



The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon



Lectures on
Biographical
and Historical
background
will be posted
on the HP

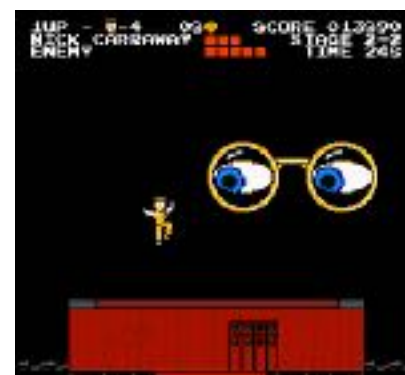
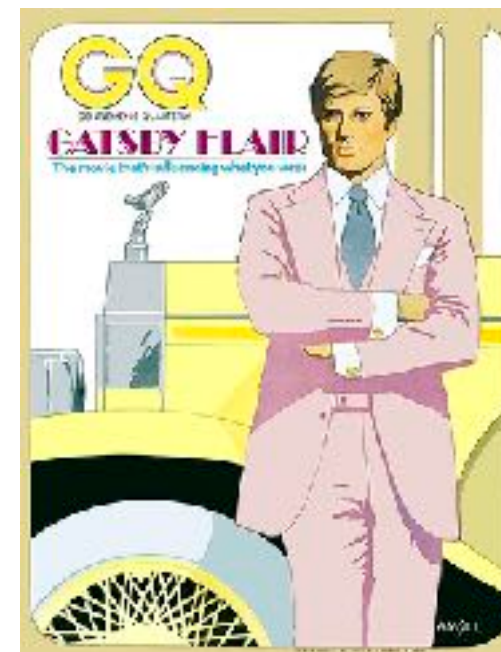
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American Fiction in the 20th Century

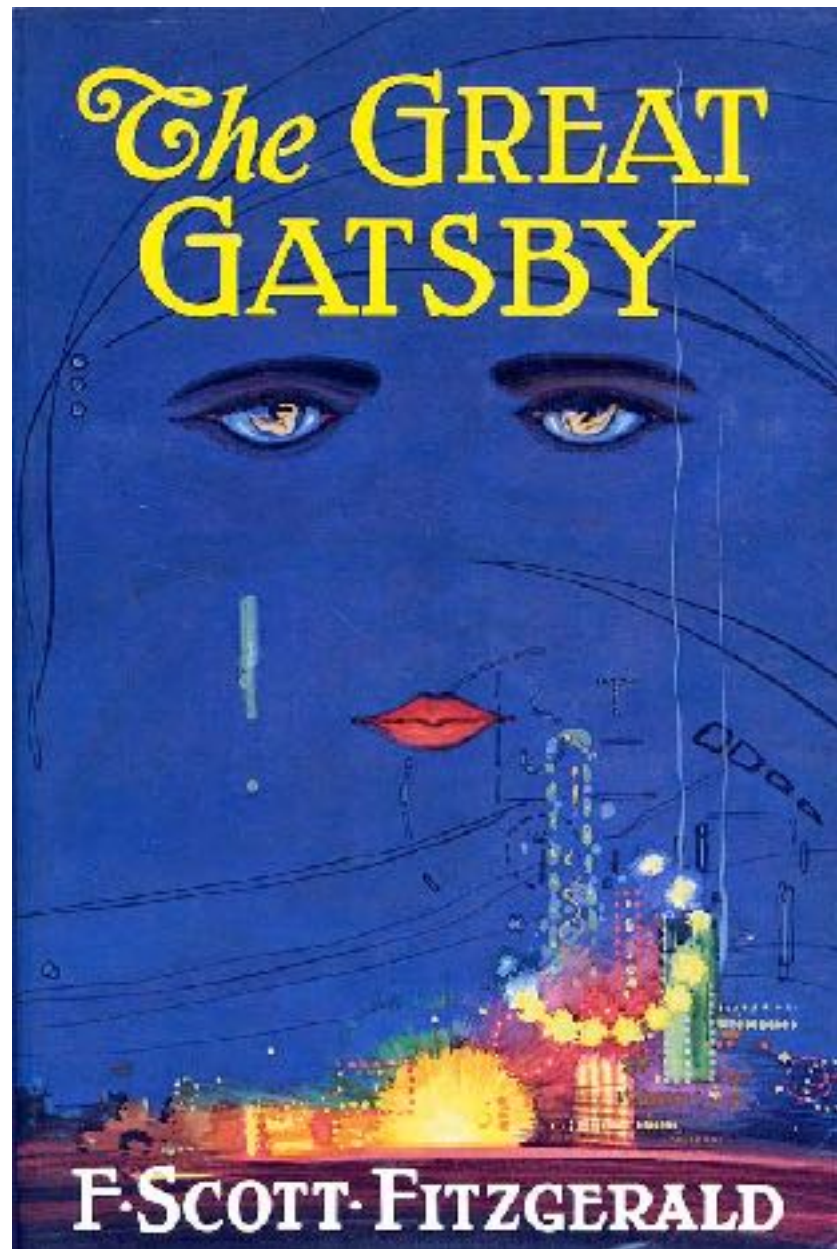


The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon





The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald



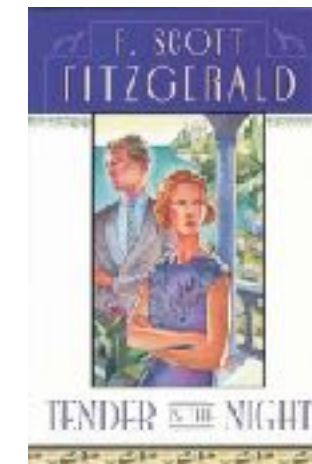
- Published in 1925
- Fitzgerald's third novel
- Considered one of the greatest American novels of the twentieth century



