

**Unreal cities and valleys of ashes in post-Great War
European and American society: a comparative
examination of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and F.
Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby***

by

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Declaration

I hereby declare that

Unreal cities and valleys of ashes in post-Great War European and American society: a comparative examination of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

E. Kruger

Date

Ethics statement

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this dissertation, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval.

The author declares that she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's code of ethics for researchers and the policy guidelines for responsible research.

Abstract

Considering that F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) were released in a time that is now referred to as the Jazz Age, it can be said that these two works have various shared characteristics. This study aims to draw comparisons between the two works in terms of the respective authors' views of the Great War as well as the overlapping characters and scenery in both works. It also aims to compare both authors' views of the cityscapes of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*, respectively, and their reverse trajectories in terms of notions of "hope" and "hopelessness".

Chapter one offers a detailed comparison of images and characters used in both the poem and the novel. This chapter discusses and compares the similar images and scenes in both texts (which shows *The Waste Land*'s influence on *Gatsby*). This chapter therefore concludes that the novel's characters are, in fact, scarred post-war waste land-dwellers in their own right.

The second chapter broadens the previous chapter's comparisons of scenery and imagery. However, the focus is more specific: New York and "the valley of ashes" as mentioned in *Gatsby* is compared to Eliot's view of London – which also shows how Eliot's description of London in *The Waste Land* reflects his personal feelings about being an outsider in this city.

The final chapter highlights the reverse trajectories of *The Waste Land* and *Gatsby*. Where *The Waste Land* takes a more positive turn (and, in its criticism, still shows a sense of hope), *Gatsby*'s conclusions are far less positive. This chapter discusses the yearning for hope in both works, and how the realisation thereof is only truly possible in *The Waste Land*.

Key terms

F. Scott Fitzgerald

Jazz Age

Modernism

New Historicism

T. S. Eliot

The Great Gatsby

The Great War

The Waste Land

World War I

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Introduction

The Eliot-Fitzgerald connection

Dear Mr. Scott Fitzgerald,
The Great Gatsby with your charming and overpowering inscription arrived the very morning that I was leaving in some haste for a sea voyage advised by my doctor. I therefore left it behind and only read it on my return a few days ago. I have, however, now read it three times. I am not in the least influenced by your remark about myself when I say that it has interested and excited me more than any new novel I have seen, either English or American, for a number of years...
With many thanks, I am,
Yours very truly, T. S. Eliot (Fitzgerald, 1945:310).

In December 1925, T. S. Eliot wrote this letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald. His assertions that Fitzgerald's then-latest novel, *The Great Gatsby*, "...interested and excited [Eliot] more than any new novel [he] had seen, either English or American, for a number of years" establishes a clear link between these two influential authors (Fitzgerald, 1945:310). Eliot's excitement regarding Fitzgerald's novel mirrored Fitzgerald's excitement upon reading Eliot's seminal Modernist poem, *The Waste Land*. Fitzgerald expressed this excitement when, upon meeting Eliot, he narrated a passage of the poem as he thought it ought to be read (Mizener, 1951:225).

Eliot's letter refers to an inscription in a first edition copy of *Gatsby* which reads: "For T. S. Elliot [sic]/Greatest of Living Poets/from his entheusiastic [sic]/worshipper/ F. Scott Fitzgerald", and, slightly beneath this inscription a further comment reading: "Pencil comments by TSE" (Fitzgerald, 1925:i, see figures 1 and 2 below). This inscription almost echoes Eliot's own dedication of *The Waste Land* to fellow poet Ezra Pound, which reads: "For Ezra Pound/*il miglior fabbro* [the better craftsman]".

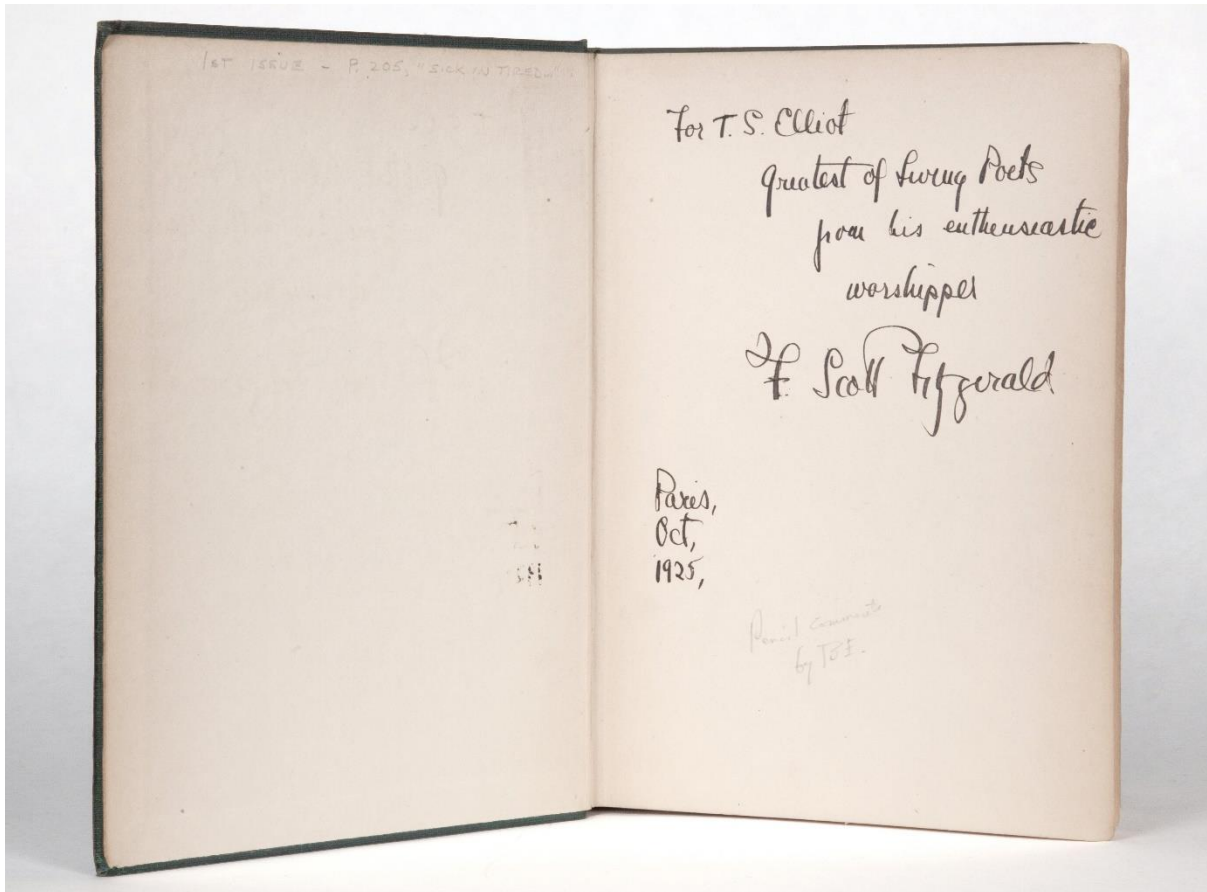


Figure 1: A photograph of the first edition inscribed copy of *The Great Gatsby*, addressed to T. S. Eliot. Brown University Library. 2013. Rhode Island. Accessed 24 July 2019. <<https://library.brown.edu/dps/curio/a-great-gatsby-a-poor-speller/>>.

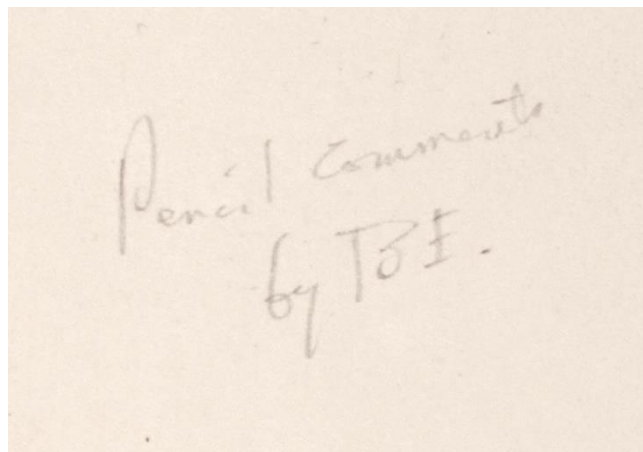


Figure 2: Closer detail from the same photograph as above, showing the inscription regarding Eliot's commentary more clearly. Brown University Library. 2013. Rhode Island. Accessed 24 July 2019. <<https://library.brown.edu/dps/curio/a-great-gatsby-a-poor-speller/>>.

Fitzgerald was touched by this letter and would write in a 1926 letter to Maxwell Perkins:

Now, confidential. T. S. Eliot for whom you know my profound admiration – I think he's the greatest living poet in any language – wrote me. He'd read *Gatsby* 3 times... (Eliot and Haughton, 2011:813).

To Fitzgerald, Eliot's commendation "...was easily the nicest thing that's happened...in connection with *Gatsby*" (Eliot and Haughton, 2011:813). *The Waste Land*, in fact, deeply influenced *The Great Gatsby* in terms of its setting, imagery and characterisation, as this dissertation will highlight in the chapters that follow.

The comparison between these two works is partially rooted in their respective authors' connection to and view of their shared time period: the post-war 1920s. Despite being focused on different cities, both *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby* deal with anxieties about life after the Great War, and a world on the brink of the Great Depression. This is an era that, especially in the American context, would come to be referred to as the Jazz Age. Fitzgerald would remark that the Jazz Age "...began about the time of the May Day riots in 1919" (Fitzgerald qtd. in Mizener, 1951:81). On the surface, the concept of the Jazz Age was positive and "gilded". Even for Fitzgerald, the Jazz Age held many surface-level enjoyments such as extravagant parties and dances (Mizener, 1951:115). In the midst of these parties, Fitzgerald, perhaps unwittingly, alludes in his writings to the collapse of the Jazz Age even as it was beginning. In his essay "Early Success", Fitzgerald writes about the Jazz Age that "...the uncertainties of 1919 were over...there seemed little doubt about what was going to happen – America was going on the greatest, gaudiest spree in history...", his intended meaning being that this "spree" would be short-lived (Fitzgerald, qtd. in Mizener, 1951:110).

The Jazz Age is considered to have lasted for the greater part of the 1920s, or sometimes 1918-1930 (Newton-Matza, 2009:xiii). Newton-Matza refers to the Jazz Age as a "...period of time in which society was emerging from a devastating period [the Great War] and allowing a new generation to define its own social code" (2009:xiii). Newton-Matza further notes that the Jazz Age was an era of "incredible contradictions" (2009:xiv) in terms of both radical liberal and conservative behaviour. He points out that Fitzgerald is the author who

exemplifies the “...sentiment[s], spirit and...frustration” of this era, and he credits Fitzgerald as the creator of the phrase, “Jazz Age” (2009:160).

Both Eliot and Fitzgerald personally dealt with feelings of anguish in the years before and during the Jazz Age. Fitzgerald experienced this during his time in New York in the early 1920s. Mizener notes that the writer Joseph Freeman, who would later be the editor of the American Marxist magazine *The New Masses*, sums up the spirit of the Jazz Age when he writes, “We fancied ourselves disinterested devotees of art, revolution and psychoanalysis. All these seemed indiscriminately to point the way to universal human freedom from external oppression and internal chaos” (Freeman, qtd. in Mizener, 1951:111). However, it would seem that the “internal chaos” Freeman mentions was still very present during the Jazz Age. Fitzgerald himself externally enjoyed the lavish life the Jazz Age provided, to the point where Glenway Wescott called him in the American magazine *The New Republic*, “...a kind of king of [the] American youth” (Wescott, 1941:n.p.). Mizener writes that during these early years, Fitzgerald had accomplished many of his goals – yet Mizener mentions that Fitzgerald was very aware “...that fulfillment [sic] destroys the dream” (Mizener, 1951:118). Fitzgerald notes himself in his essay “My Lost City” that, as he considered how he had fulfilled his ambitions, he “...remember[s] riding in a taxi one afternoon between very tall buildings under a mauve and rosy sky; [he] began to bawl because [he] had everything [he] wanted and knew [he] would never be so happy again” (Fitzgerald, 1936:5).

Eliot’s experience of the Jazz Age, meanwhile, was perhaps not an explicit one. The Jazz Age did manifest in England, and Eliot observed these social changes in London from the position of an outsider (Blanton, 2011:35). It was this mindset, more than a realisation of unhappiness in fulfilment like Fitzgerald, that dominated Eliot’s attitude during this time. Eliot was, as noted by Robert Crawford, attempting to “...maintain two opposite, mutually reinforcing stances, to be an insider and an outsider at once” (Crawford qtd. in Blanton, 2011:36). Eliot

biographer Lyndall Gordon echoes the idea that Eliot was an “outsider” in London during the war: “In the autumn of 1915 Eliot came to settle in a city at war and saw it from the estranged angle of a non-participant” (1998:136). The idea of Eliot as a “non-participant” in the war and in the city is echoed in his view of London’s inhabitants:

He saw a London from which almost all its young men were withdrawn, and only the sick and unfit, the elderly, the women, the workers, and a few pacifist intellectuals – the outcasts – remained. He knew the gloom, the privation, and the deadness of London in those war years...Eliot shared in the horror of the English intellectual at the dehumanisation of his countrymen, but...he felt less shocked, more resigned. The war bore out his dim view of human nature (Gordon, 1998:136, 137).

Eliot’s personal anguish during this time manifested partially in his writing of *The Waste Land*. Gordon notes that, in writing the poem, Eliot would have had to “[climb] the twisting path of his mind; he dived into his own deep waters; he kept an account of signs and balanced them against the soul’s diseases” (1998:153). Personal crisis would also colour Eliot’s experience of the Jazz Age. His wife, Vivienne, had broken down and was suicidal, and the couple suffered greatly in terms of finances (Gordon, 1998:157). As a result, Eliot would have his own breakdown in 1921 – as the Jazz Age was gaining momentum – and convalesce at Lausanne and Margate (Gordon, 1998:169).

The English Jazz Age in London mirrored the Jazz Age in Fitzgerald’s New York in that it was extravagant and hedonistic. London’s Jazz Age gave rise to a kind of “youth culture” embodied in the group known as the Bright Young People (Taylor, 2007:21).

The Bright Young People and the Lost Generation are often seen as the same generation, merely based in different locales (Taylor, 2007:30). The term “bright young person” or “bright young thing” was generally ascribed to those “...chattering twenty-somethings who infest[ed] literary parties...anything juvenile, bumptious and loud” (Taylor, 2007:30). Taylor adds that regardless of the fact that this generation (in both England and America) might have been viewed as “lost”, they still viewed themselves as “...homogenous, part of the same

broadly defined social group, sustained if not by social or economic ties then by a communal view of the life they led” (2007:31).

The Jazz Age (in both America and England), was a product of events that preceded it – the most crucial of these being the Great War. It is the mindset of the Jazz Age that is critiqued in both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*. It is because these two works scrutinise what is essentially the same event in different geographical locations (*The Waste Land* perhaps more explicitly than *The Great Gatsby*), that an overlap between characters, attitudes, settings and themes exists. Both works are described as “[holding] up a mirror” to their respective societies (Martín Bullón, 2015:5).

European society after the Great War was fragmented, and nationalist sentiments on the continent had greatly diminished (Preston, 2000:158). In a society made anxious by inflation, war debts and scarcities in the work force there was little room for Europeans to consider their futures (Preston, 2000:158). Tradition, morality and future-driven endeavours made way for a sense of general uncertainty. It is this issue that Eliot addresses in *The Waste Land*, among other matters, using conventions that would now be deemed “Modernist” to do so (Jay, 2000:264).

Keeping these factors in mind, it can then be said that both Eliot’s poem and Fitzgerald’s novel – in their considerations of past and contemporary events and mindsets – foreshadow the coming tragedies of their ages (in Eliot’s case, the further trauma and disenchantment of World War II, and the Great Depression in Fitzgerald’s case).

In his text, “The Waste Land of F. Scott Fitzgerald”, John W. Bicknell considers the similarity between the imagery of *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby* – however, Bicknell also considers some of Eliot’s and Fitzgerald’s other works, such as “The Hollow

Men” by the former and *Tender is the Night*, *This Side of Paradise* and *The Last Tycoon* by the latter. In this text, Bicknell points out the following:

As we reread Gatsby today, we are struck by the sharpness with which he seized upon the archetypal theme of the twenties and thirties, and by the fact that *he pronounced a sentence of doom over a social order that imagined itself in full flower*. For indeed, the atmosphere, the characterizations, and the final violence of Gatsby all resound with the chords of *moral horror and disillusion*. It is, as Lionel Trilling [1951] has hinted, *a prose version of Eliot’s “Waste Land,” a poem Fitzgerald knew almost by heart. The prevailing tone is brooding, haunted, elegiac* (1973:556, emphasis my own).

The Modernism of F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Influence of the Great War

“On or about December 1910, human character changed,” writes Virginia Woolf in her essay “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” (1924:1). In this famous statement, Woolf is considered to be referring to the dawn of Modernism as a movement, and as a new means of thinking about and negotiating one’s identity in a rapidly changing world. It is important for the purposes of this study to note that Woolf is referring to a time before the Great War, before a literature of disillusionment and displacement known as “war poetry” would come to the fore, before the very events that would later be seen as influencing the Modernist movement itself had taken place. Keeping this in mind, it is important to note that while the Great War was later viewed as one of the great influential factors that contributed to the Modernist movement and the ideas perpetuated therein, the war is, in many examples of Modernist writing, a peripheral event. The war is hardly ever mentioned overtly, and when it is, it is usually done in a subtle, indirect manner.

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s involvement in the Great War was not inspired by patriotism, as may have been the case for most of his contemporaries. In fact, biographer Jeffrey Meyers points out that Fitzgerald had “...no interest in or understanding of” the war, and that “Fitzgerald joined the army for the same reasons that he went to Princeton. It was the fashionable thing to

do” (1994:33). Meyers further highlights that Fitzgerald actually rejected the patriotism linked to the war, as noted in letters he wrote to his mother, Mary McQuillan Fitzgerald and his cousin, Cecilia Taylor:

Updike of Oxford or Harvard says ‘I die for England’ or ‘I die for America’ – not me. I’m too Irish for that – I may get killed for America – but I’m going to die for myself...About the army, please let’s not have either tragedy or Heroics because they are equally distasteful to me. I went into this perfectly cold-bloodedly and don’t sympathize with the ‘Give my son to country’...stuff because *I just went* and purely for *social reasons* (Fitzgerald qtd. in Meyers, 1994:33, original emphasis).

While *The Waste Land* is an essentially Modernist poem in terms of its style, its mixture of various images and its clear attempt at Modernist “newmaking” – innovation and renewal – *The Waste Land* also conveys the tone employed by Fitzgerald’s characters in *The Great Gatsby*: disenchantment, disappointment and dissatisfaction. Here, a link between Modernism and Fitzgerald can be traced: because of Fitzgerald’s (albeit uninterested) involvement in the Great War and Eliot’s commentary thereupon, these writers are inextricably linked by their eras and their circumstances.

Sandra Gilbert makes a link between Eliot’s Modernism and the literature of the Great War (to which *The Great Gatsby* is inherently connected through its author and characters) and applies it to a very specific view of the war, both during and after. Gilbert notes that these wartime literary modes (when applied to *The Waste Land* specifically, in the case of Modernism) point to what she refers to as a common “anti-pastoral” preoccupation with “death and the dead” (1999:191). Eliot’s preoccupation with this theme is more evident than Fitzgerald’s might be, perhaps. However, while Eliot did not serve in the trenches, Fitzgerald was personally surrounded by the constant threat of becoming one of “the dead” during his time spent in the military, faced with the reality of meagre food supplies, the constant threat of deployment and anticipating one’s seemingly imminent death (Watts, 2015:n.p). Fitzgerald

had hopes to become a war hero, to “...prove his courage in combat” and succeed in the army where he had failed at Princeton (Meyers, 1994:33).

