon tea at Nick's cottage.

And Nick goes and invites Daisy to the, to this afternoon tea and Gatsby is also Introduced as well to Daisy. Then we get a back story of how Daisy's and Gatsby's lives were before the time of the text. So, we see that Daisy was a socialite, who, who fell in love with Gatsby when he was an army personnel and he had nothing, when he had no wealth and no place in the upper social class. And it was only after the army that Gatsby through some means a mass wealth and now Gatsby is living in West Egg, directly across Tom Buchanan's house in the East egg across the bay, so that he can relive the past and change the past and make Daisy his own wife.

So this is the basic plot and this is the basic setting and we go on to see what happens, because of disease, because of Gatsby's love for Daisy Buchanan. So, after this, we see that Daisy and Gatsby have a short love affair and on one day Daisy invites Nick and Gatsby to dinner at the Buchanan's estate. And through some of Daisy's dialogues, which we will see later, Tom gets the idea that both Gatsby and Daisy are having an affair behind his back.

So, Tom gets angry and all of them leave to the city to have a drink because the weather is so hot. And Tom let's Daisy drive with Gatsby to the hotel to kind of show off that he is not affected by Daisy's infidelity, although we also know that Tom had too many affairs outside the marriage. And they go to the hotel, there is a huge fight with Gatsby and Daisy and Tom and we also get to know that when they were crossing the Valley of Ashes that Myrtle Wilson and George Wilson, Myrtle who is Tom's mistress, they are planning to leave, planning to leave the Valley of Ashes because now George Wilson also gets an idea that Myrtle is having an affair behind George's back.

It is just that George does not know who is the person Myrtle is having an affair with. So, in the hotel there is a huge fight and Gatsby tries to make Daisy tell Tom that she never loved Tom and it was always Gatsby she loved. But in sedan reversal of luck, Daisy and the saying that she always loved Tom also and Tom and Daisy and Nick and Jordan, everybody comes back to the fictional village of West Egg. So, when they are driving back, we see that one of those cars which was why, which was driven by Sorry, which was driven perhaps by Gatsby and Daisy hit Myrtle Wilson on the road and kill her.

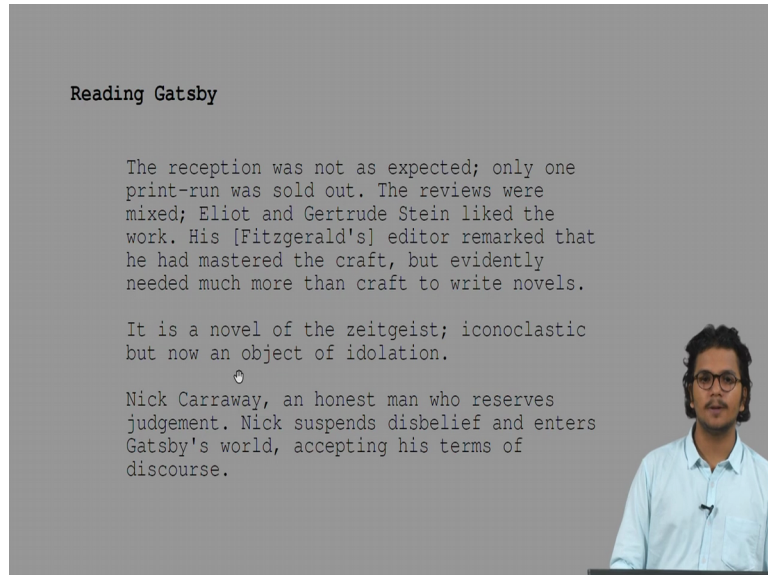
So, Tom goes into George's garage and talks to him and tells him tells George that the car which hit was not Tom's because George is having an idea that Myrtle ran out into the road, during an argument she was having with George, so it was to stop the guy in the car and George thought that the guy in the car was the person whom Myrtle was having an affair with. So, George understands that the owner of the car is a person who is having an affair with Myrtle and tries to figure who that is by going through the city and enquiring about a yellow car, which is Gatsby's, who hit, which hit Myrtle.

So, here we see George Wilson going into Gatsby's house and after searching through the city and we see that Gatsby has been telling Nick that it was Daisy who actually drove the car and that is why she did not stop and we see Gatsby trying to listen through the window of Tom's estate, Tom's house to see whether Tom was misbehaving with Daisy over the fight they had in the afternoon. So, after the long night, Gatsby goes back to his home, his mansion and we see George Wilson coming and shooting Gatsby and killing himself.

So, by this we are almost near the end of the story and Nick figuring out that something had happened, goes to Gatsby's mansion and finds that Gatsby is that, as well as George is dead and Tom and Daisy have left presumably to New York to leave the past behind. So, and it ends with a few novel scenes of Gatsby were (( ))(19:49) as opposed to the extravagant parties

which he threw to the new populars of New York City. So, this is the basic plot and his love for Daisy Buchanan is what is driving the story.

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**Reading Gatsby**

The reception was not as expected; only one print-run was sold out. The reviews were mixed; Eliot and Gertrude Stein liked the work. His [Fitzgerald's] editor remarked that he had mastered the craft, but evidently needed much more than craft to write novels.