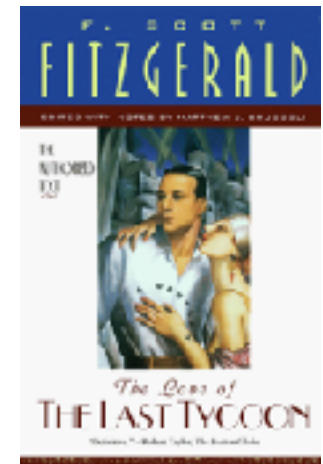
*This Side of
Paradise*
1920



*The Beautiful
and Damned*
1922



*Tender is the
Night*
1934



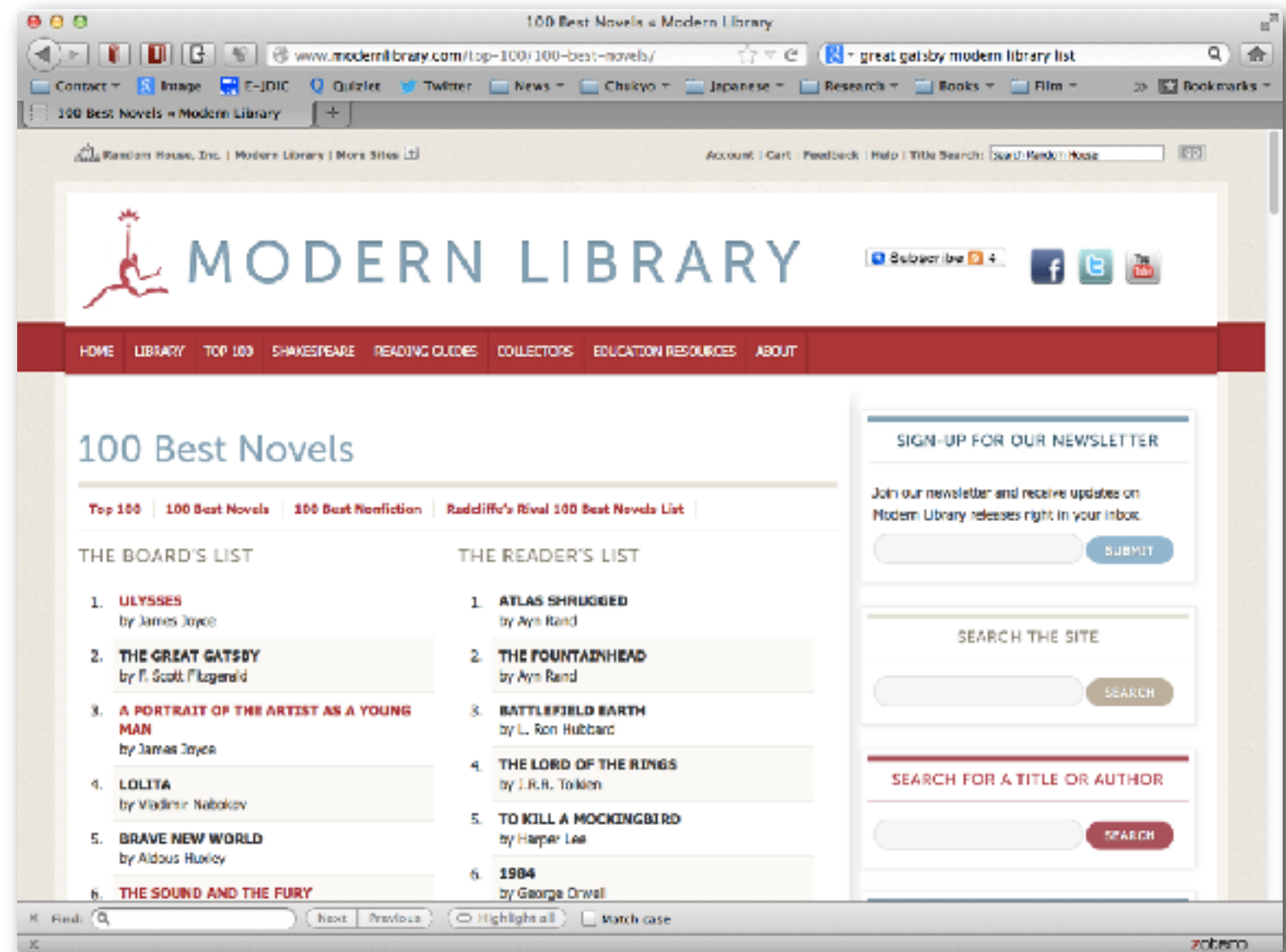
The Last Tycoon
1941



The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Popular Reputation

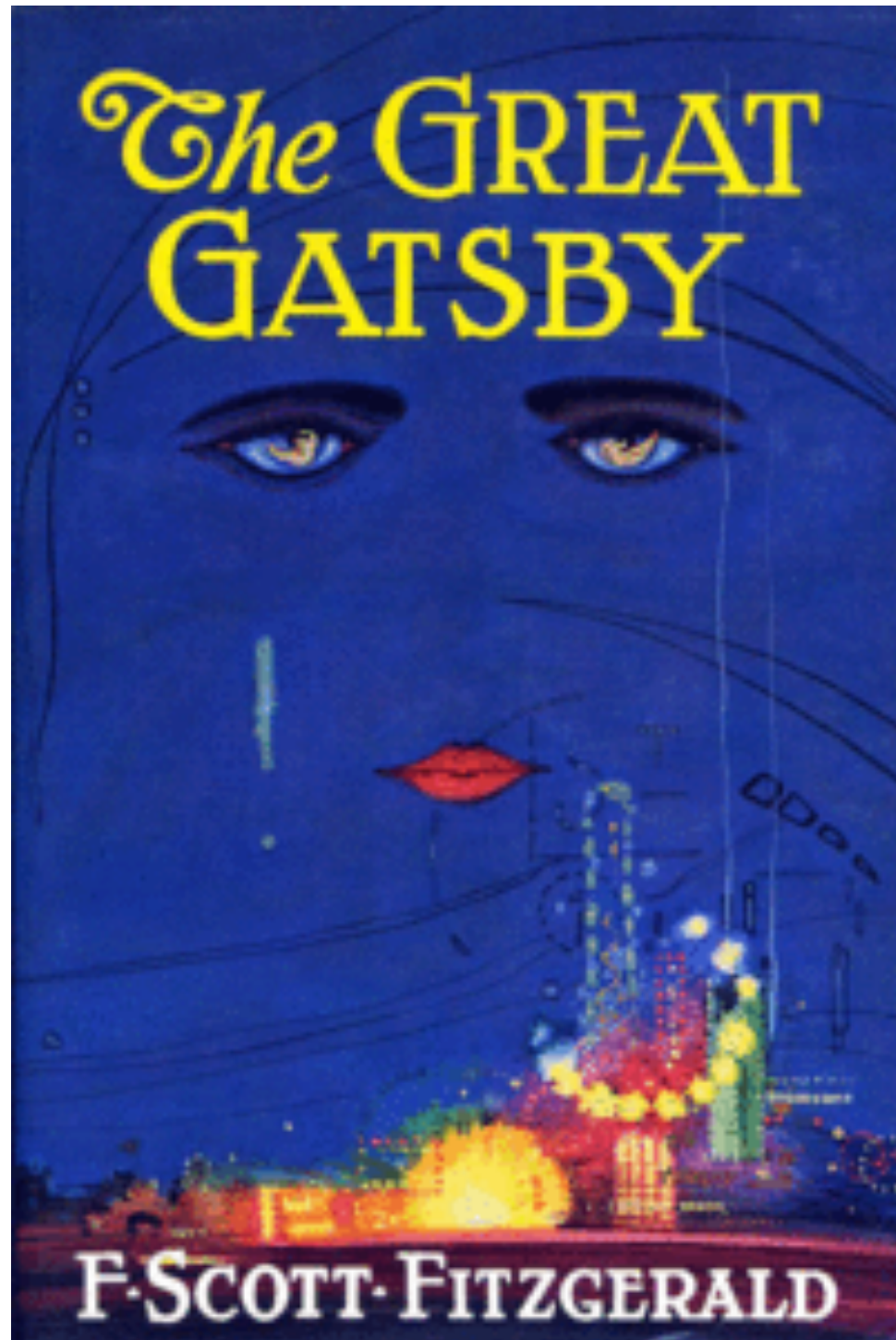
1999: Modern Library
(publishers) panel of
experts votes *Gatsby* #2
in their list of the 100
Best Novels of all time.

2002: *Book* magazine's
panel of literary experts
pick Jay *Gatsby* as the
best character in
American literature
since 1900.





Publication and Reception



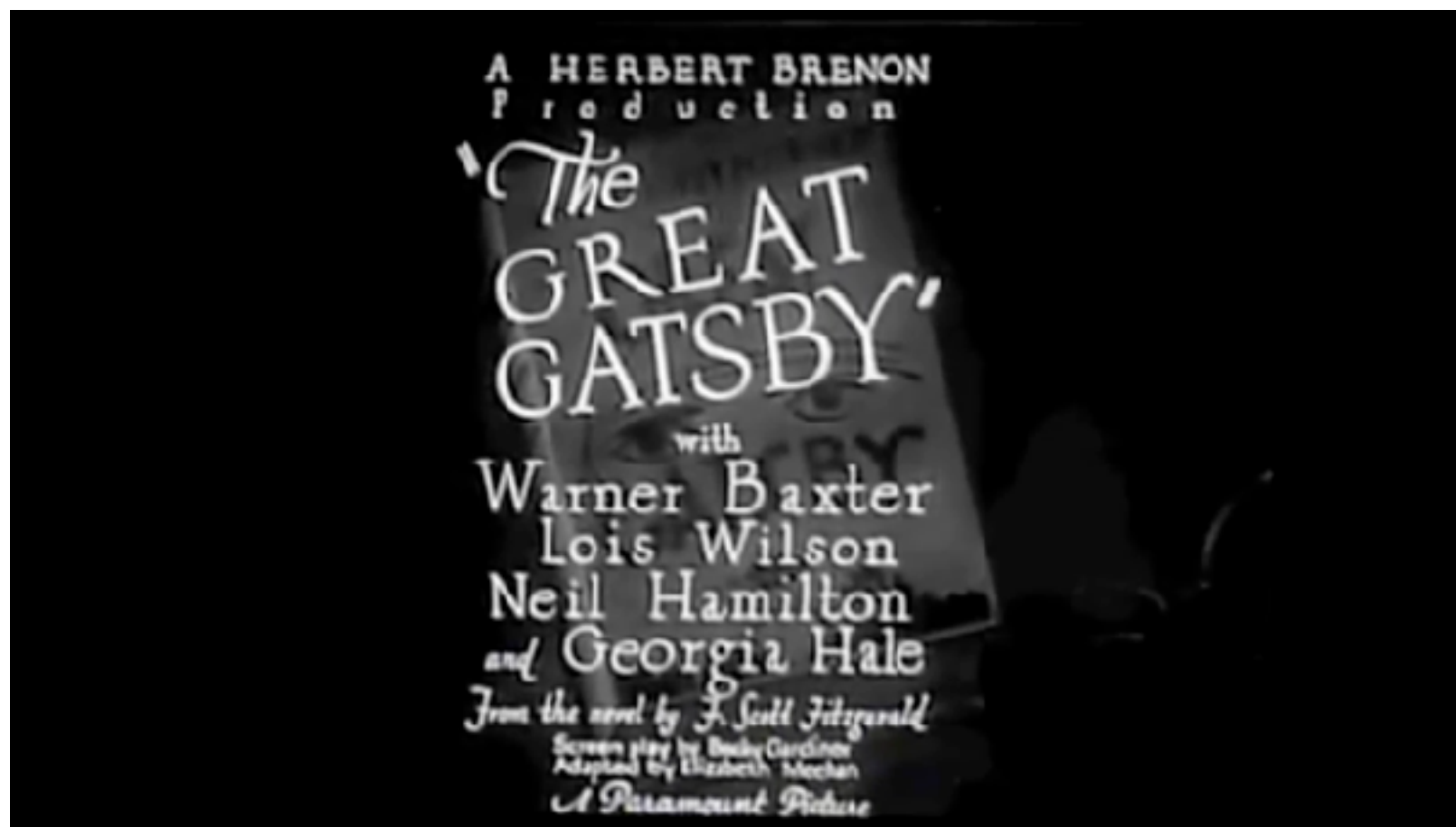
- Publication of *The Great Gatsby* rushed for April 1925
- Scott doesn't do a final check: errors in 1st edition
- Until March Scott still thinking about changing the title: "Under the Red, White and Blue"
- Reviews diverse, no consensus; sales poor

"[T]he book contains no important woman character and women control the fiction market at present" -FSF
Letter to publisher



The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Film Adaptations

- Footage from lost 1926 adaptation



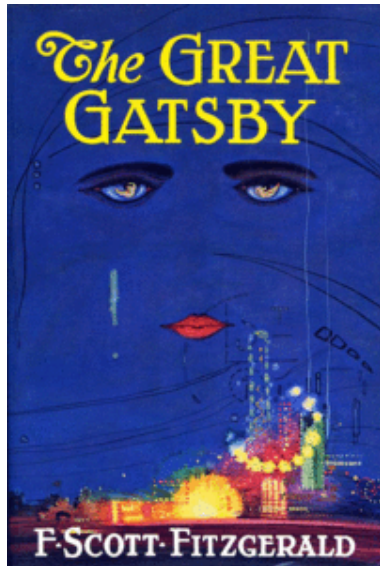
Paramount Pictures

Dir. Herbert
Brenon

Adapted from a
stage version of the
novel



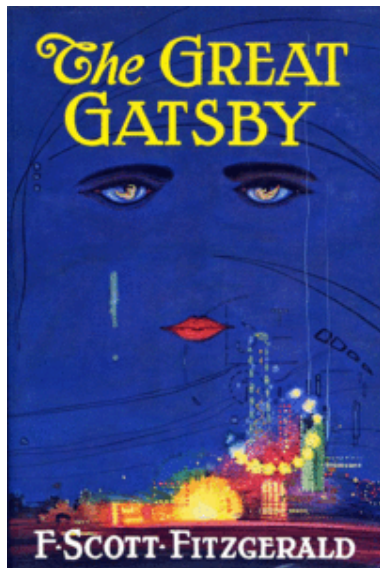
Early Reception of *The Great Gatsby*, 1925-1934



- Reviews of the novel “mixed” (Beuka I)
- Some reviewers questioned Fitzgerald’s standing as a major American novelist.
- Other reviewers recognized his mature talent.