Eliot’s focus on “death and the dead” in *The Waste Land* might stem from his observations of his generation’s mindset once the war had ended, but it is also surmised by Sandra Gilbert that this focus on both physical and spiritual death was inspired by the death of his friend, Jean Verdenal, which stirred a “personal and poetic crisis” in Eliot (1999:193).

While Woolf notes that “human character...” was altered “[o]n or about December 1910” (1924:1), Jarica Watts of Brigham Young University adds to this point in a 2015 lecture titled “Writing the War to End the War: Literary Modernism and World War I” by saying that if Woolf’s statement had not been realised, “human character” would almost certainly have been altered “...on June 28, 1914 when Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated at Sarajevo” (Watts, 2015:n.p).

While this action is generally viewed as the event that led Europe into the Great War, the war, in turn, is seen as one of the great influencing factors on the Modernist movement. As stated by Suzanne Lynch, “[t]he evolution of ‘Modernism’ – the cultural and literary movement that emerged in the early 20th century – was intimately bound up with the shock and experience of the first World War” (2015:n.p).

While the Great War was viewed, in England and America especially, as a “popular war” (Watts, 2015:n.p.) when it first broke out, an air of disillusionment soon settled among the soldiers themselves, and, in some cases, among those members of the populace who did not face the trenches, but were left in perpetual fear of hearing that their loved ones had been killed while in battle. This disillusioned mindset was transferred into the minds of those remaining after the war as well, leading to the Modernist discourse of the time, of which *The Waste Land* forms a significant part. It is thus important to note that, since Fitzgerald himself

was immersed in war culture and formed part of the so-called Lost Generation, he, too, was heavily influenced by the disillusionment that shaped Modernism and 1920s Jazz culture (Daniel, 2017:x).

While Fitzgerald was perhaps not a well-known or acknowledged member of the Modernist movement proper, he was certainly profoundly influenced by it. Modernism would greatly impact the ideas behind the writings of Fitzgerald and his contemporaries. Modernism offered Fitzgerald and writers like him “...not only with new tactics but a new sensibility” (Berman, 2002:82). Furthermore, Fitzgerald’s works (*Gatsby* in particular) tend to focus on “[p]roduction, entertainment, style and consumption [which] are native subjects of Modernism, often displacing what is merely natural” (Berman, 2002:82). With *Gatsby*, Fitzgerald had taken the topic of the New York social scene – which seems to lend itself to Modernist outlooks – and produced something altogether unexpected. *Gatsby* reviewer and cultural critic H. L. Mencken appears to have expected *Gatsby* to approach its subject matter very differently: “...[Mencken] expected something that might have been called *Prohibition on Broadway*. He did not expect a romance, or a myth as powerful as that of *The Waste Land*” (Berman, 2002:82).

The Modernist movement is popularly viewed as being a self-conscious movement, and the disillusioned language of both *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby* shows that Eliot and Fitzgerald were conscious of their subject matter, consciously writing for and about the post-war, Jazz Age individual. According to Lynch, *The Waste Land* is a poem “permeated by the shadow of the first World War” (2015:n.p). In this context, *The Great Gatsby* can then in turn be viewed as a novel “permeated” not only by the “shadow” of the Great War, but also by the events it is seen to foreshadow: The Great Depression.

Chapter 1: Imagery and Characters in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*: A Comparison

Introduction

Considering that *The Great Gatsby* (1925) was released shortly after *The Waste Land* (1922), it might seem almost expected that certain images and character traits in these texts would overlap due to the prevailing attitudes of the time: a sense of inherent hopelessness combined with hedonism, and both texts' exploration of the time they were written in. However, investigating this overlap still remains a worthwhile exercise, especially when considering the overarching ideologies, historical events and individual attitudes that influenced thought in the 1920s.

This chapter will therefore draw a comparison between similar scenes in the two texts, subsequently linking characters in scenes from *The Waste Land* to the characters in *The Great Gatsby*, to illustrate how the novel's characters are, in fact, scarred post-war waste land-dwellers or "hollow men" in their own right. Important considerations in this regard include the notion that Fitzgerald's "valley of ashes" is in itself a "waste land" and is also comparable to what Letha Audhuy calls "Eliot's...valley of dry bones," in reference to line 390 of *The Waste Land*: "[d]ry bones can harm no one" (1980:41). The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg will also be discussed in terms of their meaning in the novel, as well as their representation of *Waste Land* ideas. Other important aspects include comparisons between the characters of Tom and Daisy Buchanan, as well as George and Myrtle Wilson (*Gatsby*) and the characters in the opulent room and the pub in *The Waste Land*'s second section, 'A Game of Chess'. These characters will also be examined in terms of their relation to *The Waste Land*'s themes of infertility or barrenness, as well as their adherence to Fitzgerald's notion of emotional bankruptcy. Another important comparison which can be made is one established by

Margaret Lukens (1987) of *Gatsby* as “a drowned sailor” – this evaluation will rely on a comparison between the use of nautical images in both Eliot’s and Fitzgerald’s respective works.

To preface these comparisons, it must first be noted that in her paper ‘*The Waste Land: Myth and Symbols in The Great Gatsby*’, Letha Audhuy makes the bold statement that Fitzgerald makes *The Waste Land* “the informing myth” of *The Great Gatsby* (1980:41). It should also be noted that Audhuy’s statement has been disputed by scholars such as Stuart Y. McDougal, who contests that even though “[t]he extraordinary impact of *The Waste Land* on Eliot’s contemporaries has not gone unnoticed... [and] *The Waste Land* had a demonstrable influence on [*The Great Gatsby*], ...Audhuy vastly overstates the case [in her abovementioned paper]” (1989:190). McDougal further mentions that Audhuy essentially attempts to find traces of *The Waste Land* “everywhere” in Fitzgerald’s novel (1989:190). McDougal cites Audhuy’s “ignorance of Eliot scholarship” as a further reason why he believes her paper’s comparisons between these two works are mostly unfounded. However McDougal does not elaborate as to why he feels that Audhuy has not engaged with Eliot scholars satisfactorily (1989:190). While stating that *The Waste Land* is “the informing myth” of *The Great Gatsby* is perhaps an overestimation of Eliot’s influence on *Gatsby* on Audhuy’s part, many of her observations and comparisons between these two works remain valid, as will be discussed in this chapter.

***The Waste Land* as a “valley of ashes”**

One of the first comparisons between *The Waste Land* and *Gatsby* drawn by Audhuy is also perhaps one of the more obvious comparisons – the strong similarities between Fitzgerald’s “valley of ashes” and the setting of *The Waste Land*. On the surface, Nick Carraway’s description of the “valley of ashes” includes a fairly obvious reference to the poem: “[t]he

only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of *the waste land*...” (Fitzgerald, 1925:25, emphasis my own). However, there is more opportunity for comparison here. It is evident that various images from *The Waste Land* are strongly echoed in Fitzgerald’s description of the “valley of ashes” in Chapter 2 of *Gatsby*:

About half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain *desolate area of land*. This is the *valley of ashes* – a *fantastic farm* where *ashes grow like wheat* into ridges and hills and *grotesque gardens*; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke, and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air (Fitzgerald, 1925:23, emphasis my own).

There are many instances within *The Waste Land* that can be compared to this section from Fitzgerald’s novel. The “desolate area of land” mentioned in *Gatsby* is comparable to Eliot’s sterile imagery in *The Waste Land*’s opening lines:

April is the cruellest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the *dead land*... (TWL¹, 1-2, emphasis my own).

One of the main correlations between this passage from *Gatsby* and the desolate, sterile setting of *The Waste Land* as a whole is that both include distorted images of nature and what is normatively considered to be “natural”. In *The Waste Land*, nature is scorned and made unattractive by taking Chaucer’s original words from the opening lines of the prologue to his *Canterbury Tales* (“When April with its sweet-smelling showers...” (1478:1)) and contradicting their positive depiction of spring. Ideas of barrenness and a loss of life-giving forces are emphasised throughout the poem, highlighting not only a distrust of the external world, but the failure thereof: the physical external landscape has been ravaged by war and a

¹ When referring to line numbers in *The Waste Land*, the abbreviation “TWL” will be used throughout the rest of this dissertation.

fetishization of wealth – a legacy which permeated the general mindset of the Jazz Age individual.

Life itself takes on nature's infertile qualities in Eliot's poem: people are left unsatisfied, powerless, unsure of whether both their physical and mental landscapes will ever change and return to a state of normalcy. Eliot points this out in lines 35-42 of *The Waste Land*, beginning with images of life in 'The Burial of the Dead': "You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;" "They called me the hyacinth girl" (*TWL*, 35-36) – vegetation and tender language combine here to form a seemingly positive scene, yet this positive image disintegrates nearly immediately when a more apathetic, in-between state is evoked: "...I could not/Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither/Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,/Looking into the heart of light, the silence" (*TWL*, 38-41). This image ends with a paradoxical statement originally penned by Wagner in his *Tristan and Isolde*: "*Oed' und leer das Meer*" (*TWL*, 42). This line, which translates to "Desolate and empty [is] the sea", evokes a conflicting image. The ocean, which is meant to be brimming with life and acts as a source of life to many, is suddenly paradoxically depicted as "empty" and becomes a desert or "waste land" landscape in itself, showing the poem's Modernist negativity towards the external world.

Parallels between *The Waste Land*'s setting and the landscape of the "valley of ashes" can also be drawn when considering other sections from 'The Burial of the Dead':

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this *stony rubbish*? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A *heap of broken images*, where the sun beats,
And the *dead tree gives no shelter*, the cricket no relief.
And the *dry stone no sound of water*. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you

Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust (TWL, 19-30, emphasis my own).

The “valley of ashes” is in itself a “heap of broken images” – it symbolises people and things which have been forgotten or cast aside by modern society: old billboards, old dwellings, and ashy men such as the slight and subservient George B. Wilson, who is instrumental in the demise of Gatsby. Eliot’s “handful of dust” becomes then, in *Gatsby*, a “valley of ashes” – a place where fear does indeed thrive: George Wilson’s fear that his wife, Myrtle, will desert him, Myrtle’s fear that she will forever live an impoverished life with George, and, in turn, her fear that her lover, Tom, will forsake her, thus ruining her dreams of improving her social status.

As discussed in the context of *The Waste Land*, Fitzgerald, too, manages to warp the generally accepted idea of nature as a life-giving force in the above extract from the novel. Here, Fitzgerald depicts the “ashes” as a natural, growing entity by referring contrastingly to the valley as a “desolate area of land” (Fitzgerald, 1925:23), and following this sentence with conflicting images: “a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens” (Fitzgerald, 1925:23). As Eliot does in ‘The Burial of the Dead’, Fitzgerald shows that the “valley of ashes”, in its barrenness, can in turn only yield more barrenness – the ashes, in their distortive role, turn this valley into the infertile zone that it is, populating it not only with “grotesque gardens” and “houses and chimneys” (Fitzgerald, 1925:23), but also later with “men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air” (Fitzgerald, 1925:23).

These ash-born “men”, even amidst the bustling New York landscape which is located not far from the “valley of ashes”, are “crumbling through the powdery air” (Fitzgerald, 1925:26) instead of conforming to the Jazz Age image of the vibrant young city-dweller, an image which Fitzgerald himself embodied. It is here where a comparison between the characters in

Eliot's poem and Fitzgerald's novel can begin to take shape – *The Waste Land* utilises a variety of characters in its discussion of, among other things, the mindset of the post-war, Jazz Age individual. While *Gatsby* is most notably (and famously) considered a critique of the unattainability of the American Dream, its characters are all products of the Great War, meaning that wittingly or unwittingly, the novel addresses post-war disillusionment. The idea that the “men” who inhabit the “valley of ashes” are “crumbling” even though the lively atmosphere exuded by Jazz Age New York looms overhead creates an image of Fitzgerald's post-war individual: the shiny veneer of the Jazz Age is displayed to the outside world, while there is internal “crumbling”. Audhuy also notes a similar parallel, saying that the “dust” and “powder” in this description from *Gatsby* “...[appear] at strategic points of the narrative to evoke the emptiness, the ‘hollowness’, the futility of America in the Jazz Age” (1980:43).

The god in the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg

In the “valley of the ashes” there lies another parallel to *The Waste Land* in the form of the gaze of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg:

But above the gray land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg.

The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic, their irises are one yard high. They look out of no face, but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness, or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many countless days, under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground (Fitzgerald, 1925:23-24).

Audhuy argues that Eckleburg's eyes serve as a “commentary” on Eliot's description of the post-Great War world – one in which the waste land-dwellers have turned away from God and one in which God, in a way, has turned away from the waste land-dwellers (1980:43). In a sense, John W. Bicknell echoes this statement in his article ‘The Waste Land of F. Scott

Fitzgerald', noting that Eckleburg's eyes "...eventually [become] a symbol of what God has become in the modern world, an all-seeing deity – indifferent, faceless, blank" (1973:68).

The novel's image of God in the modern world is a deliberately paradoxical one, as the Eckleburg-god's eyes are "simultaneously unseeing and all-seeing", and their presence may come across as contemptuous because of this (Lupack, 1994:335). Despite their contemptuous gaze, however, and the fact that the owner of the eyes, Doctor Eckleburg himself, has either succumbed to "eternal blindness" or "moved away", the Eckleburg-god remains "brood[ing] on over the solemn dumping ground", albeit detachedly (Fitzgerald, 1925:24).

A clearer comparison between Eckleburg and God is drawn near the end of *Gatsby*, shortly after Myrtle Wilson's death, during an exchange between George Wilson and his friend, the Greek coffee shop owner Michaelis:

"I told her she might fool me but she couldn't fool God. I took her to the window." – with an effort [George] got up and walked to the rear window and leaned with his face pressed against it – "and I said 'God knows what you've been doing, everything you've been doing. You may fool me, but you can't fool God!'"

Standing behind him, Michaelis saw with a shock that he was looking at the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, which had just emerged, pale and enormous, from the dissolving night.

"God sees everything," repeated Wilson.

"That's an advertisement," Michaelis assured him (Fitzgerald, 1925: 163-164).

This comparison is much more literal, and George's link between Eckleburg and God comes as a shock to Michaelis, who is not truly a waste land dweller in this context, as he does not dwell in the Gatsby-Buchanan-Wilson circle.

Audhuy makes another interesting connection in terms of Eckleburg's eyes. She makes reference to Eliot's 1920 poem "Gerontion", noting that it is very strongly linked to *The Waste Land* – to such an extent "...that Eliot wanted to use it for a prologue" (1980:43).

Audhuy uses the following line from “Gerontion” to make her connection: “Signs are taken for wonders” (17). The “signs” in “Gerontion” and the physical “sign” on which Eckleburg’s eyes are printed are, to Audhuy, part of what she calls a “joke” made by Fitzgerald, which is “...to make an actual sign (board) into a wonder” (1980:43).

‘A Game of Chess’, Daisy Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson – “What shall we ever do?”

A deeper discussion of Eliot’s characters in *The Waste Land* in relation to the characters in *Gatsby* shows that both the characters in Eliot’s poem and the characters in Fitzgerald’s novel live in crowded isolation – even though they are surrounded by constant movement, whether from the “crowd” that flows “over London Bridge, so many” (*TWL*, 61-63) or from Jay Gatsby’s “large parties” that are “so intimate” (Fitzgerald, 1925:43).

This isolation and division between individuals is addressed in the second section of *The Waste Land*, ‘A Game of Chess’, in the exchange (or, in this case, non-exchange) between a wealthy woman (the Belladonna) and a fellow waste land dweller who answers her questions mentally, but not vocally. It can be argued firstly that Daisy Buchanan’s words and actions mirror those of the Belladonna, and that Tom Buchanan can be seen as the person she is having a non-conversation with. The Belladonna’s words give shape to her anxiety and isolation when she says:

“Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.
“What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
“I never know what you are thinking. Think” (*TWL*, 112-114).

A sense of anxiety is conveyed in her statements about the future:

“What shall I do now? What shall I do?
“I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
“With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
“What shall we ever do?” (*TWL*, 131-134).

These desperate words uttered in ‘A Game of Chess’ mirror Daisy’s (arguably less urgent) sentiments on multiple occasions in *The Great Gatsby*:

“What’ll we plan?” She turned to me helplessly: “What do people plan?” (Fitzgerald, 1925:18).

Later in the novel, Daisy echoes this mindset again when she cries, “What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon?... and the day after that, and the next thirty years?” (Fitzgerald, 1925:121). This becomes what Audhuy calls “a verbal correspondence between the two works” (1980:46). While Daisy’s statement in Chapter 1 of the novel (“What’ll we plan?...What do people plan?”) is made more out of bourgeois boredom than anxiety, her abovementioned statement which appears in Chapter 7 is much more urgent – it is one that still retains a realisation of her chronic and possibly never-ending boredom, but its nature is also more existentialist than before.

Importantly, the distressed woman mentioned in these lines from ‘A Game of Chess’ is not alone – she is directing her words at an individual who does not – to her vexation – give her any verbal responses. This is evidenced by the fact that her words are placed between quotation marks, while her speech partner’s words are not. This is also true in Daisy Buchanan’s case. She reaches out to those around her, but this is often met with indifference or responses that do not consider what she has to say. Tom is often dismissive of Daisy and responds to her with a coldness that both contradicts and echoes the non-verbal responses in ‘A Game of Chess’.

Tom is not the only character guilty of being unresponsive to Daisy. In fact, almost everyone she surrounds herself with is guilty of this, as she is often described as uttering words or completing actions “helplessly” or “desperately”:

“‘What’ll we plan?’ She turned to me *helplessly*: ‘What do people plan?’” (Fitzgerald, 1925:18, emphasis my own).

“‘Please don’t!’ she interrupted *helplessly*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:154, emphasis my own).

“‘He isn’t causing a row.’ Daisy looked *desperately* from one to the other” (Fitzgerald, 1925:153, emphasis my own).

“‘I love you now – isn’t that enough? I can’t help what’s past.’ She began to sob *helplessly*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:157, emphasis my own).

Tom’s responses, while very verbal, often deprecate Daisy and reflect his misogynistic attitude, along with the mindset that other humans are mere tools to be used for his personal gain. Tom and Daisy’s marriage is one of convenience. Daisy at first appears to love Tom, as her friend Jordan Baker points out in Chapter 4 of the novel: “I thought I’d never seen a girl so mad about her husband...She used to sit on the sand with his head in her lap by the hour, rubbing her fingers over his eyes and looking at him with unfathomable delight” (Fitzgerald, 1925:82). However, Daisy soon grows disillusioned with the marriage due to Tom’s emotional disconnection from their union and his habit of being caught with women other than his wife – a fact that is also mentioned by Nick early on in the novel:

There was always a halt there [in the valley of ashes] of at least a minute, and it was because of this that I first met Tom Buchanan’s mistress. *The fact that he had one was insisted upon wherever he was known.* His acquaintances resented the fact that he turned up in popular restaurants with her and, leaving her at a table, sauntered about, chatting with whomsoever he knew. Though I was curious to see her, I had no desire to meet her – but I did (Fitzgerald, 1925:24, emphasis my own).

Jordan Baker also explicitly comments on Tom’s infidelity in Chapter 4 of the novel:

A week after I left Santa Barbara Tom ran into a wagon on the Ventura road one night, and ripped a front wheel off his car. *The girl who was with him got into the papers, too, because her arm was broken – she was one of the chambermaids in the Santa Barbara Hotel* (Fitzgerald, 1925:82, emphasis my own).

It is Tom’s emotional lack of interest in his marriage that makes him become like the “silent partner” mentioned in ‘A Game of Chess’. While Tom certainly communicates with others on a deeper level, this communication often does not happen with Daisy at the receiving end. Tom prefers, initially at least, the company of Myrtle Wilson, with whom he shares a definite connection. Whether this is because Tom feels that Myrtle mirrors his base desires, as she is

of a lower social standing, or whether they reflect each other's immoral, adulterous yearnings, Tom certainly feels attracted to Myrtle because she is easily impressed by his wealth, and therefore easily manipulated. Myrtle is, somewhat materialistically, impressed with Tom's "dress suit and patent leather shoes" (Fitzgerald, 1925:43) when they first meet, as by comparison her own husband "borrowed somebody's best suit to get married in, and never even told [her] about it" (Fitzgerald, 1925:41). Tom is able to manipulate Myrtle not only because she has been made dependent on his wealth, but also through his physical strength when she tries to show autonomy:

Some time toward midnight Tom Buchanan and Mrs. Wilson stood face to face discussing, in impassioned voices, whether Mrs. Wilson had any right to mention Daisy's name.