It is a novel of the zeitgeist; iconoclastic but now an object of idolation.

Nick Carraway, an honest man who reserves judgement. Nick suspends disbelief and enters Gatsby's world, accepting his terms of discourse.

So, with this we will go to a reading of Gatsby. So, the reception of the novel was not as expected by Fitzgerald, only one of the print runs was sold completely and by the time Fitzgerald died, the 2nd print run was yet to be sold. And the reviews were kind of mixed and TS Eliot and Gertrude Stein said that they liked the work but his, Fitzgerald's editor said that although Fitzgerald had mastered the craft, he had, he evidently needs much more than this craft to write novels.

So we see that Fitzgerald perhaps died without having a very nice opinion of himself and it is a novel of the zeitgeist, of that age of 1920s, it was an iconoclastic novel when it came out, because it kind of critiqued the Moral and the spiritual decadence of 1920s, although it had amassed a lot of wealth. So, it was yes, Nick Caraway is introduced to us as an honest man, who reserves judgement always, as perhaps the 1st paragraph of the novel suggests. And Nick suspends disbelief and enters Gatsby's world, accepting his terms of discourse.

Gatsby is a liar too because he does not actually disclose how he amassed his wealth, which we which we come to know later that has been through illegal sale of liquor and also through so many financial frauds that Gatsby had actually amassed his wealth. But Nick, as he himself professes to be an honest man who reserves judgement, kind of tries to accept what Gatsby is saying and perhaps the narrator, Nick Caraway is one of those people in the novel whose point of view is more or less objective.



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### Reading Gatsby

Talks about the spiritual and moral decadence of the roaring twenties. But the novel is not cynical per se---It often talks about cynicism.

The American Dream and the inherent contradictions in such a dream.

Fitzgerald's life and The Great Gatsby:  
Ginevra King and Zelda.



### The Discourse of the Self-Made Man

1890s to 1930s, success manuals flourished.  
Horatio Alger; Andrew Carnegie; McGuffey  
Readers.

Success is a function of character.

A world of success, so alien to others. (Tom  
drinking through the prohibition; the valley  
of ashes; parties and so on)



### The Discourse of the Self-Made Man

Cues from the text:

The different magazines people read (Simon  
Called Peter); the colors; the metaphors of  
floating and flowing; Carelessness and social  
power; fashionable cynicism; Tom and Mary  
(Burning gardens and smouldering); "...her  
voice was full of money..."; uncut books; the  
funeral of the self-made man; the time-table



Although he at times strays from his reserving judgement and disinterestedness and gives us so many objective is to depict so many of the characters in the novel. So, the spiritual and Moral decadence as I told earlier is the main theme and it is not cynical but it often talks about the cynicism the 1920s generation had. And the main theme which we will be discussing is the American dream and the inherent contradictions in such a dream.

So, we will also look at Fitzgerald's life and the Great Gatsby as linked to Zelda's notions of Fame and of a social life and also one of those motivations for great Gatsby is set to be Ginerva King, whom Fitzgerald liked in the beginning but of course as just Gatsby was, Fitzgerald was very much lower than King's social class, so that he could not marry King. So, we will be looking at the American dream now.

So the discourse of the self-made man is the primary locus of the American dream. So, from say 1890s to 1930s, just before the stock market crash, there was a flourishing of success manuals, how to become great, how to succeed in life, how to amass wealth, how to climb the social ladder, such literature flourished in the United States. For example, we had Horatio Alger whose novels were embodiment of this discourse of the self-made man, who could move up the social class just by his own industry, whatever his circumstances maybe.

We also have Andrew Carnegie who was another writer of such popular works and who also delivered a lot of speeches on how a man can move up the social ladder. Another literature of the 1920s was of the McGuffey Readers, which were elementary school textbooks for children, which also was the embodiment of this discourse of the self-made man, who could buy his own industries, industry could move up the social ladder. So, the idea was that whatever the circumstances maybe and how much ever poverty they had to go through, whatever the, whatever the difference maybe, success can be achieved by one's own industry and one's own function of, one's own character.

So, success is a function of a good behaviour, a good all-round character. So, we will see that Gatsby does so many of these, Gatsby is also the, is also the manifestation of how this discourse was taken up by the populace and how they try to try to reimagine themselves as a self-made man. So, it is a world of success which is alien to others. So, all the successful men, all the successful people, including the fictional characters which we see here as in Gatsby, we see that their success is totally alien, totally in a different world all together because they are some of these individual people who could actually move up the ladder because of particular circumstances.

Not everybody was able to be the self-made man. The discourse is highly selective in terms of who grows up, who achieves success and we can see that this stark contrast between the worlds, the world of an alien, the world of a successful rich man and the world of others who could not climb up the ladder of success was what read. So, here we see that Tom and Daisy and everybody is Drinking through the prohibition era. And the Valley of Ashes for example, as opposed to the flamboyant parties and the cars they drive, the Valley of Ashes is grey, very desolate and it is a world where Daisy, world which Daisy cannot even imagine.

So this stark contrast is also shown through the text. So, thank you for listening to this session of introduction to world literature. Now we will, and the next session will start at, again at the discourse of the self-made man, taking cues from the text, thank you.