Early Reception of *The Great Gatsby*, 1925-1934



- Negative reviews focused on (1) the modern tone of the novel, its shallowness, surface and triviality. Was it a novel that would endure?
- Critics often compared (negatively) the novel to Fitzgerald's stunningly successful first novel *This Side of Paradise*
- (2) Moral relativism: N

“[N]o more than a glorified anecdote and not too probable at that.... [the] story is obviously unimportant”

-- H.L. Mencken, Baltimore Evening Sun newspaper

[W]e wish that there had been somebody good in the book”

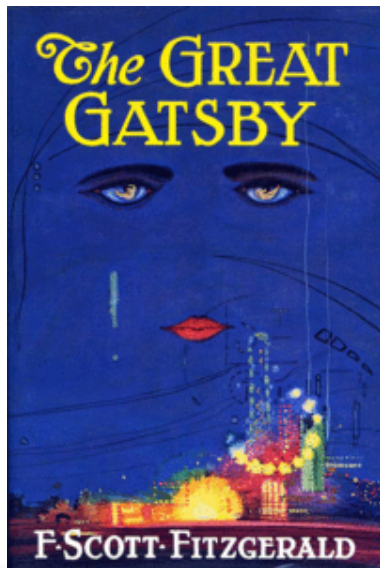
-- Raleigh News and Observer

“[The novel is] sordid and depressing”

-- Kansas City Star



Early Reception of *The Great Gatsby*, 1925-1934



- Positive reviews recognized (1) Fitzgerald's new found maturity as a writer
- (2) Fitzgerald's realistic portrayal of contemporary society

“[T]horoughly matured craftsmanship”

-- William Benet, Saturday Review of Literature

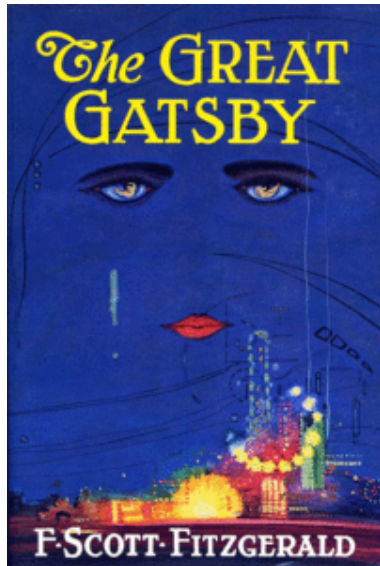
-- William Curtis, Town & Country

“[The novel] expresses one phase of
the grotesque spectacle of our
time. It is humor, irony,
and cynicism.”

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...
erpiece”

Early Reception of *The Great Gatsby*



- Positive review of the novel's maturity as a work of art

- (2) Fitzgerald's early reception

“[The novel] expresses one phase of the great grotesque spectacle of our American scene. It is humor, irony, ribaldry, pathos and loveliness.”

-- Edwin Clark, *New York Times Book Review*

“[T]horoughly matured craftsmanship”

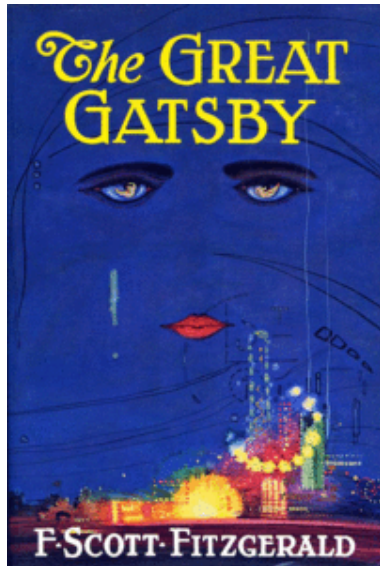
-- William Benet, *Saturday Review of Literature*

“In ‘The Great Gatsby’ Mr. Fitzgerald ... has produced somethings which approaches seriously near a masterpiece”

-- William Curtis, *Town & Country*



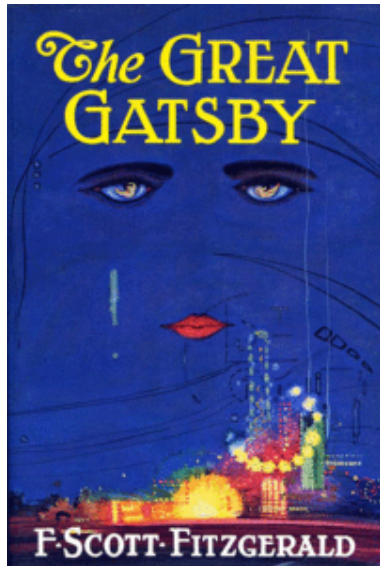
Early Reception of *The Great Gatsby*, 1925-1934



- Fitzgerald to agent Maxwell Perkins: “the best American novel ever written.”
- Fitzgerald’s Preface to 1934 Modern Library edition:
“Never before did one try to keep his artistic conscience as pure as during the ten months put into doing it.”
- Publisher (Scribner’s) refused FSF’s repeated requests to re-publish a cheap paperback edition.



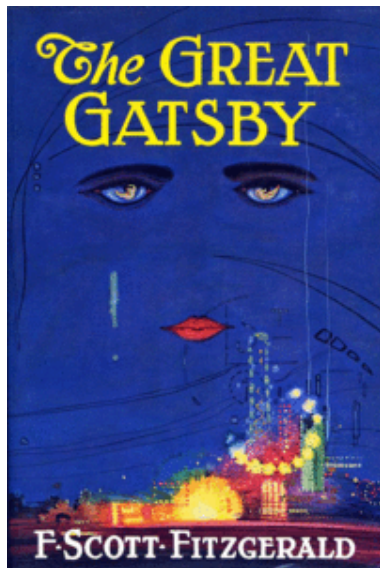
Early Reception of *The Great Gatsby*, 1925-1934



- Commercial failure: Only two printings during Fitzgerald's lifetime: 23, 870 copies.
- Some copies unsold at the time of FSF's death in 1940.
- 1940: *The Great Gatsby* was "long gone and forgotten" (Beuka 2)



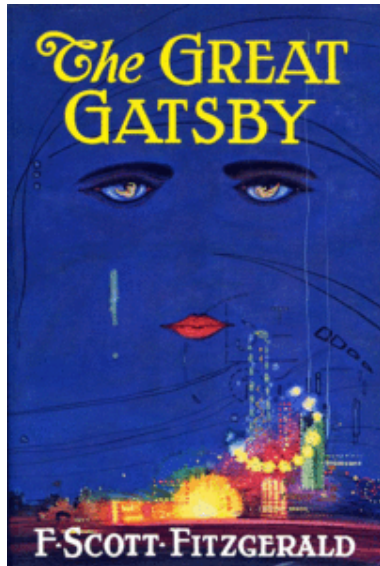
The Fitzgerald Revival, 1940-1950



- 1941: *New Republic* magazine: Edmund Wilson arranges a collection of commemorative essays on Fitzgerald.
- 1941: Wilson publishes *The Last Tycoon*, Fitzgerald's unfinished novel about Hollywood, along with *The Great Gatsby* and five short stories.
- *The Portable F. Scott Fitzgerald* (1945), published by Viking and distributed free to WWII soldiers; Bantam paperback edition of *Gatsby* (25 cents)
- 1945: Wilson also published *The Crack-Up*, a collection of Fitzgerald's essays.
- 1946: New Directions Press edition of *Gatsby* with introduction by Lionel Trilling, a famous American critic



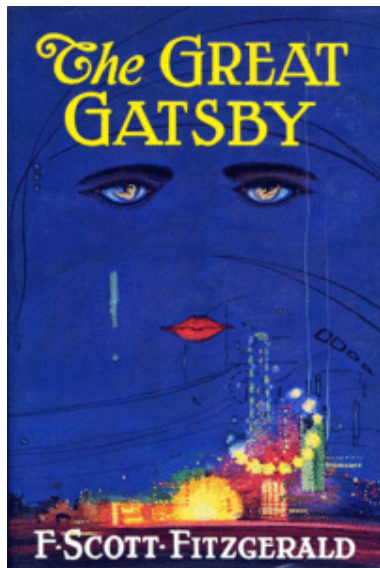
The Fitzgerald Revival, 1940-1950



- 1949: Paramount Pictures releases the second film adaptation of the novel.
- 1950: Bud Schulberg (screenwriter) publishes *The Disenchanted*, a novel based Schulberg's relationship with FSF in Hollywood. Novel depicted FSF (Manley Halliday) as a washed-up writer desperate to recapture his past success
- 1951: Arthur Mizner publishes *The Far Side of Paradise*, the first biography of FSF.
- By 1951, critics noticed the complete turnaround in Fitzgerald's reputation since his death: "a Fitzgerald cult"