"Daisy! Daisy! Daisy!" shouted Mrs. Wilson.

"I'll say it whenever I want to! Daisy! Dai-." Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand.

Then there were bloody towels upon the bath-room floor, and women's voices scolding, and high over the confusion a long broken wail of pain (Fitzgerald, 1925:44).

However, while Tom's communications with Myrtle are seemingly far more impassioned than his communications with Daisy (albeit in a negative sense), Myrtle's death leads to a scene that is reminiscent of the aforementioned non-conversation in 'A Game of Chess', as Tom and Daisy must decide how to handle Myrtle's death and Daisy's future associations with Gatsby. However, in this depiction, Daisy is the silent speech partner, with Tom taking charge:

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table, with a plate of cold fried chicken between them, and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her, and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement.

They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale – and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture, and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together (Fitzgerald, 1925:148).

Myrtle Wilson herself plays her part as an echo of the characters and scenes in 'A Game of Chess'. The first and most obvious connection is made by Bicknell: that of the "hollow" nature of the gathering at Myrtle's apartment (1973:69). Myrtle Wilson's apartment is described in the same gaudy and extravagant manner as the opulent room in 'A Game of Chess':

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,
Unguent, powdered, or liquid-troubled, confused
And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air
That freshened from the window, these ascended
In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,
Flung their smoke into the laquearia,
Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.
Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam... (TWL, 77-96).

Myrtle Wilson's Belladonna-like opulent apartment and its furnishings seem unnecessarily oversized – symbolic of her constant battle to fit in with Tom and to prove herself "worthy" of him in spite of her lower social status. Myrtle's apartment is "crowded to the doors with a set of tapestried furniture entirely too large for it" – even the lone photograph in the room is "over-enlarged" (Fitzgerald, 1925:30), and in an echo of the aforementioned opulent room

from *The Waste Land*, one “stumble[s] continually over scenes of ladies swinging in the gardens of Versailles” (Fitzgerald, 1925:30). The true irony of the situation is that – much like Gatsby’s home and his crowded parties – Myrtle’s apartment is lavishly furnished and in this scene is bustling with activity, yet it is inherently empty. The characters in the apartment engage in what Bicknell refers to as “sham camaraderie [which] only emphasizes the absence of any really human or humane contacts” (1973:69). It is here where not only Myrtle’s apartment reflects the room from ‘A Game of Chess’, but her outlook also reflects that of the paranoid Belladonna sitting on the “burnished throne”. Not even the woman’s lavish room can safeguard her from her encroaching feelings of paranoia, isolation and directionless patterns of thought that seem to lead only to fear and later to the “...[n]othing again nothing...” felt by her companion (*TWL*, 120).

The Belladonna’s neurotic way of speaking is reflected in the formal structure of ‘A Game of Chess’, which begins in a semi-structured manner, as it is written in a somewhat iambic form (albeit in blank verse):

/ ~ ~ / ~ / / ~ ~ /
 Speak to | me. Why | do you | never | speak? Speak (*TWL*, 112).

However, these semi-organised thoughts are quickly replaced by a more unbalanced pace as the woman’s thought process becomes more frantic and less structured:

“Do
 “You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember
 “Nothing?” (*TWL*, 121-123).

The Belladonna emphasizes her own isolation and the isolation of her partner by summing up what this empty opulence has done to their minds and their respective worldviews: ““Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?”” (*TWL*, 126).

Myrtle, too, is almost frantic in her attempts to please Tom and be perceived by all as a “proper lady”. When she is first introduced in *Gatsby*, she is described as exuding a frantic

type of energy: “Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crêpe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty, *but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:26, emphasis my own).

Myrtle is also shown parroting high-class words and mannerisms, such as her “artificial laughter” – all elements which she thinks will make her seem more sophisticated:

“My dear,” she cried, “I’m going to give you this dress as soon as I’m through with it. I’ve got to get another one to-morrow. I’m going to make a list of all the things I’ve got to get. A massage and a wave, and a collar for the dog, and one of those cute little ash-trays where you touch a spring, and a wreath with a black silk bow for mother’s grave that’ll last all summer. I got to write down a list so I won’t forget all the things I got to do” (Fitzgerald, 1925:44).

Myrtle’s frantic listing of everything she “has” to do is an empty attempt at not only flaunting her perceived upward shift in social status by associating with Tom, but it also reflects the emptiness of this upward shift – her list consists of material objects that need to be bought, which also further emphasises her dependence on Tom, as it is with his money that she intends to purchase these things. Furthermore, her meaningless grasping at a sophisticated vocabulary fails her as she still phrases her sentences in an unsophisticated manner: “I *got* to write down a list so I won’t forget all the things I *got* to do” (Fitzgerald, 1925:44, emphasis my own). Her notion of “listing” these activities is also an attempt at projecting an inflated sense of importance to the outside world – an act which is inherently “hollow”.

In this light, then, Myrtle’s apartment, as an extension of her outwardly gregarious personality, transmogrifies from a reflection of the opulent room in ‘A Game of Chess’ to the more informal, working class milieu which follows almost immediately after the extravagant room is described. As Nick Carraway describes his increasing state of drunkenness, he also comments on how quickly the time passes during the apartment gathering: “It was nine o’clock – almost immediately afterward I looked at my watch and found it was ten”

(Fitzgerald, 1925:44). This mirrors the refrain which rings out throughout the pub scene in ‘A Game of Chess’: “HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME” (*TWL*, 165).

Myrtle is caught between two worlds, in search of her identity. Her apartment is decorated in a way she perceives to be cultured, and her manner of speaking attempts to mirror the speech of upper-class people she merely knows about, yet both of these factors make Myrtle seem like a parody. As the gathering at her apartment becomes livelier, she and her companions begin to resemble the women from the pub scene in ‘A Game of Chess’. It appears that the pub may be a setting in which Myrtle would be more comfortable, not only because of its informality, but also because of the blasé manner in which serious issues are often viewed. An example of this is Myrtle’s fleeting and unemotional remark about purchasing “a wreath with a black silk bow for [her] mother’s grave that’ll last all summer”, which she mentions in the same breath as trivial items like an ash tray and a dog collar (Fitzgerald, 1925:44). The characters from the pub scene in *The Waste Land* also take on this nonchalant attitude towards death and suffering. The views asserted here are seemingly pragmatic, almost clinical in nature, describing life after the war in straightforward terms: either you carry on with life as if nothing has happened, or you let your resolve crumble into uncertainty and lose the little you have:

When Lil’s husband got demobbed, I said –
I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself...
Now Albert’s coming back, make yourself a bit smart.
He’ll want to know what you done with that money he gave you
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there...
He said, I swear, I can’t bear to look at you.
And no more can’t I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
He’s been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
And if you don’t give it him, there’s others will, I said...
Others can pick and choose if you can’t.
But if Albert makes off, it won’t be for lack of telling (*TWL*, 139-140, 142-144, 146-149, 154-155).

Like Myrtle, the speakers here, because of their financial circumstances, must settle into a pattern of carrying on with life despite trauma, which forces them to take a more clinical view of death (for example, in the form of abortion):

It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)
The chemist said it would be all right, but I've never been the same.
You *are* a proper fool, I said.
Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,
What you get married for if you don't want children? (*TWL*, 159-164, original emphasis).

Daisy, however, embodies only the Belladonna from 'A Game of Chess', as she has been raised to exemplify refined, practically aristocratic qualities. Daisy adopts sophisticated behaviours and mannerisms which she has been indoctrinated with since childhood. She feigns complacency and an almost childish personality in the company of her husband, Tom, but is more honest with Nick. This becomes clear early on in the novel, when Jordan and Tom leave Daisy and Nick to speak alone: "I've had a very bad time, Nick, and I'm pretty cynical about everything" (Fitzgerald, 1925:17). She further confesses her unhappiness to Nick when she describes the birth of her daughter, and her aspirations for the child:

"Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool – that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.' "You see I think everything's terrible anyhow" (Fitzgerald, 1925:18).

Daisy, unlike Myrtle, already has an upper-class lifestyle and sophistication, but this does not bring her any happiness, which is evident when she mentions that she thinks "everything's terrible anyhow". However, Daisy adds to this statement: "Everybody thinks so – the most advanced people. And I *know*. I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything...[s]ophisticated – God, I'm sophisticated!" (Fitzgerald, 1925:18, original

emphasis). Even though Nick doubts the sincerity of these words as she says them, Daisy's statement places her character in clear contrast to Myrtle's, and her words of unhappiness establish further bonds between her and the Belladonna from 'A Game of Chess'.

Myrtle, Daisy, Gatsby and *The Waste Land's* barren imagery

As previously mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is an overlap between images of barrenness in *Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* in terms of the landscapes that are described in both works. However, this barrenness also presents itself in the characters of both works. Specifically, barrenness is represented in *The Waste Land* by the Belladonna and her surroundings, and in *Gatsby* by Daisy, Myrtle, and to some extent, by Jay Gatsby himself.

The images of barrenness in both works overlap once again when comparing Myrtle and the Belladonna. Firstly, there is the notion of barrenness in the form of maternal infertility, which manifests itself in the Belladonna's lavish room. In the room, there are "golden Cupidon[s]" (TWL, 80-81), but there is no mention of a real child. This stands in opposition to the scene in William Shakespeare's *Anthony and Cleopatra* that this section of 'A Game of Chess' is based on:

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burn'd on the water...
O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature: *on each side her*
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids (*Anthony and Cleopatra*, 2.2.190-191, 199-201, emphasis my own).

The same applies to Myrtle. She has her little dog, which she purchases on a whim, but she and her husband, George, apparently have no children of their own either, despite having been married for twelve years.

As also mentioned earlier in this chapter, Myrtle embodies both of the dominant characters in *The Waste Land's* 'A Game of Chess': the Belladonna and Lil, the working class woman

being discussed in the pub scene. Both of these figures have, according to Claire Saunders in her essay ‘Women and *The Waste Land*’, their unhappiness rooted in “their sexual and social identit[ies] as women” (1988:49). Both the Belladonna and Myrtle, as discussed, dwell in claustrophobic, over-decorated rooms, filled with an abundance of unnecessary trinkets. The Belladonna’s room solidifies *The Waste Land*’s images of infertility by describing, aside from the golden Cupidons as stand-ins for human babies, the unnatural “flames” which emanate from the “sevenbranched candelabra” (*TWL*, 82). These “flames”, in turn, create artificial light when “reflecting...upon the table” and then reflecting on the Belladonna’s jewellery (*TWL*, 83, 84). Furthermore, the room is filled with the scent of “her strange *synthetic* perfumes” (*TWL*, 87, emphasis my own). None of these elements are natural, yet they are manufactured to come across as such. Consequently, the Belladonna’s surroundings are, in their very essence, sterile. This sterility is mirrored in her fruitless conversation with her silent partner, spilling over into her reality. Saunders further mentions that Eliot’s initial title for ‘A Game of Chess’ was ‘In the Cage’, which aptly describes the Belladonna’s circumstances (1988:50).

It can also be argued that this title would describe the women in *The Great Gatsby*, as they are, in various ways, caged either literally, or by their relationships with others. Myrtle fits this description well, as she is “caged” by various facets of her barren life. Firstly, she is physically “caged” by her husband after he learns of her infidelity. George says to Michaelis that he has Myrtle “locked up in there [in their bedroom]” and that “she’s going to stay there till the day after to-morrow, and then we’re going to move away” (Fitzgerald, 1925:139). Secondly, Myrtle is, as mentioned, “caged” by her barren marriage to George. Their union is physically barren as it appears that they have no children, yet it is also emotionally barren, as Myrtle is described as “walking through her husband as if he were a ghost” (Fitzgerald, 1925:26). Myrtle later solidifies the idea that she is unhappy in her barren union with George

as she says that he is not “fit to lick [her] shoe” (Fitzgerald, 1925:35). This haughty attitude has its effect on George as well, however, as it is mentioned that his entire being is barren due to his wife’s pride and her influence on him – he is “his wife’s man and not his own” (Fitzgerald, 1925:140). Myrtle does attempt, in a distorted manner, to re-introduce a tactile element into the marriage. The problem with her attempt to eradicate the barrenness of the relationship is that it relies on violence to be successful. Shortly before her death, she is heard screaming at her husband: “Beat me...Throw me down and beat me, you dirty little coward!” (Fitzgerald, 1925:140). Interestingly, it is right after this incident that another distorted image of fertility is presented: immediately after Myrtle utters these violent words at her husband, she is seen rushing “out into the dusk, waving her hands and shouting” (Fitzgerald, 1925:140), after which she is killed by Daisy, driving by in Gatsby’s car. It is then, after Michaelis and another driver inspect Myrtle’s body, that this distorted fertility-image is given:

Michaelis and this man reached her first, but when they had torn open her shirtwaist, still damp with perspiration, they saw that *her left breast was swinging loose like a flap, and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath*. The mouth was wide open and ripped at the corners, as though *she had choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long* (Fitzgerald, 1925:140-141, emphasis my own).

Myrtle’s breast and heart, both of which should be life-giving, are now torn, grotesque, and lifeless – barren. Myrtle’s feelings of displacement in her marriage to George, her relationship with Tom and her inner conflict regarding her social class are therefore never resolved. In her final moments, Myrtle resembles not necessarily *The Waste Land*’s Belladonna, but Lil – her body hastened into a state of early decay by numerous abortions, whereas Myrtle’s body is simply physically broken, and dead. Neither, however, are fertile (Saunders, 1988:51).

Daisy's feelings of barrenness and infertility manifest themselves in similar ways to Myrtle. The key difference, however, is that Daisy *does* have a child: Pammy Buchanan. This aspect of her life is consequently not barren, yet it does not seem as though Daisy finds much joy in this fact. Daisy is visibly unhappy with her life, and she appears to project these feelings onto her daughter. By mentioning that she hopes her daughter will be "a beautiful little fool" (Fitzgerald, 1925:18), Daisy reflects upon the events of her own life up to that point. She hopes that Pammy will share her beauty, her wealthy status and her privileges, but that she will find joy in only these shallow, barren aspects of life and nothing more, so that she will not be as sorrowful as her mother. In this instance, should Daisy's wish for her daughter be fulfilled, she will continue the barren waste land cycle and become a young Belladonna character herself, at once comfortable and claustrophobic in her luxurious life. In her child, who should represent fertility, Daisy consequently sees only barrenness: no future hope for a happier life for her child, unless – ironically – it is a hollower life than her own. Daisy's "sterile" outlook on her daughter's future is depicted in Pammy's entire characterisation in the novel. Throughout *Gatsby*, Pammy appears only once, and only in her capacity as a "lifeless" baby doll to be "shown off" by her mother, and as a mere reminder to Gatsby that Daisy is, in fact, married to another man:

"Bles-sed pre-cious," she [Daisy] crooned, holding out her arms. "Come to your own mother that loves you." The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly into her mother's dress.

"The bles-sed pre-cious! Did mother get powder on your old yellowy hair? Stand up now, and say – How-de-do."

Gatsby and I [Nick] in turn leaned down and took the small, reluctant hand. *Afterward he kept looking at the child with surprise. I don't think he had ever really believed in its existence before.*

"I got dressed before luncheon," said the child, turning eagerly to Daisy. "*That's because your mother wanted to show you off*" (Fitzgerald, 1925:119, emphasis my own).

Pammy is further dehumanised during her short appearance in the novel by being referred to as "it" by Nick, and by being called "blessed precious" by her mother, instead of being called

by her name. Thus Pammy, in her childlike innocence, adds to Daisy's barrenness as a character because she is stripped of a child's usual associations with life-giving forces by being depicted only briefly, and in such a way that she is not made to seem truly human. Pammy can subsequently also be seen as part of the novel's barren waste land imagery, no more than a "golden Cupidon" for her mother to boast about when she pleases.

The infertile imagery embodied by Daisy is also Belladonna-like in its representation. Daisy is the very epitome of the Belladonna and her opulent lifestyle. Where the Belladonna's surroundings are mostly unnatural and filled with scents of "strange synthetic perfumes" (TWL, 87), Daisy, too, occupies an "artificial world" which is "redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year" (Fitzgerald, 1925:154, emphasis my own). However, it is also Daisy's very personality that takes on a sort of synthetic quality. She is "high in a white palace, the king's daughter, the golden girl" (Fitzgerald, 1925:123) – all qualities which are reminiscent of courtly love, placing Daisy on a pedestal and making her faultless, untouchable, and a "golden Cupidon" in her own right.

Daisy's type of personality is aptly described in the words of Monsignor Darcy in

Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*:

A personality is what you thought you were... *Personality is a physical matter almost entirely...* (Fitzgerald, 1920:171, emphasis my own).

Consequently, Daisy's "synthetic" personality runs even deeper than this, as Nick seemingly cannot decide whether many of her words and actions are truly genuine. She is certainly not genuine around her husband, especially in some of the novel's earlier scenes, but even in moments where she appears to open up to Nick, he doubts her sincerity:

"Sophisticated – God, I'm sophisticated!"

The instant her [Daisy's] voice broke off, ceasing to compel my [Nick's] attention, my belief, *I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said*. It made me uneasy, as though *the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory*

emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face, as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged (Fitzgerald, 1925:18, emphasis my own).

Furthermore, Daisy's synthetic, barren, manufactured personality is embodied in her mannerisms and, famously, in her way of speaking:

"She's got an indiscreet voice," I [Nick] remarked.
"It's full of..." I hesitated.
"*Her voice is full of money,*" he [Gatsby] said suddenly.
That was it. I'd never understood before. *It was full of money* – that was *the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it...* (Fitzgerald, 1925:123, emphasis my own).

Daisy's voice, at once alluring and repelling, echoes yet another instance from *The Waste Land*, once again from 'A Game of Chess':

Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears (TWL, 97-103, emphasis my own).

Saunders describes "Jug Jug" as "simultaneously an innocent evocation of birdsong and a crude reference to sexual intercourse" (1988:53). In the same way, Daisy's voice is almost innocent, having the abovementioned "jingle", a "cymbals' song" – yet by the time her voice is described as such, we already know that this description does not and should not evoke innocence, but shallow, barren materialism. Langbaum describes the call of "Jug Jug" in a similar manner, which is also applicable to Daisy:

Part II [of *The Waste Land*] opens with an opulently old-fashioned blank-verse-style description, not so much of a lady as of her luxurious surroundings. The chair she sits in reminds us of Cleopatra's "burnished throne" and the stately room of Dido's palace, while a picture recalls the rape of Philomela. The shifting references – showing how Eliot mythologizes his unhappy marriage – suggest that the lady is seductive, but that she is also, like Cleopatra with Anthony and Dido with Aeneas, one of those who is in the end violated and abandoned by a man. The theme of violation takes over... (1977:91).

Interestingly, Langbaum firstly mentions that this passage from *The Waste Land* “mythologizes [Eliot’s own] unhappy marriage” – an idea that adds to the poem’s theme of sterility, and one that transfers easily to the barren Daisy-Tom, Tom-Myrtle and Myrtle-George relationships in *Gatsby*. Langbaum places further emphasis on the nightingale’s voice in this discussion, saying: “The nightingale’s *voice*, the story’s meaning, is inviolable; but the violation of innocence in the waste land goes on” (1977:91, original emphasis). The opposite is true of Daisy: her voice, “full of money”, carries no real meaning, her words are ambiguous and untrustworthy. It is Daisy’s *image* as “the king’s daughter, the golden girl” (Fitzgerald, 1925:123) that is “inviolable” in the novel, but her true personality, her actions and her decisions contribute to this “violation of innocence in the waste land” (Langbaum, 1977:91), which in turn makes *Gatsby*’s waste land an infertile setting.

Secondly, there is the mention that this section of the poem focuses on women who are “violated and abandoned by a man” (Langbaum, 1977:91). In *Gatsby*, this is certainly true of a character like Myrtle, but less so of Daisy. In fact, it can be argued that the roles are reversed in Daisy’s case: even though she suffers a form of spiritual abandonment by Tom due to his infidelity and physical abandonment by Gatsby when he leaves to perform his military duties, Tom does not physically abandon her, and Gatsby attempts to reverse his abandonment through extravagant methods. Daisy, however, “violates” and then abandons Gatsby – she indulges her selfish passions by revisiting her love for him and giving him false hope, but eventually, she chooses Tom, not even attending Gatsby’s funeral:

I [Nick] tried to think about Gatsby then for a moment, but he was already too far away, and I could only remember, without resentment, that Daisy hadn’t sent a message or a flower (Fitzgerald, 1925:179).

Similarly to Daisy, Gatsby’s personality is barren and “manufactured” as well – but unlike it was for Daisy, this is by choice. Gatsby moulds himself into the man he thinks Daisy will

love, determined to change himself and his surroundings to attract and impress her. In many ways he is like George Wilson: Daisy's man and "not his own" (Fitzgerald, 1925:140). It is his behaviour towards Daisy that is described so aptly by the novel's opening quotation, by a fictional author of Fitzgerald's own creation, Thomas Parke D'Invilliers, who first appears in *This Side of Paradise*:

Then wear the gold hat, if that will move her;
 If you can bounce high, bounce for her too,
 Till she cry "Lover, gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover,
 I must have you!" (Fitzgerald, 1925:i).

Further evidence for the "manufactured" and barren nature of Gatsby's personality is given in the novel after his death, as Nick reads Gatsby's "schedule" which he had written down in an old copy of *Hopalong Cassidy*:

Rise from bed	6.00	A.M.
Dumbbell exercise and wall-scaling	6.15–6.30	“
Study electricity, etc.	7.15–8.15	“
Work	8.30–4.30	P.M.
Baseball and sports	4.30–5.00	“
Practice elocution, poise and how to attain it	5.00–6.00	“
Study needed inventions	7.00–9.00	“

GENERAL RESOLVES

No wasting time at Shafers or {a name, indecipherable}
 No more smokeing [sic] or chewing
 Bath every other day
 Read one improving book or magazine per week
 Save \$5.00 {crossed out} \$3.00 per week
 Be better to parents (Fitzgerald, 1925:177-178).

Here, Gatsby seems to be the manufacturer of his own personality. This permeates his life, as he transitions from the plebeian James Gatz into the extravagant and well-off Jay Gatsby, who is easily able to keep his neighbours and party guests guessing as to how he obtained his fortune, and in essence, who he truly is:

“...Somebody told me—” The two girls and Jordan leaned together confidentially.

“Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once.” A thrill passed over all of us... “I don’t think it’s so much that...it’s more that he was a German spy during the war.” One of the men nodded in confirmation.

“I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany,” he assured us positively.

“Oh, no,” said the first girl, “it couldn’t be that, because he was in the American army during the war.” As our credulity switched back to her she leaned forward with enthusiasm. “You look at him sometimes when he thinks nobody’s looking at him. I’ll bet he killed a man” (Fitzgerald, 1925:45).

When looking deeper than the mere surface of Gatsby’s façade, Nick finds not much more than deep-seated insecurity, and Gatsby’s almost naïve penchant for self-deception and nostalgia for a past he wants to, but cannot, change. Nick refers to this quality as Gatsby’s “extraordinary gift for hope” (Fitzgerald, 1925:2):

[Gatsby] wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: “I never loved you.” After she had obliterated four years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house – just as if it were five years ago... “She used to be able to understand. We’d sit for hours—”...

“I wouldn’t ask too much of her,” I [Nick] ventured. “You can’t repeat the past.” “*Can’t repeat the past?*” he cried incredulously. “*Why of course you can!*” “*I’m going to fix everything just the way it was before,*” he said, nodding determinedly. “*She’ll see.*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:112-113, emphasis my own).

The emotional bankruptcy of *The Waste Land*

The themes of fertility which appear throughout *The Waste Land* are widely known to be influenced by Eliot’s reading of James Frazer’s *The Golden Bough*, as well as Jessie L.

Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance* (Dwivedi, 2003:136). Eliot combines the themes of these two works by depicting the Grail legends’ Fisher King as a “maimed...fertility god”

(Dwivedi, 2003:136). Dwivedi explains this notion further:

Miss Weston relates the Tammuz-Adonic cult of Frazer to her own Grail legends, and explains that the wound suffered by Adonis was in his genitals...and adds that this accounts for the infertility of the land. By associations, the wound of the Fisher King was identical” (2003:136).

The discussion in the poem of ancient fertility symbols and rituals is representative of early religions. These flow into mentions of eastern and western religion in Part III of *The Waste Land* – ‘The Fire Sermon’. The most significant of these are the words of St. Augustine, combined with a mantra adapted from Buddha’s ‘Fire Sermon’:

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning
o Lord Thou pluckest me out
o Lord Thou pluckest
burning (*TWL*, 307-311).

St. Augustine’s words here are effective when considering the contexts of the barren outlooks of the other waste land dwellers. A train conductor in *Gatsby* also echoes these sentiments near the end of the novel: “Hot!...Some weather! Hot! Hot! Hot! Is it hot enough for you? Is it hot? Is it...?” (Fitzgerald, 1925:117). St. Augustine himself struggled against his own “sexual urge” and in this section, presents what Dwivedi calls “a graphic account of his spiritual and *emotional bankruptcy*” (2003:138, emphasis my own). The reason for the importance of the phrase “emotional bankruptcy” is that, while not explicitly used by Eliot in the poem, it is a concept that explains the personalities of the waste land dwellers, and most importantly, it is a concept which was coined by Fitzgerald (it would also later be the title of one of his shorter novels). Fitzgerald biographer Mizener describes the concept of emotional bankruptcy as “the most pervasive idea [Fitzgerald] ever had” and as deriving “from his own knowledge of himself” (1951:70). It could then be argued that a prevalent “personality trait” during the Jazz Age might have been emotional bankruptcy. The aforementioned barren personality of Daisy embodies this concept well. Even though Fitzgerald would only coin the term “emotional bankruptcy” in the 1930s (Mizener, 1951:70), it is a notion that permeates his works throughout his career. Monk describes the concept as follows:

The theory of ‘emotional bankruptcy’ is not an edifice of gigantic erudition. It is the quintessential drinker’s theory: the hangover as unpaid interest on the night before’s

excesses...it sufficiently covered [Fitzgerald's] own case, and that of the collapse of Boom into Depression (Monk, 1983:91).

As the concept is mirrored in the author's own life, so it is mirrored in his characters. In his story, also titled *Emotional Bankruptcy*, Fitzgerald encapsulates the concept in its closing lines:

She was very tired and lay face downward on the couch with that awful, awful realization that all the old things are true. *One cannot both spend and have*. The love of her life had come by, and looking in her empty basket, she had found not a flower left for him – not one. After a while she wept.

“Oh, what have I done to myself?” she wailed. “What have I done? What have I done?” (Fitzgerald, 1931:40, emphasis my own).

Daisy, although constructed as a character long before the concept of emotional bankruptcy had been given its name, embodies this yearning to “both spend and have” in her relationships with Gatsby and Tom:

“It doesn't matter any more. Just tell him the truth – that you never loved him – and it's all wiped out forever.”

She looked at [Gatsby] blindly.

“Why – how could I love [Tom] – possibly?”

“You never loved him.” *She hesitated*. Her eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, *as though she realized at last what she was doing – and as though she had never, all along, intended doing anything at all. But it was done now. It was too late.*

“I never loved him,” she said, *with perceptible reluctance...*

She looked at Gatsby. “There, Jay,” she said – *but her hand as she tried to light a cigarette was trembling*. Suddenly she threw the cigarette and the burning match on the carpet.

“Oh, you want too much!” she cried to Gatsby. “*I love you now – isn't that enough? I can't help what's past.*” She began to sob helplessly. “*I did love him once – but I loved you too*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:134-135, emphasis my own).

It is Daisy's hesitation, her need to have the best of both worlds in her relationships, that connect her to the concept of emotional bankruptcy. She craves both Tom's stability and status as well as her exciting clandestine affair with Gatsby, while ironically accusing Gatsby of being the one who “want[s] too much”. It is this yearning that leaves Daisy with nothing much to give to either of these men by the end of the novel, however. For Gatsby, she does

not even send “a message or a flower” (Fitzgerald, 1925:179) at his funeral. In the case of Tom, Daisy slips comfortably back into their old routine, with Tom “talking intently across the table *at her*,” while she nods silently “in agreement” (Fitzgerald, 1925:148, emphasis my own). She offers Tom silent compliance, and together they are “[not] happy”, but yet not “unhappy either” (Fitzgerald, 1925:148), and their part in the story ends in a shared emptiness. In this capacity, Daisy’s interaction with Tom resembles *The Waste Land*’s Thames-daughters:

“My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart
Under my feet. After the event
He wept. *He promised ‘a new start.’*
I made no comment. What should I resent?”
“On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble *people who expect*
Nothing” (TWL, 296-305, emphasis my own).

The Thames-daughters’ words also speak of an emotional bankruptcy and emptiness. In these scenes from the poem, the girls are “casually violated” – acts and words are described which add no value to their supposed sexual connections to the men they speak of, or any serious weight to the notion of being “violated” (Saunders, 1988:52). They refer to these acts – in a passing manner – respectively as being “undid” and as “the event” (TWL, 294, 297). The connection which should have value now has none, which is what becomes of Daisy’s and Gatsby’s connection by the end of the novel. The acts described are made to sound “banal [and] matter-of-fact” (Saunders, 1988:52):

...I raised my knees
Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe (TWL, 294-295).

In a similar way, Daisy, having grown up with everything she could desire, seems to add no value to human connections – positive or negative. While her circumstances might not mirror those of the Thames-daughters, her approach to intimacy does, albeit for different reasons.

On the one hand, the Thames-daughters have an almost unemotional attitude towards sexual acts because, in the context of *The Waste Land*, it is forced upon them. Daisy, on the other hand, is unemotional towards romantic relationships because of her upbringing and her very existence being “full of money”. She, like the Thames-daughters, is “dully unimpressed [and] unresisting, unprotesting” when it comes to sexual advances (Saunders, 1988:52). This is evident when Daisy first hears of Gatsby in the novel:

“You must know Gatsby.”

“Gatsby?” demanded Daisy. “What Gatsby?” (Fitzgerald, 1925:12).

Of course, Daisy knows exactly “what Gatsby”, however her surprise at hearing his name would suggest that he is no more than a memory to her. This is the opposite for Gatsby, who has moulded his whole life to suit Daisy in an obsessive manner (“Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay” (Fitzgerald, 1925:80)). To her, though, he is a mere afterthought at this point in the novel. Daisy did, briefly, consider calling off her marriage to Tom upon receiving a letter from Gatsby, but eventually she “married Tom Buchanan *without so much as a shiver*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:79, emphasis my own). Their affair is consequently not truly reciprocal, as Gatsby’s life has been driven by his passion for Daisy since they last saw one another (“He doesn’t know very much about Tom, though he says he’s read a Chicago paper for years just on the chance of catching a glimpse of Daisy’s name” (Fitzgerald, 1925:81)) whereas Daisy moves on with relative ease, beginning a new, different life with Tom:

“We haven’t met for many years,” said Daisy, *her voice as matter-of-fact as it could ever be.*

“Five years next November.” The *automatic quality* of Gatsby’s answer set us all back at least another minute. (Fitzgerald, 1925:89, emphasis my own).

In this light, Daisy’s emotionally bankrupt attitude toward relationships resembles the typist from *The Waste Land*’s third section, ‘The Fire Sermon’. To an emotionally bankrupt

character, sexuality is not connected with beauty, but with apathy, and in some cases, the imagery used in the narrative of the typist and her encounter with the clerk makes this particular sexual encounter seem almost repulsive, as her encounter is not romantic in nature, it is not tender and it lacks an affectionate partner (her partner is also described as being physically grotesque):

He, the young man *carbuncular*, arrives...
Endeavours to engage her in caresses
Which still are *unreproved, if undesired*.
Flushed and decided, he *assaults* at once;
Exploring hands *encounter no defence*;
His vanity requires no response,
And makes a welcome of *indifference*...
Hardly aware of her departed lover;
Her brain allows one *half-formed thought* to pass:
“Well now that’s done: and *I’m glad it’s over*” (TWL, 231, 237-242, 250-252,
emphasis my own).

Her “indifference” and his fierce advances point to a certain fracturing of the mind caused by their own emotional bankruptcy and emptiness: love as a concept has lost its meaning. These particular individuals can now only enact “love” – or their distorted version thereof – as empty lust and lethargy.

As the typist “await[s] the expected guest” (TWL, 230) she surrenders her emotional currency to loveless visits from this “young man carbuncular” (TWL, 231). Her continuation of this relationship is a form of emotional bankruptcy and the young clerk appears to deceive himself into thinking that his feelings of lust for the typist are mutual, almost as Gatsby feels in relation to Daisy, yet the typist, much like Daisy, is “bored and tired”. Her apathy shows in her actions: the clerk’s advances are “unreproved, if undesired”, his “[e]xploring hands encounter no defence”, yet his “vanity”, his self-deceit, “requires no response,/[a]nd makes a welcome of indifference” (TWL, 236, 238, 240-242). As Daisy and Gatsby’s relationship appears to be, these waste land characters also have a somewhat uneven relationship, with one partner connecting more value to the relationship than the other.

An emotionally bankrupt character such as Daisy and, to an extent, some of *The Waste Land*'s characters mentioned in this section, would not build their identity based on valuable human relationships, but rather on status and material possessions. The link between these two works in this context can also be discussed in terms of Daisy as an echo of Eliot's description of a member of the Austrian nobility at the beginning of the poem. This character is partly based on Countess Marie Larisch. She makes an attempt at cementing her identity, at least in a nationalistic – and consequently materialistic – way, by saying, “Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch” – “I'm not Russian at all; I come from Lithuania, a true German” (*TWL*, 12). With standing and power likely playing a large part in her outlook on life, this member of the nobility negotiates her identity in the only way she knows how – by asserting her nationalistic superiority and status. Aside from their shared wealth and social status, both Daisy and the poem's Marie share a common side-effect of being so lavishly rich: a permeating sense of boredom. *The Waste Land*'s Marie describes her activities matter-of-factly: “I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter” (*TWL*, 18). She is self-assured in her utterances about her “true German” background, and she has no doubt about her place in society, yet she still comes across as “inwardly restless, unsatisfied [and] insecure” as her “apparently flourishing existence is, in fact, rootless” (Saunders, 1988:48). Saunders links this assertion to the lines directly following the Marie-vignette (Saunders, 1988:48):

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish?... (*TWL*, 19-20).

Marie embodies the poem's “search for something more sustaining” in her dreary life (Saunders, 1988:48). Daisy, too, searches for distractions from a life that is, to her, filled with boredom:

“What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon?” cried Daisy, “and the day after that, and the next thirty years?”...“Who wants to go to town?” demanded Daisy insistently (Fitzgerald, 1925:121).

Daisy seems to have had these bored and disquieted feelings in her youth as well:

Through this twilight universe *Daisy began to move again with the season*; suddenly she was again keeping half a dozen dates a day with half a dozen men and drowsing asleep at dawn with the beads and chiffon of an evening dress tangled among dying orchids on the floor beside her bed. *And all the time something within her was crying for a decision. She wanted her life shaped now, immediately – and the decision must be made by some force – of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality – that was close at hand* (Fitzgerald, 1925:154-155, emphasis my own).

Together with Daisy, Tom also experiences this boredom and restlessness:

“[Tom and Daisy] had spent a year in France, *for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together.*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:6, emphasis my own).

“[Tom], among various physical accomplishments, had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven – a national figure in a way, *one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterward savors of anti-climax...Tom would drift on forever seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game.*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:6, emphasis my own).

This restless ennui is the symptom of these emotionally bankrupt waste land dwellers, and, especially in the case of Tom and Daisy, they are perfectly happy to disrupt the lives of others in negative and irreparable ways to selfishly cure their own boredom:

They were careless people, Tom and Daisy – *they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made...* (Fitzgerald, 1925:184, emphasis my own).

A comparison of nautical images in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*

In her article, “Gatsby as a Drowned Sailor”, Margaret Lukens notes that Nick, upon comparing “the Buchanan’s ‘wine-colored rug’ to the sea...launches a series of marine images that give point to a major motif in the novel” – that of Gatsby as the aforementioned “drowned sailor” (1987:44). *Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* share various associations with nautical images, which form important touchstones for both works. Gatsby’s water-death in

his swimming pool evokes the prophecy made by Madame Sosostris in *The Waste Land*'s first section, 'The Burial of the Dead':

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,
Had a bad cold, nevertheless
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,
With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
Is your card, *the drowned Phoenician Sailor*,
(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
...I do not find
The Hanged Man. *Fear death by water* (TWL, 43-48, 54-55, emphasis my own).

As Lukens' article also points out, Gatsby's death is already foreshadowed at a gathering before "his first rendezvous with Daisy at Nick's tea party" (1987:45):

Gatsby, pale as death, with his hands plunged like weights in his coat pockets, was standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically into my eyes (Fitzgerald, 1925:88).

Gatsby's death is, of course, not *by* water, but *in* water. This description of Gatsby "in a puddle of water glaring tragically into [Nick's] eyes" still evokes how Nick would see him upon his death:

There was a faint, barely perceptible movement of the water as the fresh flow from one end urged its way toward the drain at the other. With little ripples that were hardly the shadows of waves, the laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool.

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, tracing, like the leg of compass, a thin red circle in the water (Fitzgerald, 1925:166).

Gatsby is a "real" sailor in his younger years as well, working with Dan Cody on a yacht, who himself "drowns in drink" (Lukens, 1987:44). This has a profound impact on Gatsby: "[i]t was indirectly due to Cody that Gatsby drank so little...he formed the habit of letting liquor alone" (Fitzgerald, 1925:103). It could be then, that Gatsby perhaps "feared death" by a different kind of "water" – however in the context of *The Waste Land*, it is important to bear in mind that the "death by water" prophecy made by Madame Sosostris is, in fact, a false and misleading one. Madame Sosostris warns that this "death by water" is to be "fear[ed]",

when it is this very element that can ensure rebirth and rejuvenation in this waste land setting (Martín Bullón, 2015:11). Gatsby fulfils an important role in this sense, as his death allows him to portray the role of the rejuvenator of Fitzgerald's waste land (a notion which links him to the Fisher King, as will be discussed at some length in a later chapter). Nick's description of Gatsby in death evokes images of completed life cycles (Martín Bullón, 2015:11):

The touch of a cluster of leaves *revolved* it slowly, *tracing, like the leg of compass, a thin red circle in the water* (Fitzgerald, 1925:166, emphasis my own).

This description can be compared to the description of Phlebas in *The Waste Land*:

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,
Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell
And the profit and loss.

A current under sea;
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew
O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you (*TWL*, 312-321, emphasis my own).

These descriptions of both Gatsby and Phlebas suggest a sense of mortality, yet there is also a sense of peace in both of these descriptions. The notion of life's turning "wheel" evokes the sense that these characters can now be prepared for rebirth and that their "death[s] by water" readies their respective arid waste lands for a break in the drought they have experienced. In order for these waste lands to be revived, respectively, Phlebas must face his mortality and let go of his youth, of being "once handsome and tall" (*TWL*, 321), whereas Gatsby must let go of "the pearls [in] his eyes" (*TWL*, 48). This is in reference to his own materialism. Gatsby cannot do this in life, as even after the accident in his motorcar he still keeps "vigil" at Daisy's window, even though it is clear they will not interact again:

"Is it all quiet up there?" [Gatsby] asked anxiously.