The Fitzgerald Revival, 1940-1950



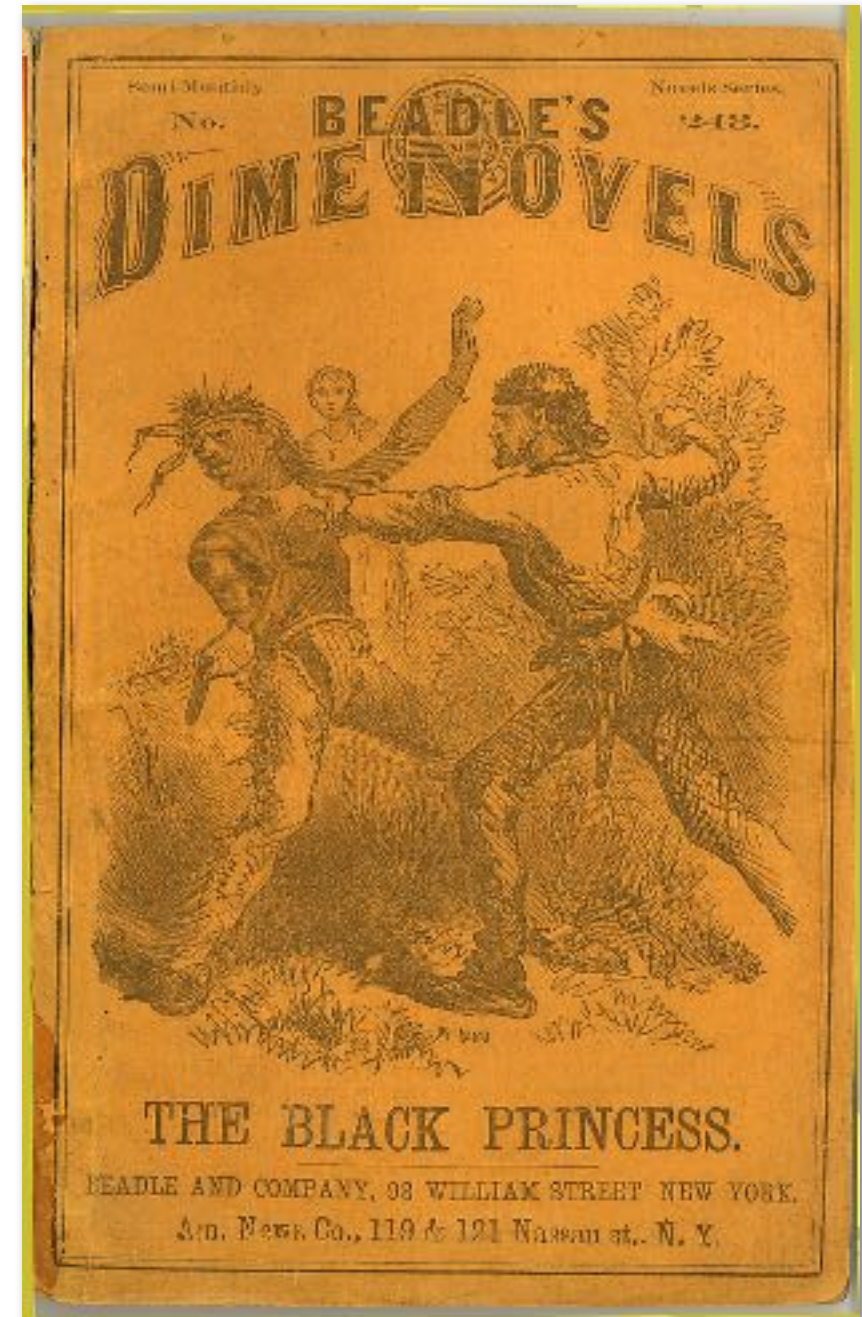
- 1949: Paramount Pictures releases the second film adaptation of the novel. Starring Alan Ladd as Gatsby.





Cultural Sources: The American Dream

- The Dime novel: a popular form of fiction, 19th century
- Usually featured stories of adventure
- Forerunners of comics, today's paperback fiction and even television: “formula fiction.”





Horatio Alger, 1832-1899

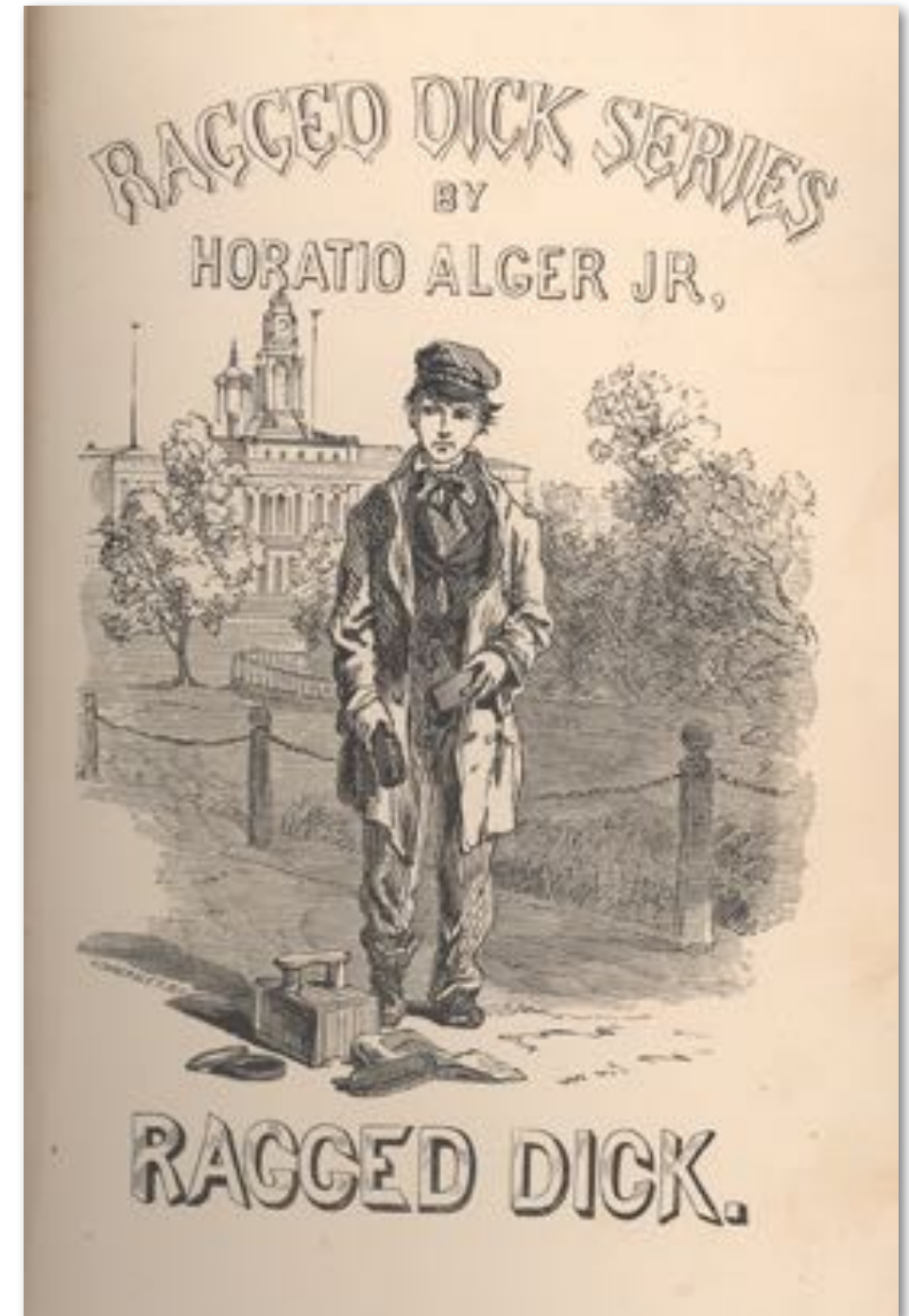
- One of America's most successful writers of dime novels
- Born in Revere, Massachusetts
- Attended Harvard and Divinity School
- Became a minister of the church
- Moved to NY where he became interested in the lives of street children





Horatio Alger, 1832-1899

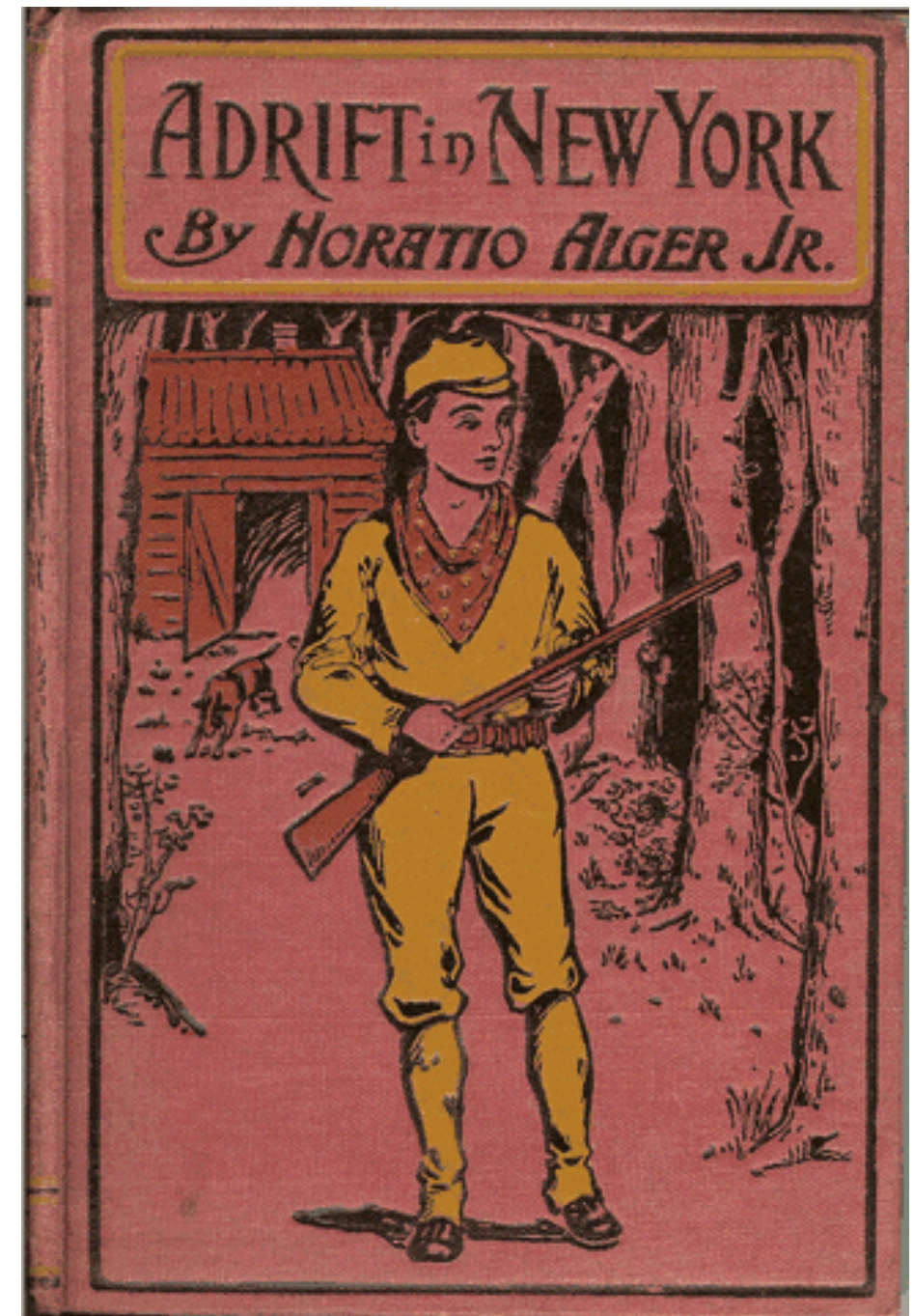
- Began a writing career: first bestselling novel, *Ragged Dick*, published in 1868
- Established Alger's formula for sales and success: “the rags to riches story.”
- Typical hero: A young boy with no luck, no money and no where to go...