“Yes, it’s all quiet.” I [Nick] hesitated. “You’d better come home and get some sleep.”

He shook his head.

“I want to wait here till Daisy goes to bed. Good night, old sport.” He put his hands in his coat pockets and *turned back eagerly to his scrutiny of the house, as though my presence marred the sacredness of the vigil.* So I walked away and left him standing there in the moonlight – *watching over nothing* (Fitzgerald, 1925:148-149, emphasis my own).

It is therefore only through death that Gatsby can fully let go of his materialism and his obsessive devotion to Daisy in order to allow the “landscape” to be rejuvenated (Audhuy, 1980:53). In the novel, Daisy echoes the assertions of Madame Sosotris that “death by water” is something to fear, as she asks Nick to “remain watchfully in the garden” while she and Gatsby have a conversation, “In case there’s a fire or a flood...or any act of God” (Fitzgerald, 1925:108). Yet she is one of the factors seemingly holding Gatsby back from fulfilling his role as rejuvenator (Audhuy, 1980:53). It is after his death, after he lets go of these aspects, that Gatsby can bring the promise of rain to his own waste land: “Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on” (Fitzgerald, 1925:179).

Chapter 2: New York as “Unreal City”: *The Great Gatsby*’s New York and *The Waste Land*’s London

Introduction

In the previous chapter, various comparisons were drawn between scenery in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*. This chapter will broaden the previous chapter’s comparisons of scenery and imagery. Now, however, the focus will be more specific: New York and “the valley of ashes”, as mentioned in *Gatsby*, will be compared to Eliot’s view of London – which will also show how Eliot’s description of London in *The Waste Land* reflects his personal feelings about being an outsider in this city. In the same way, Nick Carraway’s descriptions of the “valley of ashes” show a vision of New York (and of America itself) that challenges patriotic viewpoints and depicts the city itself as a negative place. Considering that the previous chapter placed emphasis on the comparison between scenes from *The Waste Land* and *Gatsby*’s “valley of ashes”, this chapter will instead focus on New York itself, although some further discussion of the “valley of ashes” may be warranted later on in the chapter.

This chapter will consider the notion that, when exploring and observing New York City, Nick Carraway takes on a similar role to *The Waste Land*’s narrators when commenting on London throughout the poem. Additionally, the notion of the city as isolating and brutal in both works will be examined in this chapter. Richard Lehan’s *The City in Literature*, as well as William Chapman Sharpe’s *New York Nocturne: The City After Dark in Literature, Painting, and Photography, 1850-1950*, among other works have proven useful with regard to this discussion.

Furthermore, this chapter will examine Nick’s descriptions of New York in *Gatsby* and how these align with Fitzgerald’s personal descriptions of New York in his essay “My Lost City”.

These descriptions will then be considered in comparison with the way London is described in various instances in *The Waste Land*. In order to aid and add context to these discussions, some reference will be made to the Great War and its impact on the characters of both works, as well as the two cities in question.

Tiresias, Nick Carraway, Owl Eyes and the eyes of Dr Eckleburg will be examined as “seers” in the respective works. Additionally, the importance of the Fisher King as a character and “voice” in both works will be discussed, as it pertains to the characters of both works and their respective views of the cities in which they are located. This discussion will focus on the sterile, “manufactured” nature of both London and New York as they are viewed and described in *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby* respectively.

London in *The Waste Land*

In both Eliot’s descriptions of London and Fitzgerald’s descriptions of New York in their respective works, a central feeling stands out: isolation. Both *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby*’s narrators offer views of their respective cities from the perspective of an outsider looking in and critiquing the city’s inhabitants. The narrators of both works have a sense of distance from their cities, and both have reasons to feel isolated from these urban landscapes and those who inhabit them.

For Eliot, the influence behind his narrator’s urban isolation lies perhaps partially in the fact that Eliot himself was an American – referred to by C. D. Blanton in his essay “London” as an “[accident] of birth” (2011:33). Blanton substantiates this by adding that “...few figures could better voice the city’s accent, and fewer still could claim to have mastered its poetic corruptions and virtues so thoroughly” (2011:33). Eliot’s now-famous description of London as an “unreal city” (*TWL*, 59) has long been associated with the narrators’ role as an outside

spectator in this environment. However, as Blanton further notes, this description of London runs deeper than feelings of isolation:

Eliot's urbanity is not merely a matter of carefully cultivated distance from American origins, English pastoral concerns and the uncouth press of demotic voices; it also implies a cultural identification with the polis...In this respect, the city in which Eliot lived and wrote for half a century is less a setting than the very substance of his work, the concrete form of a turbulent unconsciousness – his urbanity less a pose than an unwilling bond (2011, 34).

In his essay on Andrew Marvell, Eliot contemplates the notion of “urbanity” when reflecting on Marvell's works:

...[N]owadays we find occasionally good irony, or satire, which lack wit's internal equilibrium, because their voices are essentially protests against some outside sentimentality or stupidity; or we find serious poets who seem afraid of acquiring wit, lest they lose intensity. The quality which Marvell had, this modest and certainly impersonal virtue – whether we call it wit or reason, or even urbanity – we have patently failed to define. By whatever name we call it, and however we define that name, it is something precious and needed and apparently extinct; it is what should preserve the reputation of Marvell (1921:263).

To Blanton, this is an indication that Eliot was unhappy at not being able to aptly define “urbanity”, which leads Eliot to conclude the essay with what Blanton calls a “deliberately foreign” line: “‘C’était une belle âme, comme on ne fait plus à Londres’ [‘It was a beautiful soul, such as one no longer finds in London’]” (2011:35). This embodies Eliot's London and his contradictory feelings towards the city: it is home, yet he is secluded and detached from it (Blanton, 2011:35). Even though Eliot had made a name and home for himself in London, he was always considered an American by those who surrounded him, to the point where, in 1945, he signed his name in a British periodical as “...*métoikos*, Greek for ‘resident alien’” (Baskett, 1988:75).

In *The Waste Land*, the view of London is one of abject horror from the perspective of the outside narrators, as is made clear when the poem refers to Dante's *Inferno* in the section ‘The Burial of the Dead’: “[u]nder the brown fog of a winter dawn/A crowd flowed over

London Bridge, so many/I had not thought death had undone so many,” (*TWL*, 61-63). This description echoes Eliot’s contradictory feelings towards London – the city is described as being in Limbo-like circumstances – largely due to the indifference of post-war individuals and the uncertainty of post-war life. Eliot’s description of this is most clearly depicted in his evocation of Dante’s description of the dwellers of Limbo: “[s]ighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,/And each man fixed his eyes before his feet” (*TWL*, 64, 65). Dante describes Limbo as hell’s first circle in his *Inferno*, and it contains those who have not been baptised as well as virtuous unbelievers. Limbo is therefore a space reserved for those who lack “...the hope for something greater than rational minds can conceive” (Lázár, 2015:220). The descriptions of Limbo that are echoed in *The Waste Land* also emphasise the sighing crowds who inhabit Limbo:

As far as I could tell from listening, here
there were no wails, but *only sighs*, that made
a trembling in the everlasting air.
They rose from sorrow, without punishment,
the sorrow of *vast throngs* of people there,
of men and women and of infants too (*Inferno*, Canto 4, lines 25-30, emphasis my
own).

This influence on Eliot’s view of London can also be seen later in *The Waste Land*, especially in the opening lines of ‘What the Thunder Said’. This section of the poem opens with reference to Matthew 27, and serves to depict the betrayal, capture and subsequent crucifixion of Christ. The scene created here is barren and desolate, conveying a sense of “agony” which also permeated the war, and still hovered over London long after the war had ended. In this context, the opening lines of ‘What the Thunder Said’ create an image of “...an urban London permeated with the experience of the trench” (Arp, 2005:70), which further adds to Eliot’s ambiguous feelings regarding the city:

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
After the frosty silence in the gardens
After the agony in stony places

The shouting and the crying
Prison and palace and reverberation
Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
He who was living is now dead
We who were living are now dying
With a little patience... (TWL, 322-330).

The post-war individual in London was, in many ways, similar to the post-war individual in New York. Both would have been uncertain and, to a certain extent, apathetic towards their circumstances. As discussed in the previous chapter, these individuals, scarred by war, viewed both life and death in clinical terms. It is therefore worthwhile to consider that the war and its aftermath are factors which make these respective cities “unreal”. Paul Fussell, in his seminal work *The Great War and Modern Memory*, points out that Eliot merely takes elements and repeated themes of war poetry (the image of the dawn, in Fussell’s example), and applies it in a Modernist way: “[In lines 60-74 of *The Waste Land*], Eliot accumulates the new, modern associations of dawn: cold, the death of multitudes, insensate marching in files, battle, and corpses too shallowly interred” (Fussell, 1989:63). To emphasise his point about Eliot’s “modern associations of dawn”, Fussell quotes lines 59-70 of the poem:

Unreal City,
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,
I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.
Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,
To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours
With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.
There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying, “Stetson!
“You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
“That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
“Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
“Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?” (TWL, 59-70).

Both Eliot’s and Fitzgerald’s characters in *The Waste Land* and *Gatsby* respectively are victims: of the war, of indifference, and of themselves. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot’s “victims” are all those who are forced to acclimatise to a “new world” brought about by the war.

Unfortunately, this world is not “new” in a positive sense at all, but rather a ravaged world with nothing but disappointment and disillusionment to offer those who have survived the already horrifying war. These victims have been stripped of their individuality, they are forced to question any form of identity they may have possessed. Their very perception of reality has been altered and distorted – they are forced to wander the waste land not in a confident manner, but rather with “...each man fix[ing] his eyes before his feet” (*TWL*, 65). This action depicts these waste land dwellers – these Londoners – as lonely figures, emphasizing other ways in which they have been victimised. They are isolated because those who have survived the trenches and returned home cannot speak of the horrors they have experienced, and those who must now welcome their tainted loved ones back home will never be able to fully comprehend just how desolate and grim life in the trenches was.

Eliot’s “alienated” view of London stands in stark contrast to the patriotic views propagated during the war. Despite the various denouncements of war poetry “as poetry” by the Modernist movement, famous Modernist poet Ezra Pound addresses the war directly in his 1920 poem ‘Hugh Selwyn Mauberley’. Pound uses the same Horatian phrase used with such effective irony by trench poet Wilfred Owen in his strongly anti-war poem, ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’. Owen refers to the phrase in this poem as “[t]he old Lie...” (‘Dulce et Decorum Est’, line 27). The full line from Horace’s *Odes*, “Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori” is generally translated as “It is sweet and proper to die for one’s country” (*Odes*, III.2.13). However, Pound echoes Owen’s anti-patriotic sentiment in ‘Hugh Selwyn Mauberley’:

Died some, pro patria,
non ‘dulce’ non ‘et decor’...
walked eye-deep in hell
believing in *old men’s lies*, then unbelieving
came home, home *to a lie*,
home to many *deceits*,
home to *old lies* and new infamy;

usury age-old and age-thick
and *liars* in public places.

Daring as never before, wastage as never before (IV.11-20, emphasis my own).

This notion of lying and deceit veiled as patriotism becomes the main focal point of Owen's poem. In it, he famously lashes out at patriotic, motivational war poet Jessie Pope (Araujo, 2014:327). Owen and various other trench poets view the saccharine patriotism of poets like Pope – who had no physical experience of trench warfare – as being deceitful and even harmful. Eliot, however, seems to be afflicted by the guilt provoked by poets like Pope for his own non-participation in the war; his "...literary ascendancy in the early Twenties had been a form of personal compensation for his impotence during the war..." (Krockel, 2011:116).

This is echoed in *The Waste Land* in the stanza that speaks of "the Hyacinth girl" (*TWL*, 25-42). In this part of the poem, "...the guilt and anxiety of Eliot's sexual and war traumas are merged..." (Krockel, 2011:117):

"You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
"They called me the hyacinth girl."
– Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence (*TWL*, 35-41).

This "impotence" during the war – a time when London, and England itself, was depicted by propagandists as being in dire need of the support of its citizens – could also have further added to Eliot's feelings of alienation in the city. The people he could not help and does not associate with are therefore simply a shapeless mass to him, "[flowing] over London Bridge" (*TWL*, 61).

Eliot's "victims" of the city are not limited to the bridge, however. The self-deceit which followed after the war and which permeated London's inhabitants in Eliot's view is pictured as a product of post-war apathy and is focused on the everyday individual and their deception of themselves and others in order to blindly fumble through life. This spiritual deceit

becomes evident in the third section of the poem: ‘The Fire Sermon’. In *The Waste Land*, various figures are traced in their movements through the city. Perhaps the ones who most deceive themselves are the typist and her companion. The typist waits for a seemingly meaningless visit from “...the young man carbuncular” (TWL, 231). The young clerk deludes himself into thinking the typist returns his facile desires, yet she is uninterested, and his “[e]xploring hands encounter no defence...” (TWL, 240). This self-deceit is also a form of isolation, as no real connection can exist between these characters and they are therefore inherently alienated from one another. Eliot’s concern here is consciousness and connection, which are notions that the majority of these city dwellers seem to ignore.

A lack of connection is also depicted during the conversation that takes place during ‘A Game of Chess’. As discussed in chapter one, this conversation takes place between two interlocutors, one speaking and one silent:

“My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
“*Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.*
“What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
“I never know what you are thinking. Think.”

I think we are in rats’ alley
Where the dead men lost their bones...

“Do
“You know *nothing*? Do you see *nothing*? Do you remember
“*Nothing*?”...
“Are you alive, or not? Is there *nothing* in your head?” (TWL, 111-116, 120-123, 126, emphasis my own).

The Belladonna is the conversation partner who speaks with nervousness here, while her partner answers only mentally, but never verbally. The atmosphere between them is “savagely still”, which further illustrates their lack of connection and engagement – one gains a sense of the “nothingness” that exists between them.

New York in *The Great Gatsby*

The sentiments of isolation and alienation that permeate descriptions of London in *The Waste Land* are shared by *Gatsby*'s Nick Carraway in his views of New York. Nick is not a native New Yorker and often finds himself confused by the way things are done in this city. His descriptions of the city and its inhabitants often highlight the gaudiness of the Jazz Age and are at times nightmarish, as Eliot's description of London Bridge is. However, Nick's depictions of New York change along with the tone of the novel. At the beginning of *Gatsby*, Nick is positive about the city and his future in it. Nick's description of Fifth Avenue early in the novel echoes his then-positive outlook on his surroundings: "We drove over to Fifth Avenue, so *warm and soft*, almost *pastoral*, on the summer Sunday afternoon that I wouldn't have been surprised to see a great flock of white sheep turn the corner" (Fitzgerald, 1925:28, emphasis my own). In fact, one of Nick's depictions mirrors the London Bridge scene from *The Waste Land*. However, instead of making the bridge (the Queensboro Bridge, in this instance) a scene of horror where the city's inhabitants seem to spill over its edges, Nick describes the bridge with a sense of optimism:

Over the great bridge, with the sunlight through the girders making a constant flicker upon the moving cars, with the city rising up across the river in white heaps and sugar lumps all built with a wish out of non-olfactory money. The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world (Fitzgerald, 1925:70, emphasis my own).

Even as Nick and Gatsby pass a hearse in this very same scene, Nick's description remains positive and idealistic, although the image of the hearse may already be signalling the city's underlying corruption:

A dead man passed us *in a hearse heaped with blooms*, followed by two carriages with drawn blinds, and by more *cheerful carriages* for friends. The friends looked out at us with the tragic eyes and short upper lips of southeastern Europe, and *I was glad that the sight of Gatsby's splendid car was included in their sombre holiday...*

“*Anything can happen now that we’ve slid over this bridge,*” I thought; “anything at all...” even Gatsby could happen, without any particular wonder (Fitzgerald, 1925: 70, emphasis my own).

Gatsby also initially offers a different, better view of what Eliot’s typist and clerk from ‘The Fire Sermon’ could be, in an idealised city. *The Waste Land*’s typist, “bored and tired”, who “lays out food in tins” (*TWL*, 223, 236), becomes a livelier figure to Nick in *Gatsby*:

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 (Fitzgerald, 1925:69).

In this instance, the young women of New York City are energetic and welcoming, not the tired, jaded women of Eliot’s London. In Nick’s view, they have a friendliness about them, adding to his romantic view of the city and its dwellers. However, it could be argued that, since Nick does not truly know these women, he unwittingly becomes a “young man carbuncular” (*TWL*, 231). He does, in his voyeuristic way, empathise with the solitude of the “poor young clerks” of the city:

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 (Fitzgerald, 1925:69).

Here, Nick delivers his commentary on the lack of connection in the city. However, in identifying with these clerks, and in imagining that he could follow the “romantic women” to their homes and simply be smiled at or even welcomed, he adopts the same “vanity” of the “carbuncular” clerk from *The Waste Land* – one whose “[e]xploring hands [might] encounter no defence” and whose “vanity requires no response” (*TWL*, 240, 241).

Yet Nick’s disillusionment with the city does make itself apparent, even early on in the novel. As in Eliot’s case, Nick considers the fact that his companions are incapable of truly

connecting with each other. This happens in the city itself, and at Gatsby's extravagant parties. In relation to the city setting specifically, Nick (and Fitzgerald himself, to an extent) takes on the role of passive observer, as *The Waste Land's* Tiresias does. It should be noted that Lehan comments that Nick, in this role of observer, "...brings a distinct consciousness to the city" (1998:77). The city's crowds, to Nick, hold great potential, but eventually it also embodies a lack thereof. To him, the dwellers of New York "...[contain] the potentiality for experience: meeting a lover or a friend or expressing a spectacle" (Lehan, 1998:74). Nick voices his concern for this lack of connection and shared experience in the city when he silently observes those who live there. He despairs at the clerks who "[waste] the most poignant moments of night and life" (Fitzgerald, 1925:69), and he wishes to join those who are experiencing connection (even if it is possibly an empty connection):

Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were 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. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gayety and sharing their intimate excitement*, I wished them well (Fitzgerald, 1925:69, emphasis my own).

The above scene depicts Nick's role as a silent observer in his city. However, the outlook described here guarantees Nick's dissatisfaction, because he and other characters like him "...always [feel] that [they are] missing out even in the process of experiencing" – which leads to the city feeling "hostile and 'unhomely'" (Lehan, 1998:74). Nick's reference here to the "throbbing taxi-cabs" mirrors a similar section in *The Waste Land*:

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
Like a taxi throbbing waiting... (TWL, 215-217, emphasis my own).

These lines anticipate the words of Tiresias, who describes himself as "throbbing between two lives" in the very next line. These echoing lines in both works establish a connection which will be discussed in more detail as this chapter progresses – the link between and

overlap of Tiresias and Nick's roles as observers in their respective works. It can be said that both Tiresias and Nick are passive viewers in this sense, both "throbbing" and "waiting", both "...missing out even in the process of experiencing", as Lehan says.

Lehan also points out that Eliot's depiction of the fragmentary nature of the city experience is due in part to "...a system of profit and loss" (1998:76). This links to the very setting of *Gatsby* – Nick finds himself in a city in the midst of an economic boom, and yet there is still something ominous lurking in this positive, productive milieu, as symbolised by the "hearse heaped with blooms" that passes by Nick and Gatsby as they drive into the city (Fitzgerald, 1925:70). Lehan further notes that Eliot's view of this system embodies sterility because, as in Jay Gatsby's case, it can only inspire "...a cycle of desire doomed to endless escalation...the city [is] nature inverted, transformed by capitalism" (1998:76). The sterility of this system is shown via the famous anti-American dream themes in *Gatsby*, and by various notions in *The Waste Land*. Firstly, there is the simple notion of material desire, shown by the smothering wealth in the opulent room in 'A Game of Chess' and the bleak view of industrialism in 'The Fire Sermon': "The river sweats/Oil and tar..." (*TWL*, 266-267). Secondly, it is shown through what Bergonzi refers to as the poem's theme of "sexual disorder" (1978:95). The system is sterile because experiences that are meant to evoke human connection are rather described as experiences "...whose intensity can be conveyed, but which can be neither described nor explained...the sexual encounters [in the poem] are all in some way sterile or empty or loveless" (Bergonzi, 1978:95).

Nick's positive view of New York is, at first, shared by Gatsby. These two characters have a parallel journey where their views of New York are concerned. Both enter the city with a sense of naïve optimism, but both later become disillusioned once they discover the truth about the city and its inhabitants – that their happiness and the city's beauty are only skin-deep. To Gatsby, New York is a place he is drawn to because of Daisy and because of his

“sense of romantic purpose” (Lehan, 1998:206). However, as the novel progresses and Nick and Gatsby are forced to come to terms with reality, New York city becomes merely “...a new arena in the battle for success” (Lehan, 1998:206). This is, of course, what the city has always been, but it takes both Gatsby and Nick time and experience to realise this.

As the novel progresses, Nick turns his gaze ever-inward, later sharing the role of Tiresias, the blind prophet, one who does not necessarily see the outer world, but whose “...inner vision becomes more acute” (Lehan, 1998:209). As this occurs, Nick’s formerly romantic view of New York shifts to one that is more negative – at times even hellish – as one of the novel’s climactic scenes sees Nick and other characters continuously complaining about the New York heat:

“Some weather! hot! hot! hot!
Is it hot enough for you? Is it hot? Is it...?” (Fitzgerald, 1925:117).

“I read somewhere that the sun’s getting hotter every year,” said Tom genially. “It seems that pretty soon the earth’s going to fall into the sun...” (Fitzgerald, 1925:120).

“But it’s so hot,” insisted Daisy, on the verge of tears, “and everything’s so confused. Let’s all go to town!” Her voice struggled on through the heat, beating against it, molding its senselessness into forms (Fitzgerald, 1925:121).

This “hellish” view of New York City can be compared to *The Waste Land* as a vision of hell and the poem’s previously mentioned references to Dante’s *Inferno*. The “heat” in the waste land itself desiccates the earth, and this shared “hellish” vision in *The Waste Land* creates a sense of “general ominousness” (Leavis, 1932:178) which makes the poem’s view of the city universal. London, in its Limbo-like state, is “unreal”, but so, too, are other cities:

What is that sound high in the air
Murmur of maternal *lamentation*
Who are those hooded *hordes swarming*
Over *endless plains*, stumbling in *cracked earth*
Ringed by the flat horizon only
What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers

*Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London
Unreal* (TWL, 366-377, emphasis my own).

While evoking the “lamentations” from Dante once more, Eliot refers specifically to both ancient cities and modern *European* cities here, but it can be argued that Fitzgerald broadens the application of the notion of being “unreal” by expanding it to New York City.

Fitzgerald’s personal views of New York greatly influence Nick’s experiences of the city. Fitzgerald, too, was initially impressed by New York City, writing in “My Lost City” that he was overwhelmed, as Nick is, by “...the New York that offered itself for inspection...[he] had come only to stare at the show, though the designers of the Woolworth Building and the Chariot Race Sign, the producers of musical comedies and problem plays, could ask for no more appreciative spectator, for [he] took the style and glitter of New York *even above its own valuation*” (1936:1, emphasis my own). Only a few sentences later, however, Fitzgerald refers to New York as “...essentially cynical and heartless” as it lacked the presence of “[his] girl” (1936:2). Here, the author himself experiences the same lack of connection as his character, and in doing so, subjects himself to the same non-experience, constantly thinking of what could be if only someone else were present, instead of facing his reality. By the end of “My Lost City”, Fitzgerald inverts the initially hopeful view of New York. As Nick and Gatsby ride into the city, Nick considers that “anything [could] happen” in this potential-filled space (Fitzgerald, 1925:70). However, by the end of the Jazz Age, New York had changed for Fitzgerald: it had become “...[a] hungry-eyed, tarnished burg of grit and glass...beneath the indifferent skyline; flashy New York shaded at the edges into a *noir* town of irony and disillusion” (Chapman Sharpe, 2008:267), a waste land. As he reflects on his departure from New York, his attitude mirrors Nick’s by the end of the novel, as Fitzgerald remarks:

Thus I take leave of my lost city. *Seen from the ferry boat in the early morning, it no longer whispers of fantastic success and eternal youth...[a]ll is lost save memory... For the moment I can only cry out that I have lost my splendid mirage. Come back, come back, O glittering and white!* (1936:8, emphasis my own).

Seers in the city: Nick Carraway, Tiresias, Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, and the Fisher King

The previously discussed lack of connection in both cities, as well as humankind's incapability of noticing or "seeing" these issues are thus key focal points of both *The Waste Land* and *Gatsby* (Randall, 1964:51). As Randall points out, Eliot highlights this notion of being unable to "see" by focusing on physical sight (1964:52) – which will be linked with a lack of connection in this chapter. In *The Waste Land*, the lack of sight, both in and out of the city, is depicted a number of times throughout the poem. One of the first instances where Eliot's depiction of the "unseeing" individual can be linked with a lack of connection occurs early in the poem, in 'The Burial of the Dead':

"You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
"They called me the hyacinth girl."
- Yet when we came back, late, from the Hyacinth garden,
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.
Oed' und leer das Meer (TWL, 35-42).

This depiction offers these characters an opportunity for connection, yet this chance is lost due to the speaker's own Limbo-like state: "...neither/[l]iving nor dead, and [knowing] nothing". Instead of seizing this chance for connection, the speaker is wrapped in this condition of being "unseeing" – his "eyes [failing]" and his inability to speak are linked in this instance, this is what leads him to look "into the heart of light, the silence". It is this "silence" that the narrator of *The Waste Land* and Nick in *Gatsby* are so frustrated with. In both works, acts of not speaking and not seeing are linked to disconnection and, ultimately, social sterility. In *The Waste Land* this lack of connection and the "unseeing" nature of the

poem's Londoners culminate in part on London Bridge, with each city dweller "fix[ing] his eyes before his feet" (*TWL*, 65).

The abovementioned hyacinth scene is immediately followed by another instance of an "unseeing" character who not only has the opportunity to be a "seer" but is in fact expected to be one. Madame Sosotris, the poem's "famous clairvoyante", has her predictions weakened by "a bad cold" (Randall, 1964:52). An important part of her prediction involves the dead eyes of the Phoenician sailor: "(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)" (*TWL*, 48). This phrase is taken from Ariel's song in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*:

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange (*The Tempest*, 1.3.397-402).

The phrase is repeated later in *The Waste Land*, during 'A Game of Chess'. In this instance, the phrase is linked to the non-conversation between the Belladonna and her unnamed companion. She is desperate for her companion to answer her – to connect with her – yet she receives nothing but silence. Her conversation partner does respond, albeit not audibly, and his response is one that evokes the "unseeing" nature of *The Waste Land*'s Londoners:

"*Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak...*
I remember
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
"Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?" (*TWL*, 112 123-125, emphasis my own).

Madame Sosotris and the Belladonna are but two of many imperfect "seers" in the poem, and Fitzgerald's New York-based "seers" in *Gatsby* are shown to be imperfect and, in many ways, unreliable as well.

The Waste Land's most prominent “seer” is its perceived narrator, Tiresias. Tiresias personally admits a lack of sight, and is a Limbo-like character caught between being male and female:

I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see
...
I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest... (*TWL*, 218-219, 228-229).

Although Tiresias is physically “unseeing”, this narrator becomes the only character in the poem who truly “sees” these city dwellers’ sterility and lack of connection. Like Nick Carraway in *Gatsby*, Tiresias is *The Waste Land*'s observer – Eliot mentions in his notes on the poem that “[w]hat Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem” (Eliot, qtd. in North, 2001:23, original emphasis).

Randall compares Tiresias to two other important figures in *Gatsby*, however (1964:52). The first comparison is to Doctor T. J. Eckleburg’s eyes, as they are, like the eyes of Tiresias, physically blind:

The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic – their irises are one yard high. They look out of no face, but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then *sank down himself into eternal blindness*, or forgot them and moved away. But *his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days, under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground* (Fitzgerald, 1925:23-24, emphasis my own).

According to Randall, Tiresias, too, “broods” over the waste land as Eckleburg’s eyes do over the “valley of ashes” (1964:52). Where Tiresias observes and comments on the waste land-dwellers’ lack of connection, Eckleburg is but a silent observer. However, Randall notes that Eckleburg’s eyes point toward another “seer” character in *Gatsby*: Owl Eyes (1964:52). Owl Eyes is first introduced at one of Gatsby’s opulent parties as a flawed “seer” himself, in various ways. Owl Eyes is so named because of his spectacles, which impede his abilities as a

“seer”, yet this ability is also hindered by his drunkenness: “I’ve been drunk for about a week now, and I thought it might sober me up to sit in a library” (Fitzgerald, 1925:46). However, Owl Eyes takes on a Tiresias-like quality, as he is one of the few characters in *Gatsby*’s New York who not only watches, but “sees”. His first act of “seeing” is slightly superficial in nature, as he comments on Gatsby’s library upon his introduction:

“Absolutely real – have pages and everything. I thought they’d be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact, they’re absolutely real. Pages and – Here! Lemme show you.” Taking our scepticism for granted, he rushed to the bookcases and returned with Volume One of the “Stoddard Lectures.”

“See!” he cried triumphantly.

“It’s a bona-fide piece of printed matter. It fooled me. This fella’s a regular Belasco. It’s a triumph. What thoroughness! What realism! Knew when to stop, too – didn’t cut the pages. But what do you want? What do you expect?” He snatched the book from me and replaced it hastily on its shelf, muttering that if one brick was removed the whole library was liable to collapse (Fitzgerald, 1925:46, emphasis my own).

Randall interprets this instance as one in which Owl Eyes is able to “...look through the façade of Gatsby, and all he stands for, and, just as important, he is able to see that there is substance behind the façade” (1964:52). In this context, Owl Eyes makes a particularly interesting comparison of Gatsby to David Belasco, a theatrical producer, famous for his exceptionally realistic sets. This might bring Randall’s assertion that there is “substance” behind Gatsby’s “façade” into question, as this comparison may suggest that, like one of Belasco’s realistic theatrical sets, Gatsby’s home (and life) is no more than a theatrical production (Bourgeois and Clendenning, 2007:105). The “set” which Gatsby calls home can be related to the opulent room in ‘A Game of Chess’, filled with its “synthetic perfumes”, a “carved dolphin”, and “golden cupidons” in the place of live children (TWL, 80, 87, 96).

Owl Eyes’ exclamation of “See!” is one which he repeats later in the evening:

“See!” he explained.

“It went in the ditch.” The fact was infinitely astonishing to him, and I recognized first the unusual quality of wonder, and then the man – *it was the late patron of Gatsby’s library* (Fitzgerald, 1925:55-56, emphasis my own).

His exclamations can be viewed as a link to Tiresias as he implores the other characters to observe things as he does – to connect, either with their surroundings or with each other. Owl Eyes is, aside from Nick, the only character from Gatsby’s parties who bothers to attend Gatsby’s funeral (Randall, 1964:52, 53):

...I heard a car stop and then the sound of someone splashing after us over the soggy ground. I looked around. *It was the man with owl-eyed glasses* whom I had found marvelling over Gatsby’s books in the library one night three months before. I’d never seen him since then. I don’t know how he knew about the funeral, or even his name. *The rain poured down his thick glasses, and he took them off and wiped them to see the protecting canvas unrolled from Gatsby’s grave...* Dimly I heard someone murmur, “Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on,” and then the owl-eyed man said “Amen to that,” in a brave voice. We straggled down quickly through the rain to the cars. Owl-eyes spoke to me by the gate. “I couldn’t get to the house,” he remarked. “Neither could anybody else.” “Go on!” He started. “Why, my God! they used to go there by the hundreds.” *He took off his glasses and wiped them again, outside and in.* “The poor son-of-a-bitch,” he said (Fitzgerald, 1925:179-180, emphasis my own).

Owl Eyes’ vision is still physically imperfect, although this time he is “...no longer troubled by drunkenness but by rain which blurs his glasses; and at such a moment he might be said, more literally than the seer of the billboard, to ‘brood...over the solemn dumping ground’” (Randall, 1964:52, 53). Here, the “solemn dumping ground” moves from the city landscape of the “valley of ashes” and transfers itself to Gatsby’s final resting place.

Nick is, as has been discussed earlier in this chapter, the chief “seer” in Gatsby’s New York. Like Tiresias, however, he observes the city-dwellers at a distance and recounts their actions. In his position as one who reports on the actions of the other characters, Nick provides “...an ocular initiation into the mysteries and wonders of a magical country, during which he is constantly absorbed in the process of adjusting his credulity to received visual data, and checking and rechecking to ascertain whether his eyes have played him false” (Westbrook, 1960:79).

Randall further argues that if both Eliot and Fitzgerald’s “seers” share similar limitations in their visions of these cities and their dwellers, then the worlds these “seers” observe must have similar imperfections as well (1964:53). To Westbrook, the “primary subject” of *Gatsby* is “the growth of an awareness” (1960:79) – this “awareness”, of course, belonging to Nick Carraway:

[Nick] not only enjoys the advantage of distance in time from the events he relates, but even at the scene of their unfolding has been more of a perceiver than a participant. It is significant that his retrospections are never so concerned with what he *did* as with what he *saw*. His freedom from crucial dramatic involvement enables the internalities of poetic vision to widen and deepen the implications of the ostensibly shallow world *The Great Gatsby* deals with. Unattended by this kind of vision the purely dramatic ingredients of the novel – as the movies and television have demonstrated – merely add up to a disjointed impression of fast living in the Twenties, affording no haunting sense of the penalties levied upon an ethos by the excitements – or, more accurately, the excitations – of an era (Westbrook, 1960:79, original emphasis).

This blossoming “awareness” is a concern in Eliot’s London as well, and it links with the previously discussed themes of connection. The fact that, in both works, only select characters possess this “awareness” and this yearning for connection further points to the pivotal themes of sterility in both works. *The Waste Land*, as previously discussed, contains a variety of distorted nature imagery. Perhaps the most prominent version of this kind of imagery in *Gatsby* is the description of the “valley of ashes”. Throughout the novel, however, there lingers a sense of “manufactured-ness” in some of its descriptions of nature: “And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow *in fast movies*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:5, emphasis my own). Westbrook describes the presence of this inverted approach to the natural in a way that may extend Fitzgerald’s (and, to an extent, Eliot’s) critique of the city:

Symbolically they reflect the abortive commitments of a generation whose sense of distinctions has been destroyed by the prodigious acceleration of a commercial and technical civilization...The people in *The Great Gatsby*, ironically enough, have not consciously renounced nature. They have only ceased to perceive its limits. They

think continually in terms of fertility, but the forms of it that they wish upon the world are either altogether specious, or else “forced” (1960:80).

The notion of general sterility can further be linked to the central image of the desert in *The Waste Land*, and the poem’s very title – with its antecedents in the Grail legends. As Weinstein asserts, “‘Bearing fruit’ is the vexed matter of *The Waste Land*, and Eliot finds many voices and strategies to convey his pervasive sense of sterility as the condition of both his moment and his city” (2014:140). One of these “voices” Eliot uses to communicate the notion of sterility in *The Waste Land* is that of the Fisher King: “Here is *the man with three staves*, and here the Wheel” (*TWL*, 50, emphasis my own). In his notes, Eliot says about this line that he “[associates The Man with Three Staves] quite arbitrarily with the Fisher King himself” (Eliot, qtd. in North, 2001:22).

In his article ‘*The Waste Land: An Analysis*’, Cleanth Brooks, Jr. links the following lines from the poem to the Fisher King as well:

*A rat crept softly through the vegetation
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank
While I was fishing in the dull canal
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse
Musing upon the king my brother’s wreck
And on the king my father’s death before him.
White bodies naked on the low damp ground
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,
Rattled by the rat’s foot only, year to year.
But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors... (TWL, 187-197, emphasis my own).*

These lines again echo Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, a play which Brooks describes as a “major symbol” of the poem (1937:116): “Sitting on a bank/Weeping again the King my father’s wrack” (*The Tempest*, 1.2.390-391). Brooks justifies his connection of these lines from *The Waste Land* to the Fisher King by creating a further link to Weston’s *From Ritual to Romance*:

The castle of the Fisher King was always located on the banks of a river or on the sea shore. The title “Fisher King,” Miss Weston shows, originates from the use of the fish as a fertility or life symbol. This meaning, however, was often forgotten, and so the title in many of the later Grail romances is accounted for by describing the king as fishing. *Eliot uses the reference to fishing for reverse effect. The reference to fishing is part of the realistic detail of the scene – “While I was fishing in the dull canal.” But to the reader who knows the Weston references, the reference is to that of the Fisher King of the Grail legends* (Brooks, 1937:118, emphasis my own).

The abovementioned lines from ‘The Fire Sermon’ place the Fisher King firmly in a city setting, referring to the “sound of horns and motors” which bleed into the Fisher King’s contemplations. However, the Fisher King is also surrounded by death and decay in this instance, as shown by the presence of the “white...naked” bodies. Even the “vegetation” surrounding him is tarnished by a rat with a “slimy belly”. The presence of the Fisher King in *The Waste Land* is credited to the book *From Ritual to Romance* by Jessie Weston – as is the title of the poem itself (*TWL*, Eliot’s note). In Arthurian legend, the Fisher King is the last of the Holy Grail’s keepers, and he is often also referred to as the Wounded or Maimed King (Weston, 1920:14). The Fisher King is wounded (often in the groin) and cannot produce a new generation. This impotence then transfers to the Fisher King’s lands, and he is seen “...as the direct cause of *the wasting of the land*” (Weston, 1920:13, emphasis my own).

The notion of the Fisher King and the fertility symbolism surrounding this character are equally important in *The Great Gatsby*. This is particularly prominent in the passage where Nick mentions that Gatsby’s self-imposed obligation to Daisy means that Gatsby has “...committed himself to the following of a grail” (Fitzgerald, 1925:152). This has led critics to liken Gatsby’s life and his pursuit of Daisy to the “quests” of Arthurian legends, with critics such as Kim Moreland even referring to his quest as “failed” or somehow incomplete (Lagomarsino, 2014:46). By illustrating Gatsby as a Fisher King-like character, Fitzgerald shows, as discussed previously, “...a certain disenchantment with the post-World-War-I era in which ideals are corrupted and love, like faith, is impossible” (Lupack, 1994:332). During

the course of the novel, it becomes clear that various parallels can be drawn between Jay Gatsby and the character of the Fisher King. The point in the novel that best illustrates Gatsby's overlap with the Fisher King lies in the description of Gatsby's death. When his body is discovered, Gatsby is on a mattress in his swimming pool:

There was a faint, barely perceptible movement of the water as the fresh flow from one end urged its way toward the drain at the other, with little ripples that were hardly the shadows of waves, the laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool. 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, tracing, like the leg of a compass, a thin red circle in the water (Fitzgerald, 1925:166, emphasis my own).

In many of the Grail legends, the so-called questor repeatedly encounters "...a dead knight on a bier" or "...a wounded king on a litter" (Weston, 1920:48). Lagomarsino links the discovery of Gatsby's body to the Grail legends in this context, stating that "...Gatsby's death scene mirrors...images of... the grail king's lifeless [body]" (2014:50). However, another key part of the character of the Fisher King is the rejuvenation of his lands upon his death. This is also the case for Gatsby, as the day of his funeral is pouring with rain:

About five o'clock our procession of three cars reached the cemetery and stopped in a thick drizzle beside the gate – first a motor hearse, horribly black and wet, then Mr. Gatz and the minister and I in the limousine, and a little later four or five servants and the postman from West Egg in Gatsby's station wagon, all wet to the skin. As we started through the gate into the cemetery I heard a car stop and then the sound of someone splashing after us over the soggy ground... 'Blessed are the dead that the rain falls on' (Fitzgerald, 1925:179, emphasis my own).