Horatio Alger, 1832-1899

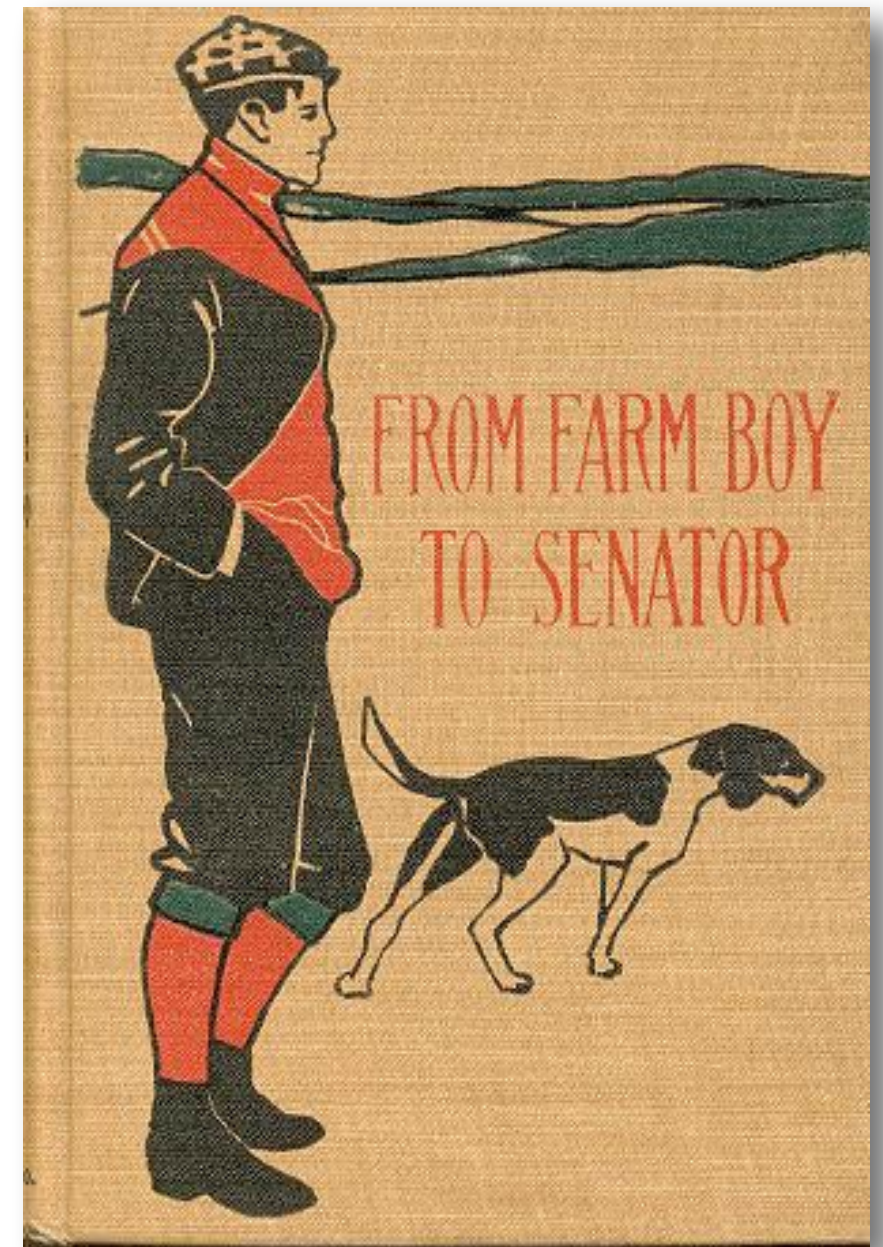
- ...works hard and becomes a successful man.
- Alger's books inspired young readers--especially new immigrants to America--to work hard.
- “Rags to riches” stories: especially popular between 1870 and 1890.





Horatio Alger, 1832-1899

- Alger's novels expressed the 'American Dream':
- With hard work, luck and courage, a person could become successful.
- Appealing to immigrants looking for success
- Alger's novels offered them the dream of a better life.

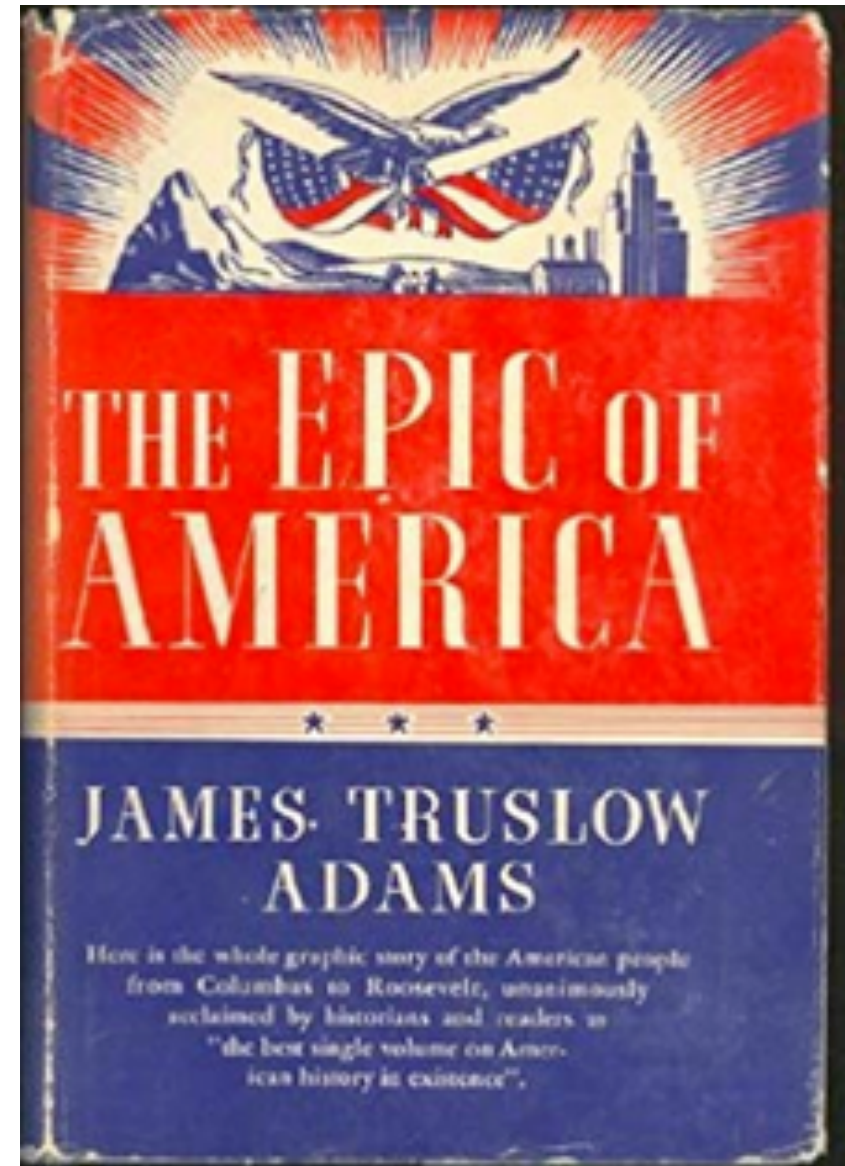




Cultural Sources: The American Dream

Historian James Truslow Adams first publicly defined the American Dream in his book *Epic of America* (1931):

“The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.”





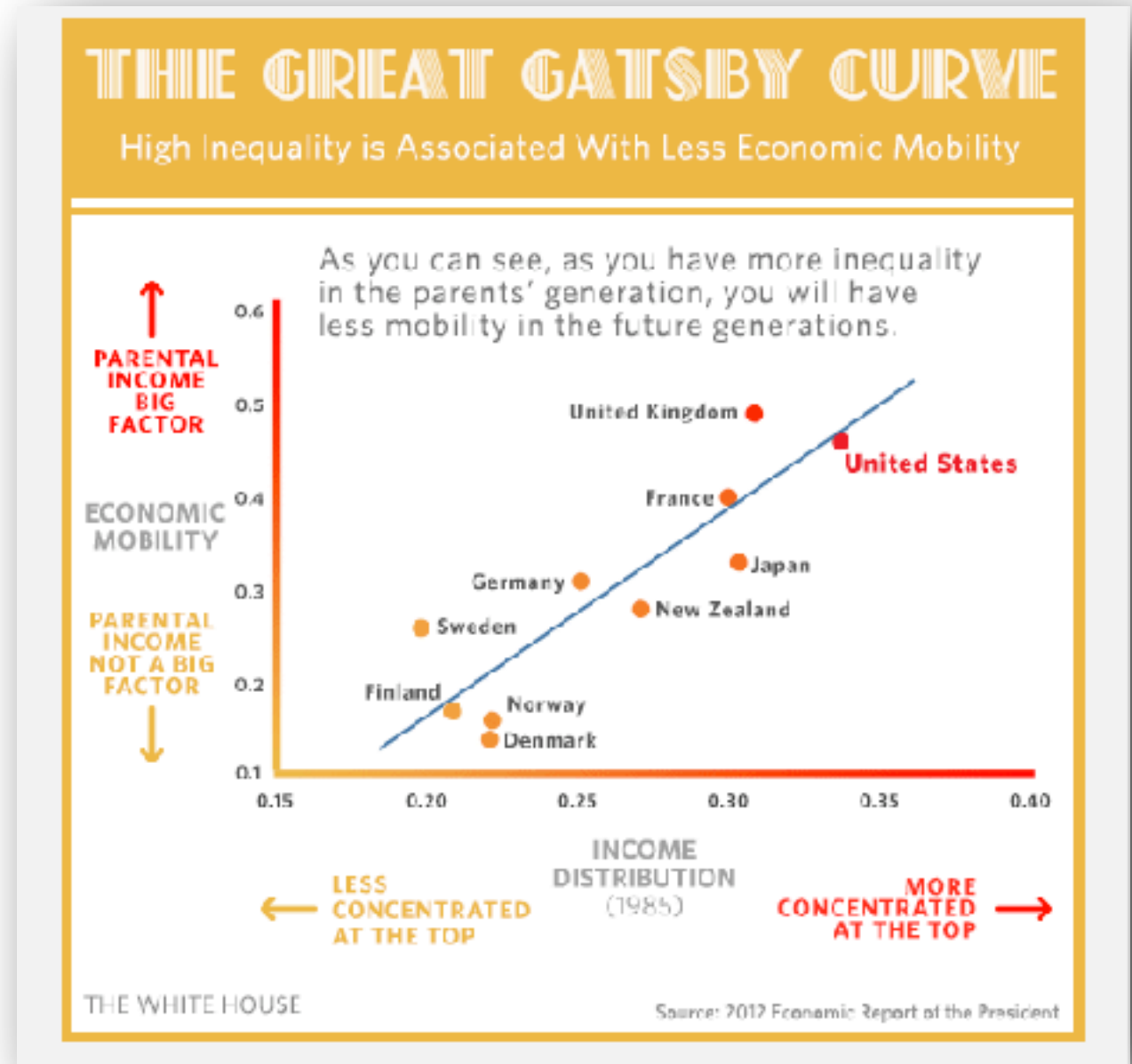
The Great Gatsby and the American Dream in the 21st Century

“The Great Gatsby Curve”

A term introduced by economist Alan Krueger in 2012, Chairman of US Council of Economic Advisors

Problem of income inequality

2008: Inequality is at highest point since the 1920s





The Great Gatsby and the American Dream in the 21st Century

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economist Alan Krueger in
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“The Great Gatsby Curve illustrates the connection between concentration of wealth in one generation and the ability of those in the next generation to move up the economic ladder compared to their parents.”

“The curve shows that children from poor families are less likely to improve their economic status as adults in countries where income inequality was higher – meaning wealth was concentrated in fewer hands – around the time those children were growing up.”

“[R]ising inequality is jeopardizing our [American] tradition of equality of opportunity”

“[W]e [must] take steps to ensure that all children have access to quality education, health care, a safe environment and other opportunities that are necessary to have a fair shot at economic success.” —Krueger



F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* and Japan



Translated
into Japanese
and published
in 2006



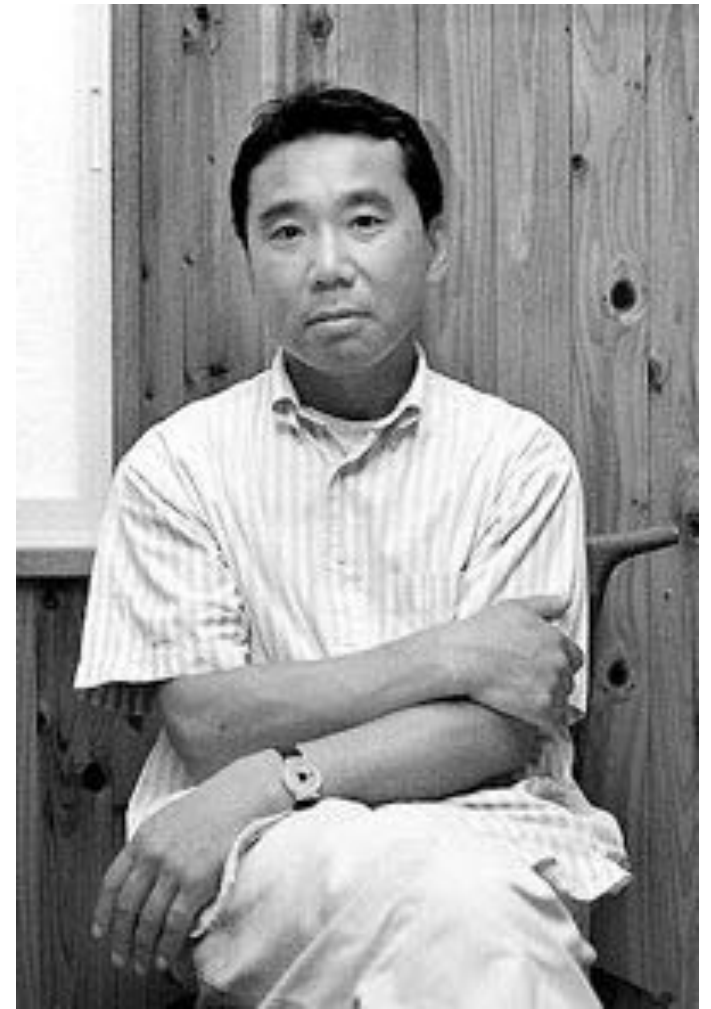
Haruki Murakami



F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* and Japan

“... the 1930s, the age of the Great Depression....
[is] a dark age in contrast to the flashy ‘20s.
Fitzgerald matured as a writer as America did as a
society....”

“I think those years may correspond to Japan’s
bubble economy, its bursting and the “lost decade”
that followed. I believe that Japanese society has
matured to a new level by going through this stage
(or that’s what I want to believe). For this reason,
now is precisely the right time for Japanese to
read *Gatsby*, which in a way will seem very
realistic to them.”



Haruki Murakami



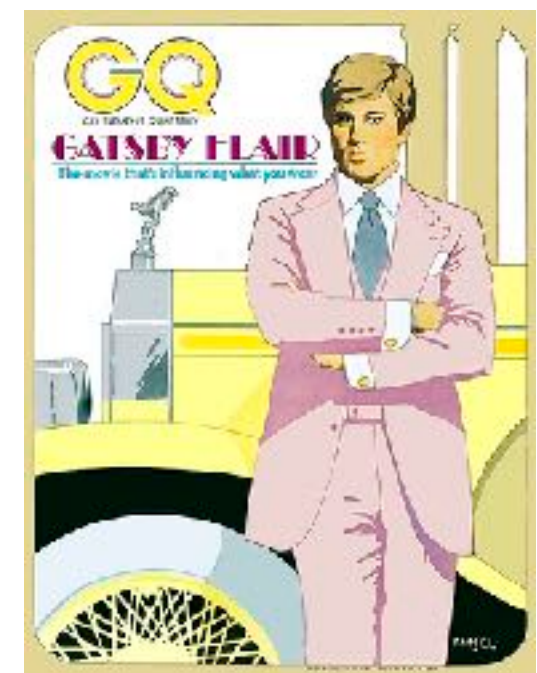
The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Film Adaptations

- Jack Clayton's 1974 adaptation
- Script by Francis Ford Coppola
- Film release included a large marketing campaign for Gatsby fashions and accessories



Time Magazine, March
1974: "The Great
Gatsby Supersell"

GQ (*Gentlemen's Quarterly*):
"Gatsby Flair: The Movie That's
Influencing What You Wear"





The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Film Adaptations



1974 film adaptation , directed by Jack Clayton and
starring Robert Redford and Mia Farrow



The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Film Adaptations



***G* (2005) directed by Christopher Scott Cherot**

Hip-hop adaptation of *Gatsby*: Summer G is a rap music producer who is trying to win back his former love Sky. Sky is the cousin of Tre, a music journalist. She is married to the wealthy and abusive Chip Hightower.



The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Drama Performance

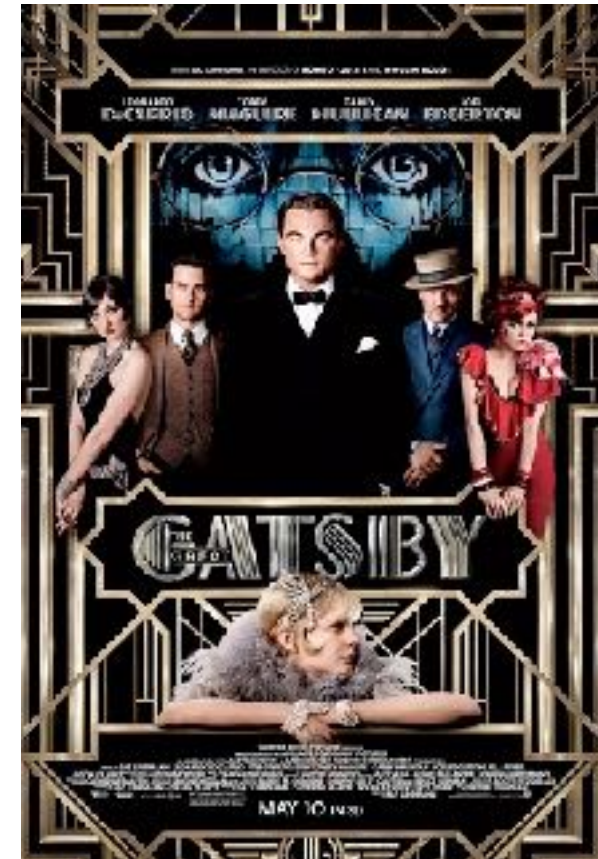
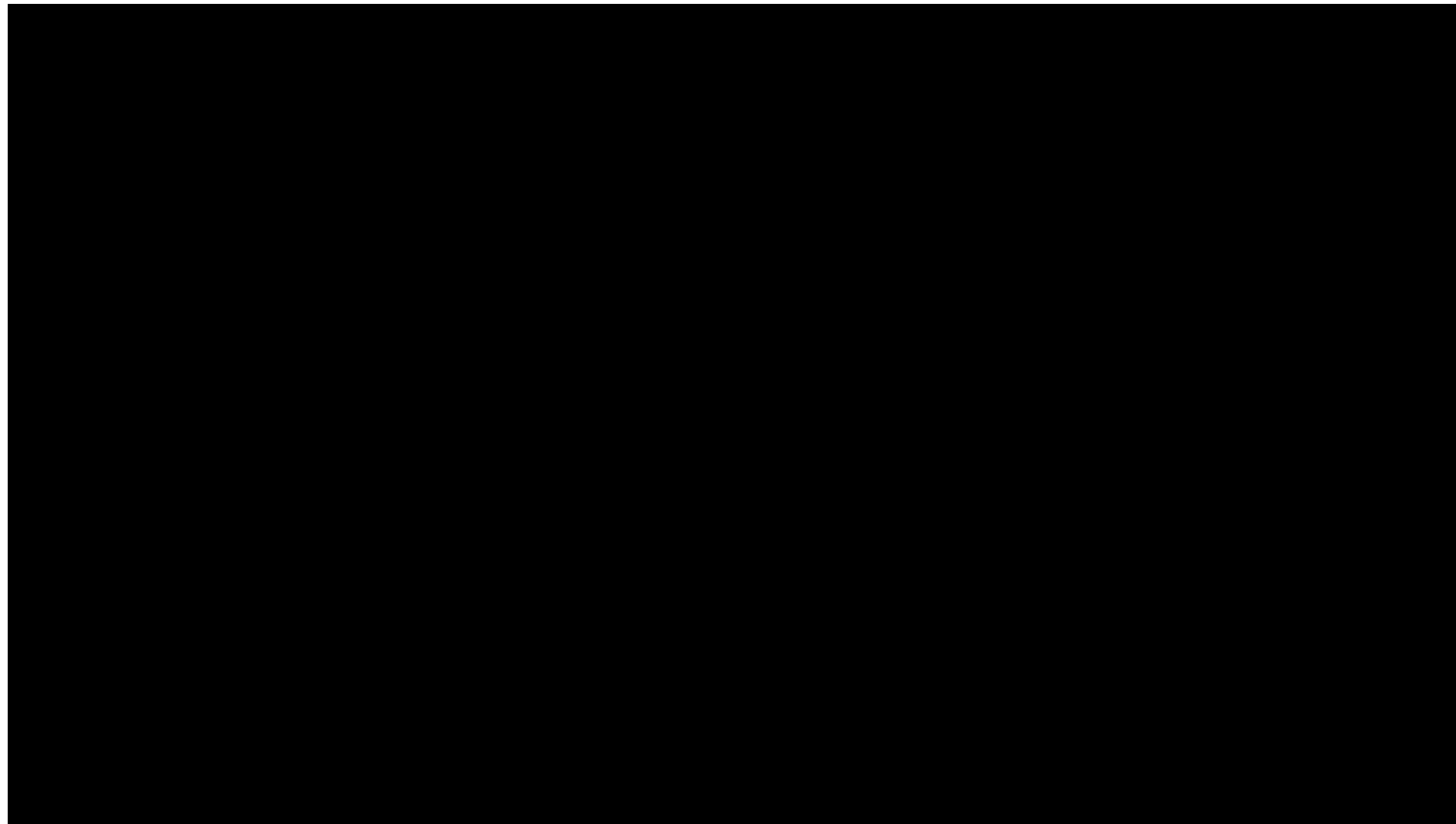
- *Gatz*: stage adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*
- Debuted at Minneapolis Walker Arts Center, September 2006
- A tired office worker finds a copy of the novel at work, late at night, and begins reading it out loud to kill time
- The whole novel is read by various characters on stage