Therefore, some renewal (albeit in a slightly negative sense) is possible after Gatsby's death – not only in the natural world, but also in Nick's personal life. He is able to cut ties with New York, a place he had once held in such high esteem, and leave it and its people behind with the remark that "the party [is] over" (Fitzgerald, 1925:185).

Chapter 3: From hope to destruction, from destruction to hope: reverse trajectories in

The Great Gatsby and The Waste Land

Introduction

Hope is a sentiment which, for many works written during and shortly after the Great War, seemed to be either elusive, entirely absent, or an unachievable societal mirage. In *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby* – both post-war works – the subject of hope and its validity is prominent in their characters and themes. This chapter will argue that a reverse movement can be seen in these two works where hope is concerned. This chapter will strive to highlight the reverse attitudes of Eliot and Fitzgerald before and after writing *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby*, respectively. Where Eliot's approach would later take a more positive turn (and where *The Waste Land*, in its social criticism, still reveals a sense of hope), Fitzgerald's later life and writings would be more negative.

Both Fitzgerald and his character Nick Carraway's attitudes are filled with a sense of naivety that is systematically broken down as the novel (and Fitzgerald's own life) progress.

Fitzgerald's personal sense of hopefulness would become evident already in his school years, as Mizener makes mention of the author's "...capacity for hero-worship" (1951:5). This attitude faded during Fitzgerald's years at Princeton, especially after being conscripted in 1917. Before his departure to Fort Leavenworth in November 1917, Fitzgerald wrote to his mother, saying that "...[t]o a profound pessimist about life, being in danger is not depressing" (Mizener, 1951:67). This notion is therefore an important informing factor for Fitzgerald's works, especially when considering his status as a member of the so-called Lost Generation – a generation that reached adulthood during the Great War. Fitzgerald's changing attitude towards life and hope, as mirrored in *Gatsby*, is confirmed in a statement made by Priya David in a 2013 article in *The Daily News*, in which David says that *The Great Gatsby* "...is

ultimately a great book, great in the way that Eliot's "Waste Land" is great, *even if it is not life-affirming* as the greatest poems and the greatest novels are" (2013:n.p, emphasis my own).

It can be argued that in *The Waste Land*, the general tone shifts from one of hopelessness to one where hope becomes possible, whereas an opposite shift occurs in *The Great Gatsby*. This chapter will therefore consider the above notion by examining the characters, settings and overall themes of both works and considering how attitudes towards hope change as these works progress.

In the case of *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby's "extraordinary gift for hope" (Fitzgerald, 1925:2), as well as Nick's initial naivety and subsequent negativity will be scrutinized. In the case of *The Waste Land*, the shifting natural world and the poem's focus on human experience will be considered in this regard. Specifically, this chapter will consider *The Waste Land*'s initial views of nature as "cruel" in relation to its later assertion that rain (and hope) could be imminent for the waste land's inhabitants. Additionally, focus will be placed on human connection and how interpersonal relationships can transcend social sterility. It should be noted that, even though this chapter will relate the two works to the War that preceded their conception and publication, I do not wish to suggest that these works are exclusively "war-centric", especially *The Waste Land*.

A New Historical perspective as set out by Stephen Greenblatt and others has proven useful in investigating the reversal of hope in these two works. This critical approach is particularly useful to this discussion as New Historicists consider works in their cultural contexts and explore these works through their histories. New Historicists also consider history and fiction to be interrelated – a notion that can be further explored through *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby*.

A reversal of expectations: *The Great Gatsby* and the loss of hope

When considering the character of Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway seems almost entranced by Gatsby's personality. At the beginning of *The Great Gatsby*, Nick possesses a sense of childlike wonder when it comes to New York City and its Jazz Age inhabitants. As mentioned in the previous chapter, his outlook shifts along with that of the novel – his sense of naïve hopefulness seems to disintegrate the more he interacts with the city and the people he surrounds himself with. Nick begins to view his companions with derision and contempt by the novel's end, coming to the realisation that Daisy is a “careless” person and that he is “too old” to carry on lying to himself about his relationship with Jordan Baker (Fitzgerald, 1925: 183, 184). He also comes to the realisation that he is now not above openly showing his disapproval of Tom, refusing to so much as shake hands with him after Myrtle's death:

“What's the matter, Nick? Do you object to shaking hands with me?”
“Yes. *You know what I think of you*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:184, emphasis my own).

This tonal shift that can be observed in Nick does not truly seem to apply to his view of Gatsby, however. As the novel opens, Nick describes Gatsby as inherently hopeful:

If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then *there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life...* This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the “creative temperament” – it was an *extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness* such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again (Fitzgerald, 1925:2, emphasis my own).

Nick looks back at his own experiences throughout the novel with negativity, now admitting that he has “unaffected scorn” (Fitzgerald, 1925:2) for things he once accepted, such as wealth, ruthless ambition and hopefulness. The Nick who first moves to West Egg is a man who himself possesses “...the naïve hope that the best of life is yet to come” (Steinbrink, 1980:157). In an interesting inverse of *The Waste Land's* famous opening, “April is the cruellest month” (*TWL*, 1) – which presents a negative view of spring and its accompanying

renewal – Nick notes at the beginning of *Gatsby* that, “...with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, [he has] that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer” (Fitzgerald, 1925:4). He thus presents a more traditional, positive, life-giving view of nature here. However, the summer later becomes excruciating to both Nick and his companions, and where *The Waste Land* ends with the promise of rain, the summer becomes unbearably “hot! hot! hot!” to the characters in *Gatsby* (Fitzgerald, 1925:117).

Additionally, in his article “‘Boats Against the Current’: Mortality and the Myth of Renewal in *The Great Gatsby*’ Jeffrey Steinbrink argues that both Nick and Gatsby eventually suffer the same fate as the majority of Fitzgerald’s characters: coming to the “...realization that such circumstances as give life meaning lie buried in an irrecoverable past” (1980:157). Steinbrink further remarks that Nick’s eventual disillusionment is inexorably linked to the universal disillusionment of post-war individuals (1980:158), as this dissertation has also previously briefly discussed. It is Steinbrink’s view that the so-called Lost Generation could not truly imagine a world before the Great War, and inevitably found themselves “suspended in time” because of this (1980:158):

To a person standing at the threshold of the 1920s the pre-war world and its traditions appeared not simply remote, but archaic, the repository of an innocence long since dead. Possessed of what seemed an irrelevant past, Americans faced an inaccessible future; for a moment in our history there was only the present. The roar of the twenties was both a birth-cry and a death-rattle...the perennial fruits of the American experience were frustration and disappointment” (1980:158).

It is with this in mind that Steinbrink links America’s overall post-war experience to that of Nick Carraway. In essence, *The Great Gatsby* serves to prove that the past cannot be recreated or relived, and it is this realisation that disappoints an intrinsically hopeful character like Jay Gatsby. He refuses to accept Nick’s confrontation that his attempts to recapture his past with Daisy cannot succeed:

“You can’t repeat the past.”

“Can’t repeat the past?” he [Gatsby] cried incredulously.

“Why of course you can!” He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand.

“I’m going to fix everything just the way it was before,” he said, nodding *determinedly.*

“She’ll see.” *He talked a lot about the past, and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy.* His life had been confused and disordered since then, but *if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly, he could find out what that thing was...* (Fitzgerald, 1925:112-113, emphasis my own).

As he attempts desperately to cling to the past, Gatsby symbolises a bridging of attitudes between pre- and post-war individuals. In his business life, Gatsby is driven and eager to move forward, as is demonstrated by the meticulous schedule he kept in his youth, upon which his father comments, “Jimmy was bound to get ahead. He always had some resolves like this or something. Do you notice what he’s got about improving his mind? He was always great for that...” (Fitzgerald, 1925:178). Gatsby is desperate to impress, to get ahead, to prove once and for all that he, too, belongs in Daisy’s world of money. Nick often describes Gatsby as “restless”, vibrating with unspent energy – Nick mentions that Gatsby has a “resourcefulness of movement” that “continually break[s] through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness” and that Gatsby “was never quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand” (Fitzgerald, 1925:65). In this sense, Gatsby embodies that part of post-war society that lives for the present and dares to strive for the budding American Dream.

However, as discussed, Gatsby certainly still also represents those post-war individuals who wished to cling to the past. This is mostly evident in his dealings with Daisy. Gatsby wishes to experience the aphoristic “best of both worlds” – he is industrious and forward-thinking, but where Daisy is concerned, their past happiness is the only thing he seems to be concerned with. Both of these mental spaces he occupies require a certain measure of hopefulness to

pre-exist in Gatsby's mind, however. As Nick mentions, Gatsby does, after all, have an "extraordinary gift" for it.

Nick appears, then, to truly admire Gatsby's ability to hope. When Nick first begins to explore New York and its surrounds, he, too, is credulous and expectant, saying that "[t]he city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first *wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world*" (Fitzgerald, 1925:70, emphasis my own).

It is right up until Nick re-introduces Gatsby and Daisy, in fact, that he still moves through life "light-headed and happy" (Fitzgerald, 1925:85). Daisy and Gatsby's first meeting at Nick's home is almost prophetic in itself – of Nick's coming disillusionment and of Gatsby's imminent demise. It is a rainy day, and to match the shift in weather, Gatsby's seemingly light-hearted restlessness now changes into something resembling anxiety, as he offers "hollow" responses to Nick's questions and looks about the room with "vacant eyes" (Fitzgerald, 1925:86). In a moment foreshadowing Gatsby's death, he stands at Nick's front door, "*pale as death*, with his hands plunged like weights in his coat pockets...*in a puddle of water* glaring tragically into [Nick's] eyes" (Fitzgerald, 1925:88, emphasis my own). It seems that, in this instance, even the unquenchable Gatsby may have lost his spark of hope. He is suddenly insecure and "embarrassed" now that part of his dream to reconnect with Daisy is within reach. For a fleeting moment, Gatsby perhaps realises that grasping at the past is a futile endeavour: "'Oh, God!' [he whispered] *in a miserable way*... '*This is a terrible mistake*,' he said, shaking his head from side to side, '*a terrible, terrible mistake*'" (Fitzgerald, 1925:89, emphasis my own). With Nick's encouragement, however, this brief change in Gatsby soon dissipates, and as Gatsby and Daisy conclude their re-introduction, a picture of hope is presented – yet it is an image that is also tainted by regret and despondency. On one hand, Daisy's "face [is] smeared with tears" (Fitzgerald, 1925:91),

which is likely indicative of either a possible realisation of past mistakes and the regret that accompanies this, or a lamentation of the fact that long-buried elements of her past are resurfacing and creating confusion within her. Gatsby, on the other hand, has undergone a rapid transformation: "...there was a change in Gatsby that was simply confounding. He literally glowed; without a word or a gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room" (Fitzgerald, 1925:91). As Gatsby's confidence and hope return, the external setting of this scene changes as well, as Nick notes to his companions that the rain has stopped.

This meeting in particular is a pivotal point in the novel when considering Gatsby's "gift for hope". Even in the face of embarrassment and possible failure, it appears that his machinations work out for the best. But, as the novel later reveals, this is not necessarily the case. Even if Gatsby does not fully realise it at this point, his hopeful dream for his life with Daisy is also fading. Nick notices this when the trio tour Gatsby's mansion on the same day as Gatsby and Daisy's re-introduction at Nick's home:

...[O]utside Gatsby's window it began to rain again, so we stood in a row looking at the corrugated surface of the Sound.
"If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay," said Gatsby.
"You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock." Daisy put her arm through his abruptly, but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that *the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever*. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. *Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one* (Fitzgerald, 1925:95, emphasis my own).

Importantly, this is Nick's interpretation of what Gatsby may be thinking. He formulates an independent conclusion regarding Gatsby's hope and whether or not it is fading. To Nick, however, this is a point where he begins to reject Gatsby's – and his own – hopefulness. In his article, 'The Gospel of Gatsby', Bernard Tanner writes that Gatsby becomes an "inverted Christ" figure – linking his "extraordinary gift for hope" to the idea of rebirth (1965:467).

Interestingly, however, Tanner compares Nick to Nicodemus and states that Nick rejects being a “disciple” of Gatsby (1965:471), despite his glowing descriptions of the man:

The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. *He was a son of God – a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that – and he must be about His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty.* So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end...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. 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 (Fitzgerald, 1925:100, 186, emphasis my own).

Tanner adds that this “rejection of discipleship becomes a rejection of life” (1965:471). This attitude could also link to Nick’s hopelessness at the end of the novel, and may even signal that he had had very little capacity for hope all along:

[Nick is] a man who, *having denied the possibility of rebirth, seeks its attractive counterfeit – general destruction – to wipe the slate clean for an enforced renewal.* Nick admits having “enjoyed” the First World War as a “counter-raid” as part of the “delayed Teutonic migration,” and *by the end of the novel, he is psychologically ripe for World War II – a new destruction which might complete the job* (Tanner, 1965:471, emphasis my own).

It is in the context of Tanner’s discussion of Nick’s “ripeness” for the Second World War that a New Historicist outlook could be applied to notions of the loss of hope in *The Great Gatsby*. New Historicism serves to awaken a dual interest in both “the historicity of texts...[which refers to] the cultural specificity, the social embedment, of all modes of writing [and]... the textuality of history...[which refers to] the surviving textual traces of the society in question” (Montrose, 1989:20). In this context, it can perhaps then be said that the novel in itself can be viewed through a New Historicist lens, as it decentralises the grand narrative of the Jazz Age and places the focus upon those who inhabit this space and suffer its inevitable consequences. Harold Veaser notes that “New Historicists have evolved a method of describing culture in action” and that they utilise methods of “thick description” to reinterpret a text so that it “...[reveals] through the analysis of tiny particulars the behavioural

codes, logics, and motive forces controlling a whole society” (1989:xi). This would mean that literature cannot be segregated from its cultural contexts, making everything surrounding these texts relatable to how they are understood. Before New Historicism first began to take root as a method of literary criticism, the contextualization of texts was, under the New Criticism, seen as an irrelevant digression rather than a serious form of literary criticism. “[H]istorical backgrounds” in texts had “nothing to do with” their interpretation (Richards, 1930:237). Texts were rather regarded as being independent of any historical or biographical context. Conversely, New Historicism propagates that texts inevitably remain connected to their socio-historical foundations.

Discussions surrounding the dissipation of hope in *Gatsby* cannot be analysed separately from the novel’s socio-historical background. Nick and Gatsby are not the only characters who experience the respective need for or a fear of destruction and decline – feelings associated with post-war disenchantment. Drawing further from the post-war context of the novel, Tom Buchanan is a character who, like many of the real-world Jazz Age individuals he is based on, is preoccupied with his fear of the “impending decline” not of only hope, but also of civilization itself (Turlish, 1971:443):

“Civilization’s going to pieces,” broke out Tom violently...”I’ve gotten to be a terrible pessimist about things...we’ve produced all the things that go to make civilization – oh, science and art, and all that. Do you see?” There was something pathetic in his concentration, as if his complacency, more acute than of old, was not enough to him any more (Fitzgerald, 1925:13-14).

Tom’s mindset, according to Turlish, forms part of the “flourish, decline, and decay” mentality of the novel and the works that influenced it, such as *The Waste Land* (1971:443).

Nick and most of the other characters view Tom’s assertions flippantly and do not pay much mind to them. This is best depicted by Daisy and Jordan Baker’s offhand comments that appear throughout Tom’s impassioned civilization-speech. Tom, of course, tramples over

their insertions with brazen interruptions, until all the guests are relieved at the “momentary interruption” of a ringing telephone during this encounter. Daisy light-heartedly winks at Nick throughout Tom’s tirade, while both Nick and Jordan seem annoyed at Tom’s assertions – or possibly simply at his rudeness:

“Tom’s getting very profound,” said Daisy, *with an expression of unthoughtful sadness*.

“He reads deep books with long words in them. What was that word we–.”

“Well, these books are all scientific,” insisted Tom, *glancing at her impatiently*...

“We’ve got to beat them down,” whispered Daisy, *winking ferociously* toward the fervent sun.

“You ought to live in California–.” began Miss Baker, but *Tom interrupted her by shifting heavily in his chair*.

“This idea is that we’re Nordics. I am, and you are, and you are, and–.” After an infinitesimal hesitation he included Daisy with a slight nod, and *she winked at me again* (Fitzgerald, 1925:13-14, emphasis my own).

Even though the characters do not seem to take Tom’s own brand of “hopelessness” very seriously, he is still without hope, despite his domineering nature.

Daisy, conversely, is a character who is depicted as inherently hopeless throughout the novel.

Despite her outward grace and cheerfulness, she quickly reveals to Nick that she “think[s] everything’s terrible anyhow” (Fitzgerald, 1925:18). Unlike Gatsby, Nick, and – to a certain extent – Tom, Daisy feels this from the very start of the novel. For her, there is no gradual decline into hopelessness – she seems to have always viewed the world in this way, and by the end of the novel, her outlook has not changed: “...with every word she was drawing further and further into herself...only the *dead dream* fought on as the afternoon slipped away, *trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly*, toward that lost voice across the room” (Fitzgerald, 1925:137-138). From a New Historicist perspective, Daisy is the post-war individual who embraces the “boredom” of post-war life for the rich, as well as the “...dizzying temptation of excess [which] could never be described simply as loss” (Monk, 2008:2). Daisy additionally embodies those Jazz Age individuals who “embrace” this selective post-war affluence without enthusiasm – perhaps in unwitting

anticipation of the coming Great Depression (Monk, 2008:2), which is evident in her defeatist view of the world as she describes her daughter's birth to Nick:

“Well, *I've had a very bad time*, Nick, and *I'm pretty cynical about everything*... Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when [Pammy] was born... It'll show you how I've gotten to feel about – things...”
“I woke up out of the ether *with an utterly abandoned feeling*, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. ‘All right,’ I said, ‘I'm glad it's a girl. And *I hope she'll be a fool – that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.*’ “You see *I think everything's terrible anyhow*... Everybody thinks so – the most advanced people... *I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything... [s]ophisticated – God, I'm sophisticated*” (Fitzgerald, 1925:17-18, emphasis my own).

In her acceptance of post-war life's “boredom”, Daisy can be aligned with the character of Marie in *The Waste Land*, as discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation. Marie seems to fill her hours and days with mostly trivial activities:

...we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour
...
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter (TWL, 9-11, 18, emphasis my own).

These sentiments echo the way in which Daisy and Tom live their lives, with Daisy constantly asking her companions what they will “do”. They both spend their time doing nothing of consequence, succumbing further to a (shared) loss of hope:

Why they came East I don't know. They had spent a year in France *for no particular reason*, and then *drifted* here and there *unrestfully* wherever people played polo and were rich together. This was a permanent move, said Daisy over the telephone, but I didn't believe it – I had no sight into Daisy's heart, but I felt that *Tom would drift on forever seeking*, a little *wistfully*, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game (Fitzgerald, 1925:6, emphasis my own).

Each main character in *Gatsby* suffers from some form of hopelessness, and each of these characters' experiences could not occur or convey meaning without the existence of the

novel's historical context. The hopelessness of post-war society is therefore an overarching attitude that greatly affects Fitzgerald's characters.

The Waste Land: an unexpected "gift for hope"

As mentioned earlier in this dissertation, when considering the closeness of their publication dates, *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby* inhabit the same contextual space, at least partially. Both of these works focus on how the external changes brought about by the war affect the internal landscapes of its victims, and both works look at the post-war individual with a kind of resentment, albeit in different ways. Both works seem to begrudge post-war individuals for their apathy towards their new post-war state: they wonder what will become of them, but do not take action, choosing instead to remain stagnant in their in-between state, allowing their lives to continue unaffected. Most importantly, however, it is vital to keep in mind that while *Gatsby's* concluding views involve ultimate ineffectiveness and futility, *The Waste Land* makes it evident that there is hope for this listless post-war society in 'What the Thunder Said' with the imagery of imminent rain – providing a possible positive outcome for this barren landscape:

In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust
Bringing rain
Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
Waited for rain, while the black clouds
Gathered far distant, over Himavant.
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.
Then spoke the thunder
...

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

Shantih shantih shantih (*TWL*, 393-399, 432-433).