Cast of *Gatz*, an 8 hour stage play in which the entire novel is read out loud



The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Film Adaptations



The Great Gatsby (2013) directed by Baz Luhrman
3D adaptation starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire and
Carey Mulligan. Financial success, mixed reviews



The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Men's Fashions

Mandom Corporation (1971)

- Originally: Kintsuru Perfume Corporation est'd 1927
金鶴香水株式会社

- Gatsby brand introduced in 1976

- Accounts for 59% of company's sales





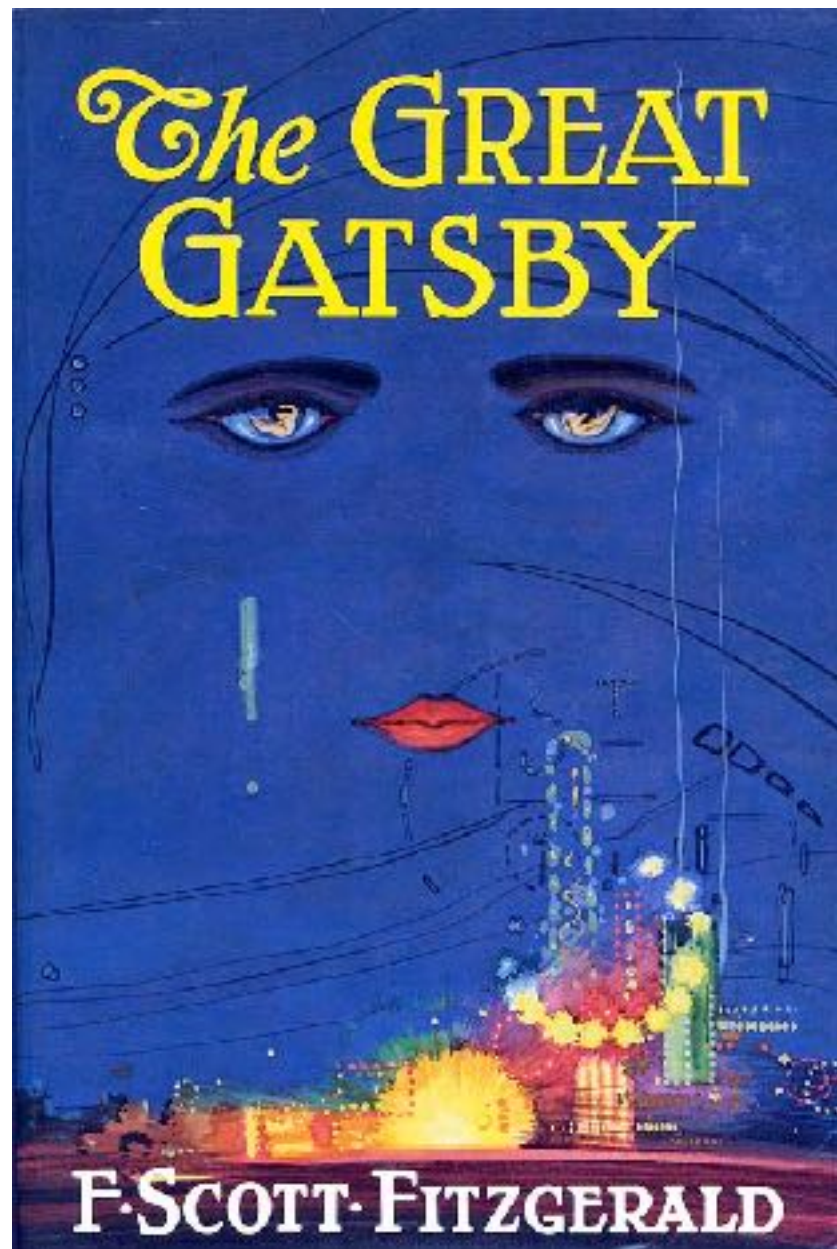
The Great Gatsby as Cultural Icon: Games



<http://greatgatsbygame.com/>



The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald



Themes in the Novel

Money, Success and the American Dream

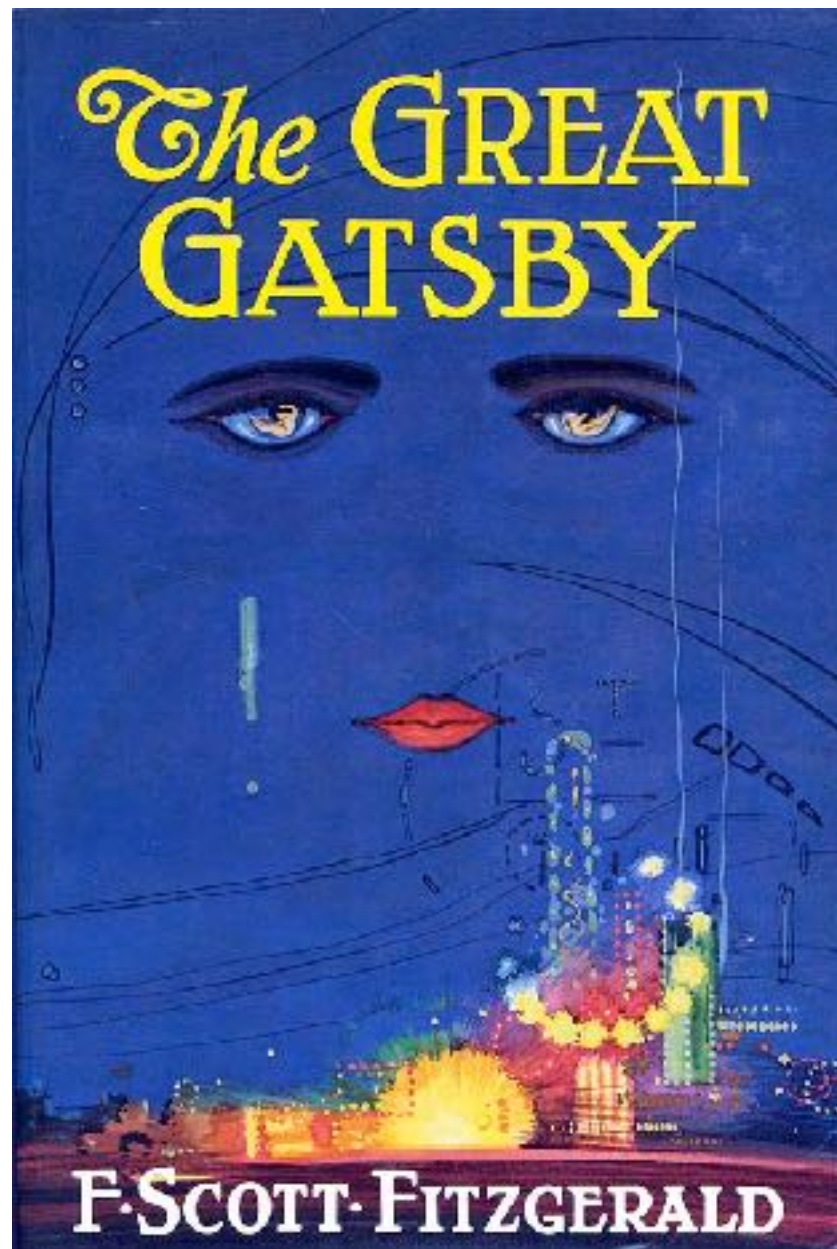
Romantic Love and Marriage

Modern Life / City Life

Women and Men



The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald



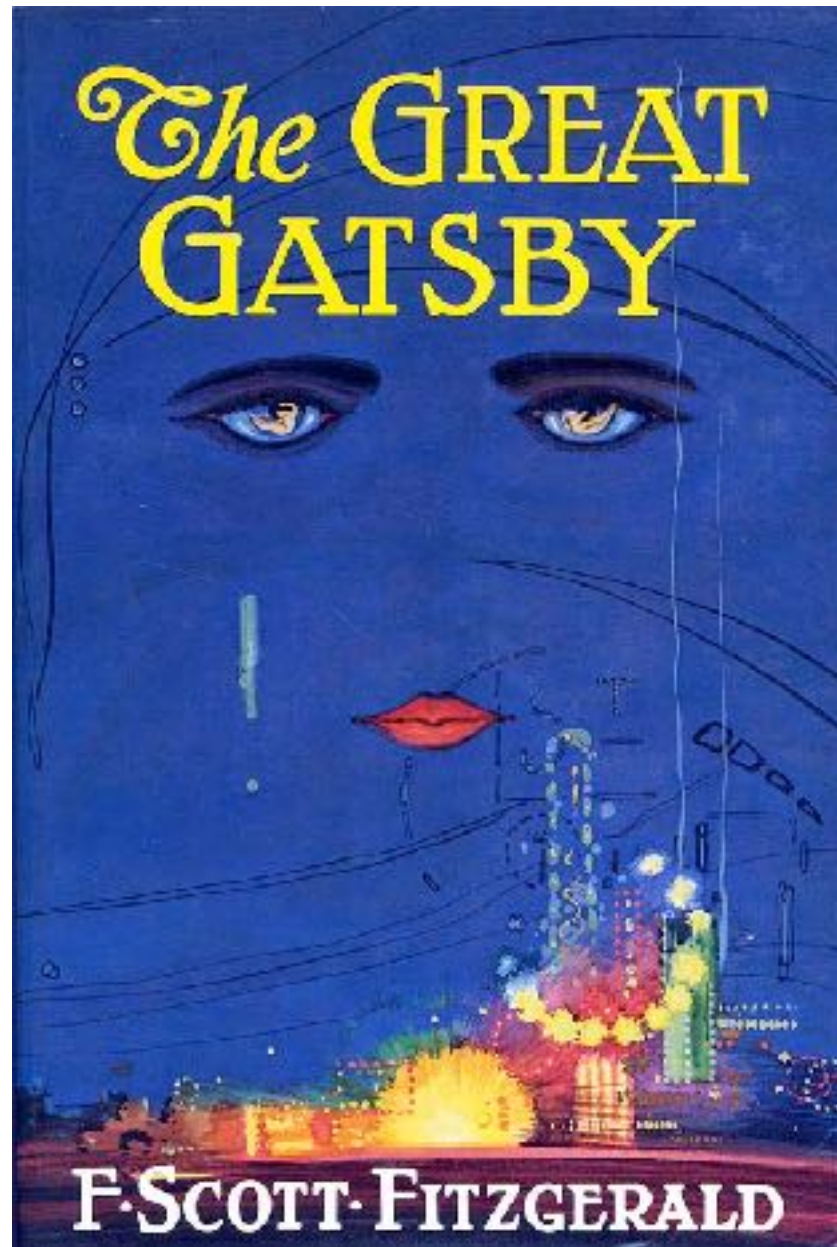
Themes in the Novel

Money, Success and the American Dream

- A positive image of American society?
- Corruption and cheating
- Money = success and belonging?
- Are there any happy characters?



The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald



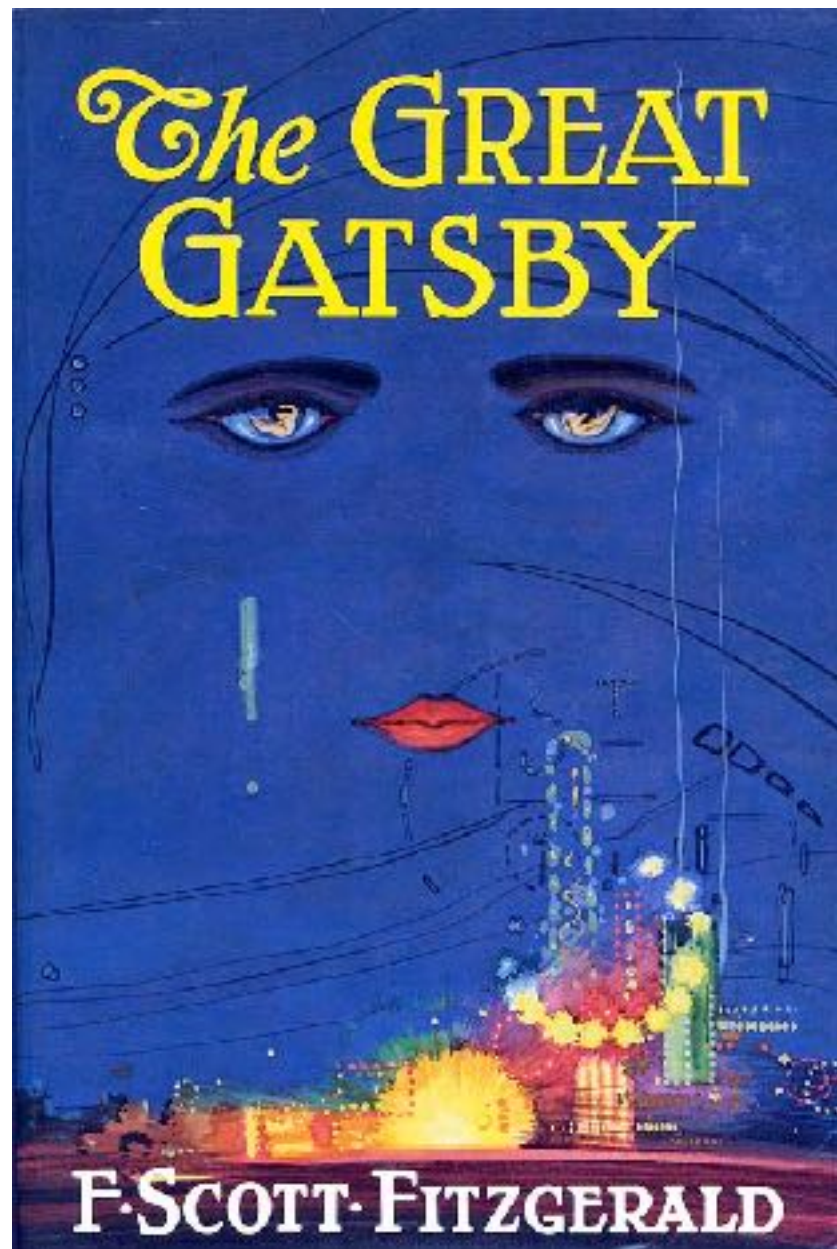
Themes in the Novel

Romantic Love and Marriage

- Who speaks about love and marriage in the novel?
- Why are the characters married?
- Gatsby: Love or obsession / control?
- Motivation for love / for marriage?



The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald



Themes in the Novel

Modern Life / City Life

- Constant movement and activity
- Importance of machines
- Automobiles as symbols of movement (recklessness, danger)
- Nervousness / Loneliness
- Physical mobility vs. social mobility



The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter into their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others—poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner—young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life.

Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were lined five deep with throbbing taxi-cabs, bound for the theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside.

(Chapter 3)



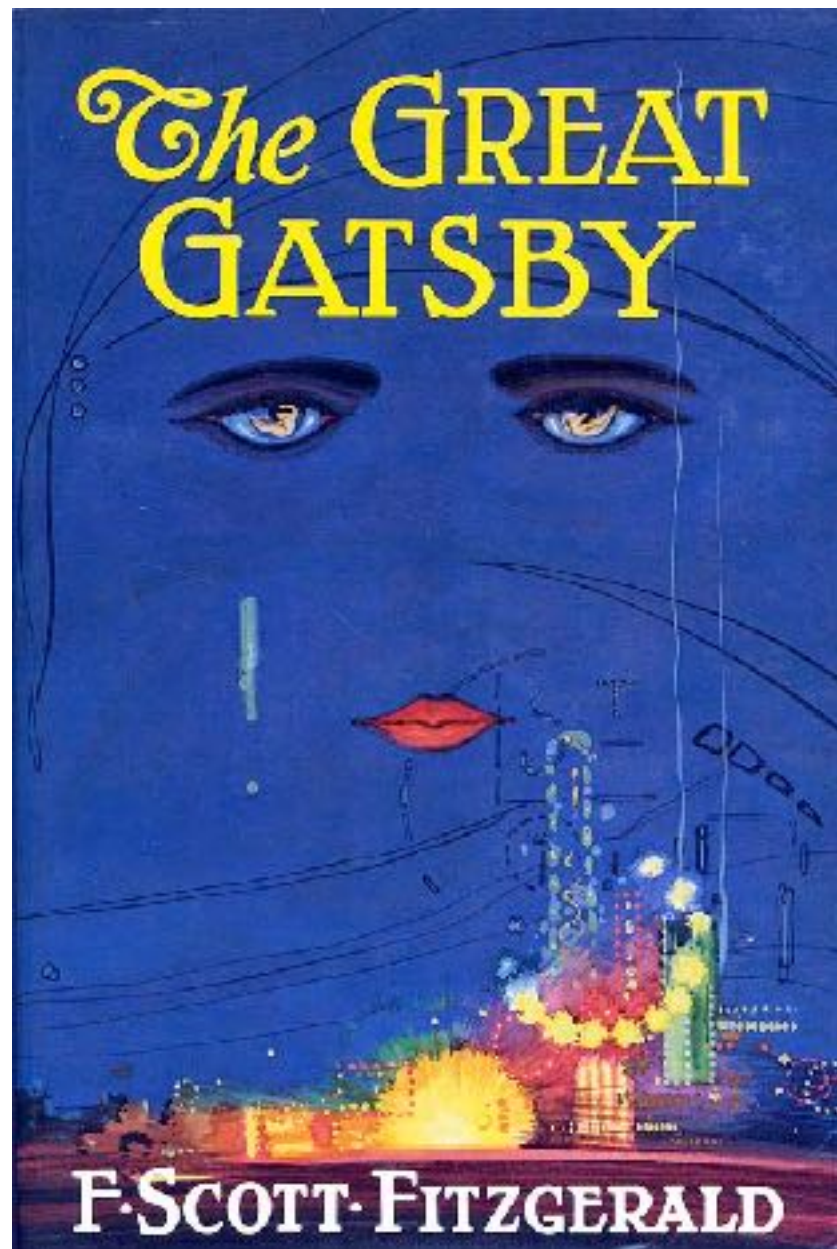
The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life. (Chapter 2)

He was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American — that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work or rigid sitting in youth and, even more, with the formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness. He was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand. (Chapter 4)



The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald



Themes in the Novel

Women and Men

- Class positions / situations of the three female characters
- Class positions / situations of the three male characters
- How do they live their lives?
- What freedoms / choices do they have in life?