The Waste Land, of course, does not begin so positively. As previously discussed, the poem opens abruptly and almost harshly with images of nature inverted. Eliot breaks down any expectations of poetically blandished language in the opening line of *The Waste Land*: "April

is the *cruellest* month” (*TWL*, 1 – emphasis my own). This curt opening serves to shock and almost dishearten readers from the very start, reminding them of the harsh reality of the war and its aftermath, confirming to them the fact that *The Waste Land* will decidedly not be a poem praising the post-war routine of blindly carrying on with life as though all is well.

While sentiments such as these are inherently hopeless as well, Eliot points to other areas of post-war society as sources of hopelessness, too. One aspect of post-war society that is depicted as fundamentally futile are religious institutions. In *The Waste Land*, the Modernist rejection of religion as a knowable, stable refuge for humanity is echoed in the depiction of the sudden spiritual poverty of the church after the war:

In this *decayed* hole among the mountains
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel
There is the *empty chapel, only the wind’s home.*
It has no windows, and the door swings,
Dry bones can harm no one.
Only a cock stood on the rooftree
Co co rico co co rico (*TWL*, 385-392, emphasis my own).

The church’s messages of compassion and love would have been doubted after the war. After the atrocities witnessed or indirectly experienced by those left behind after the war, such messages might have lost meaning in their barren mental landscapes. Bergonzi highlights both the lack of and simultaneous need for religious stability as a key theme of *The Waste Land*, as the influence of religion began to diminish during and directly after the war (1970:383). The poem’s references to the abandoned, “empty chapel” and the “tumbled graves” which surround it suggest that “...just as the war has replaced the lyrical fields of pastoral vision with ‘an infernal cemetery’, it has also shattered the *consolatory hopes* of Christian theology” (Gilbert, 2014:n.p, emphasis my own).

An outlook of hopelessness and futility is adopted in *The Waste Land*, which is made evident not only in the poem’s title, but also in its disposition. Gilbert, perhaps over-persistently,

ventures that *The Waste Land*, "...may be considered a figure for No Man's Land itself, a ravaged terrain littered with the shards of the English elegy..." (Gilbert, 1999:194). An elegy, which is traditionally produced as a means of lamenting the passing of a person, generally ends with a form of consolation, moving from misery to optimism. If *The Waste Land* is to be viewed in the way Gilbert asserts here, it can then be expected that there is some form of consolation to be reached at the end of the poem. Ezekiel Black, perhaps slightly fancifully, postulates that Eliot uses the opening section of *The Waste Land* as an attempt to "resurrect" Jean Verdenal, a soldier-friend of Eliot's who died in 1915 (2013:9). Verdenal's death is said to have caused Eliot to undergo a "...personal and poetic crisis" (Gilbert, 1999:193). This idea is echoed by Krockel: "Verdenal and the dead of war form the ordering silence of *The Waste Land*. They are dissociated from the cultural narrative of the poem, just as Eliot dissociated his memory of them from his personal history as a successful critic of culture" (2011:90). However, assertions that *The Waste Land* can be viewed as a type of elegy for Verdenal have largely been contested. Bergonzi notes that, "...the assumption that *The Waste Land* is a homosexual elegy or lament...[has] little basis in fact" (1978:x). Bergonzi adds that hopelessness and futility are present in *The Waste Land*, just not in the way that critics like Gilbert, Black and Krockel argue: "...anxiety and disgust and longing recur in Eliot's poetry, but it is evident that they are provoked by women rather than by men" (1978:x).

The first four sections of *The Waste Land* echo the sentiments of futility which would be shared by most individuals who had either returned from the war or those who had stayed behind during the war. However, the Great War was not reviled from its beginning. In fact, many enlisted as a result of the aforementioned motivational and patriotic, almost propaganda-filled works by poets such as Jessie Pope. The Great War, many believed, "...would be quick and glorious" (Watts, 2015:n.p). However, the opposite turned out to be true. As the years dragged on with no apparent end to the war in sight, and as soldiers and

civilians alike experienced the deaths of friends and loved ones in large numbers, “...bitterness and disillusionment set in” (Watts, 2015:n.p). This disillusioned attitude is perhaps best conveyed in the 1929 novel by Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*:

I am young, I am twenty years old; yet *I know nothing of life but despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow*. I see how peoples are set against one another, and *in silence, unknowingly, foolishly, obediently, innocently slay one another*. I see that the keenest brains of the world invent weapons and words to make it yet more refined and enduring. *And all men of my age, here and over there, throughout the whole world see these things; all my generation is experiencing these things with me*. What would our fathers do if we suddenly stood up and came before them and proffered our account? What do they expect of us if a time ever comes when the war is over? Through the years our business has been killing;– it was our first calling in life. *Our knowledge of life is limited to death. What will happen afterwards? And what shall come out of us?* (1929:119, emphasis my own).

This passage depicts two sides of the war-affected individual. Firstly, it depicts the disillusioned soldier – one who has seen death, and who may at some point have been the cause thereof. In this passage, main character Paul Bäumer laments the fact that he is young, yet he does not know a life outside of the “...despair, death, fear, and fatuous superficiality cast over an abyss of sorrow...” (Remarque, 1929:119) brought about by the war. Secondly, Bäumer becomes a proto-waste land dweller: he finds himself wondering what will become of him and his fellow soldiers “...if a time ever comes when the war is over...What will happen afterwards? And what shall come out of us?” (Remarque, 1929:119). This echoes the Belladonna’s words in *The Waste Land*: “...[w]hat shall we do tomorrow?/[w]hat shall we ever do?” (TWL, 133-134).

When discussing this uncertainty of the post-war individual embodied as a rising concern in the closing question of this passage from Remarque’s book, Watts notes that it “...speaks to the reality of what it was like to return home to a land which knew nothing of the battlefield, into a general citizenry that could never comprehend the horror of trench warfare” (2015,n.p). She adds her own variation on a quote by Philip Larkin to add to this statement: “...these

men, and really the world at large, would never know such innocence again” (Watts, 2015,n.p).

When considering themes of uncertainty, futility and hopelessness from a New Historicist viewpoint, it becomes clear that a New Historicist perspective can be applied to *The Waste Land* if it is viewed as a poem which highlights the post-war perceptions not necessarily only of T. S. Eliot himself, but also those of the surviving individuals feeling the effects of the war. A New Historicist discussion of *The Waste Land* cannot be launched without acknowledging the poem as a seminal Modernist work, however. In *The Great War and the Language of Modernism*, Vincent Sherry notes that Modernism’s link to the Great War and vice versa is a factor that is often overlooked. Sherry notes that “...the “newness” of Modernism [is depicted] as a general, even mass, condition” (2003:34) and that after the Great War, “...[h]umanity will have moved into this next dimension, or so goes the plot of this cultural history, simply by passing over those (putative) Rubicons, of which the Great War is nominally the greatest” (2003:34).

Sherry further points out that this view of Modernism was largely influenced by the “...imperial claims of *The Pound Era*, in which Hugh Kenner references a whole cultural age to the aesthetic premises of one major poet” (2003:34). This would later be viewed as perpetuating a view contradicted by a New Historicist perspective. Instead, Modernism attempts to achieve a state of authorial multiplicity, a notion that the New Historicists would favour in the 1980s. New Historicist views solidify the notion that a formalist view of history which values only grand narratives “devalu[es]...Modernism” (Sherry, 2003:34).

This New Historicist view is linked to Eliot’s theory of impersonality, which he writes about in his essay ‘Tradition and the Individual Talent’. In this theory, Eliot considers the poet in relation to the past, and the relation of the poet and the poem, explaining that the poet cannot

be separated from his or her fellow poets and poetic forerunners – nor can the poet be separated from his or her socio-historical milieu:

The emotion of art is impersonal. And the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done. And he is not likely to know what is to be done unless he lives in what is not merely the present, but the present moment of the past, unless he is conscious, not of what is dead, but of what is already living (1917:7).

In *The Waste Land*, Eliot almost foreshadows what the New Historicists would later strive to do: to give voices to the marginalised characters of history – of the aftermath of the war in the case of *The Waste Land*. In the case of New Historicism, the marginalised characters of literature are highlighted, although the New Historicists would conclude that if history is but another narrative, then history and literature take on similar characteristics.

Due to the ruptures caused by the war in society as it was known to civilians, the perfect circumstances for the rise of Modernism were created, especially for “...American expatriates like Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, [because] their discussions moved from concerns about aestheticism to the nature of civilization – the preservation of which the war was meant to ensure” (Watts, 2015,n.p).

In accordance with New Historicist theoretical views, *The Waste Land* cannot be read critically without taking its historical context and intertextual references into consideration. *The Waste Land* was written during an *inter-war* period and depicts humanity in an in-between state which mirrors its historical context. Eliot explores what is left of the mental landscapes of confused, guilt-ridden post-war civilian figures and takes this approach even further by not only placing the focus on one group of war survivors, but on a host of different post-war individuals with different backgrounds. This conglomeration of different historical voices is perpetuated in New Historicist theory, taking the shape of “...a kind of ‘Marxist criticism’ ...[providing a perspective of] history and contemporary political life as

determined, wholly or in essence, by struggle, contestation, power relations, *libido dominandi*” (Pechter, qtd. in Montrose, 1989:17).

The poem moves its gaze between a variety of characters, all of whom are “hopeless” in their own ways. Marie suffers a crisis of identity and feels that she must proclaim her pedigree through patriotic assertions: “Bin gar keine Russin, stamm’ aus Litauen, echt deutsch” – “I’m not Russian at all; I come from Lithuania, a true German” (*TWL*, 12). With borders ravaged and cultural individuality brought into question, Marie feels she must re-establish her identity by relying on nationalism. Yet it is people like herself, too, who would have been reviled by soldiers for sending them into the horrors of the trenches while they remained behind, living in opulence.

The poem then moves its gaze to the bourgeoisie – those inhabitants of post-war London who “...flowed over London Bridge, so many” and had been “undone” by death (*TWL*, 62-63). They are the epitome of those feelings of loss, confusion, disenchantment and hopelessness connected to life after the war. The dwellers of London, once strong and self-assured, have had their confidence shattered by the war and the realisation that patriotism alone is not enough to sustain military morale and the lives of young men.

As the poem progresses and the Belladonna and her interlocutor are introduced in ‘A Game of Chess’, we see hopelessness and futility in their empty conversation as well. Her mind is scattered and she is uncertain: “My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me” (*TWL*, 111). The conversation here is filled with “...[n]othing again nothing...” (*TWL*, 120), creating a sense of further disillusionment.

This uncertain scene is suddenly abandoned for a more informal, working class setting, and offers a different view of the post-war mind. Now, the focus is placed on the two women in

the pub, who discuss matters of death and trauma matter-of-factly – therein lies their hopelessness:

It's them pills I took, *to bring it off*, she said.
(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)
The chemist said it would be all right, but *I've never been the same* (TWL, 159-161, emphasis my own).

In this vignette, the character of Lil is belittled by her purported friends and her husband. She speaks clinically of her abortion, even though it has clearly damaged her physically and mentally – sex is now something she finds menacing, and her offhand comment about her abortion links sex and death in an unnatural way. This clinical view of death and the hopelessness connected therewith are later converted to their inverse when the focus of the poem shifts to the typist in the poem's third section, 'The Fire Sermon': this clinical view is now also applied to the sexual. In this fractured, fragmented world, sexuality is linked to indifference and is not life-giving, as it is expected to be. The typist is "unreproving" when the "young man carbuncular...[e]ndeavours to engage her in caresses" (TWL, 231, 237, 238). These are details which would certainly not be considered as forming part of the grand narrative of the Great War and its aftermath, which is why it can be said that the inclusion of such details coincides with New Historicists' theoretical approaches. These details are seemingly minor if viewed in the grander scheme of the war itself but become major aspects of the lives of the individuals pictured in these vignettes.

As the poem progresses, more isolated, hopeless figures are given a voice in 'The Fire Sermon' – the Thames-daughters. They are, like their fellow waste land dwellers, afflicted by the horrors of the war. They attempt, but struggle to make meaning from their physical and mental state which has been made chaotic by the war's rupturing effects. Their social status and vocations are not made clear, however, they still act as another set of voices who would be otherwise marginalised by the grand "historical" account of the Great War. The Thames-

daughters go through great efforts to make a success of their process of meaning-making, but this, too, is futile:

*I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect
Nothing... (TWL, 301-305, emphasis my own).*

The Thames-daughter who speaks here communicates in a way that is unsure. Her sentences are abrupt, verging on "...a voiced interior monologue or stream-of-consciousness speaking" (Arp, 2005:53). Following this excerpt is a "la la" which at first appears to be haphazardly added, but when placed into context, it instead becomes an anxious murmur, "...as if the narrator wishes to soften or repudiate this sudden revelation with a laugh" (Arp, 2005:53). This "la la" acts as a shortened, more dejected version of the earlier "Weialala leia/Wallala leialala" (TWL, 277-278), which echoes "the lament of the Rhine-maidens in Richard Wagner's *Die Götterdämmerung*" (North, 2001:14).

In the fifth section of the poem, 'What the Thunder Said', the trepidations and complications of all the figures mentioned in *The Waste Land* become amalgamated. Despite their backgrounds, their socioeconomic statuses, and their differing worldviews, they all share common issues and anxieties: they are resented as a collective by those who faced the trenches in their stead, they have been failed by patriotism and the romanticising of war as coping devices for trauma, their physical living spaces and their respective identities have been ravaged by death and destruction, and they are all lost and hopeless dwellers of the waste land. Their collective experiences of isolation, hopelessness and fear are encapsulated in 'What the Thunder Said':

*Datta: what have we given?
My friend, blood shaking my heart
The awful daring of a moment's surrender
Which an age of prudence can never retract*

By this, and this only, we have existed
Which is not to be found in our obituaries
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
In our empty rooms

DA

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison
Only at nightfall, aethereal rumours
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus (*TWL*, 401-416, original emphasis).

These waste land dwellers, in their isolation, do not realise the possibility for community and hope that is so within their reach. If they find within themselves a willingness to admit that they have been purposefully detaching themselves from their post-war reality and if they gather the courage to speak about their losses and trauma, they will find that they possess “the key” that will free them from their self-constructed “prison” of isolation (*TWL*, 411, 413).

It is in the fifth section of the poem that *The Waste Land*'s capacity for hope reveals itself. The thunder holds the possibility of rain, and hints that there may be an opportunity for rejuvenation and hope in this barren landscape. Importantly, an actual storm is not depicted in the poem itself – it is shown as something that may happen, something which relies on the waste land's inhabitants' own ability to unlock their “prisons”. The landscape is still anxiously anticipating the rain. The rolling thunder is personified here as “speaking” (“[t]hen spoke the thunder”) providing certain conditions that need to be met in order for peace and hope to be achieved (*TWL*, 400). These conditions are prefaced by a section containing the important qualifier “if”:

*If there were the sound of water only...
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
But there is no water* (*TWL*, 352, 357-358, emphasis my own).

This qualifying word introduces the conditions that the thunder sets out for the waste land dwellers in order for their lands to be revitalised by rain. Firstly, the thunder “speaks” of “*Datta*” (TWL, 432). Earlier in this section of the poem “*Datta*” is followed by the words, “what have we given?” (TWL, 401). This is in reference to a “generosity of being and spirit” (Green, 2015:n.p.). Secondly, the thunder “says”: “*Dayadhvam*”, which refers to compassion for others (Green, 2015:n.p.). “*Dayadhvam*” is also linked to the poem’s statements about the waste land inhabitants’ self-made “prisons”. The “keys” to these prisons are compassion and human connection, which suggests a possibility for hope as well:

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison...(TWL, 411-414, original emphasis).

The thunder’s final interjection is “*Damyata*”, which refers to self-control: over one’s emotions, one’s desires and over oneself. These are all things that the dwellers of the waste land cannot seem to achieve (Green, 2015:n.p.). This notion of self-discipline links to what follows directly after the first “*Damyata*”-utterance:

The sea was calm, *your heart would have responded*
Gaily, *when invited*, beating *obedient*
To *controlling hands* (TWL, 420-422, emphasis my own).

This shows that the dwellers of this waste land are inherently able to follow these guidelines, they can transform their world and they can ultimately experience “shantih” or peace. It can “rain” in this barren landscape – “if” these aforementioned conditions are fulfilled. It is a situation that, as Green notes, “...is both infinitely simple, and infinitely complicated” (2015:n.p.).

The poem’s final line reads like the end of a prayer: “Shantih, shantih, shantih” (TWL, 433). It functions as an “amen” to this “prayer” – however, it is incomplete. The full phrase generally reads, “shantih, ohm”, which signifies the entirety of the universe (Green,

2015:n.p.). In its proper form the ending should thus read, “shantih (peace be with you)” followed by “ohm” as a “...universal benediction for all beings to go in peace” (Green, 2015:n.p.). The fact that this “benediction” is absent therefore indicates that, even though hope is achievable for these characters, it is not guaranteed that they will meet the conditions set out by the thunder.

Linking the movements to and from “hope” in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*

Having separately considered the concept of hope in both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*, the movement to and from “hope” in both works can now be fully compared.

Considering the separate analysis done in this chapter on these two works, it becomes clear that there is, indeed, a movement from “hope” to “destruction” or “hopelessness” in *Gatsby*, and an opposite movement in *The Waste Land*.

Nick’s attitude, as his hope dissipates in *Gatsby*, begins to resemble *The Waste Land*’s view that the hopeless post-war individuals are “undone” by “death”. Nick comes to the stark realisation that the people he has surrounded himself with are “careless”. He notes that Tom and Daisy, especially, lack the compassion and connection needed in order for “rain” to fall on their New York waste land:

They were *careless* people, Tom and Daisy – *they smashed up things and creatures* and then *retreated back into their money* or their *vast carelessness*, or whatever it was that kept them together (Fitzgerald, 1925:184, emphasis my own).

Importantly, *Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* follow similar patterns in their respective beginnings and endings, but the application of “hope” as a concept is applied differently in each work. The openings of both works centre around summer and spring, yet different attitudes can be detected.

As mentioned, *The Waste Land*’s opening lines are harsh, April is “cruel” and spring is not life-giving. Winter is instead slightly more positive to the waste land’s inhabitants, albeit for

negative reasons. It “keeps [them] warm” and covers “the earth in a forgetful snow” (*TWL*, 5-6). The snow covers the fact that their land is dry and barren, helping them “forget” the issue. Summer, however, “surprises” them, perhaps by uncovering and even enhancing the very barrenness they wish to forget. In *Gatsby*, however, the idea is established early on that the summer is meant to be viewed positively: Nick notes that he has “...that familiar conviction that life [is] beginning over again with the summer” (Fitzgerald, 1925:4). Yet, as there is the hopeful possibility for rain at the end of *The Waste Land*, nature becomes inverted by the end of *Gatsby*, as Nick imagines what passes through Gatsby’s mind as he is dying:

[H]e must have felt that *he had lost the old warm world*...He must have *looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about*... (Fitzgerald, 1925:165, emphasis my own).

As both works end, they also make use of similar imagery: that of water. In *The Waste Land*’s fourth section, ‘Death by Water’, the depiction of this “death” is at first seemingly negative:

A current under sea
Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell
He passed the stages of his age and youth
Entering the whirlpool...
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you (*TWL*, 315-318, 321).

However, there is hope to be found in this depiction of the death of Phlebas. He forgets “...the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell” (*TWL*, 312-313), but, more importantly, he also forgets “...the profit and loss” (*TWL*, 314). This is a privilege that Jay Gatsby does not have in his own death. Death brings “hope” for Phlebas, because it means that he may find peace – he does not “[f]ear death by water” (*TWL*, 55). As mentioned in the first chapter, Jay Gatsby’s death is *in* water, not *by* water. When Gatsby is found in his pool, he is an “accidental burden” on his floating mattress, and Nick solemnly contemplates that, in Gatsby’s final moments, he must have (hopelessly) felt that he had “...paid a high price for

living too long with a single dream” (Fitzgerald, 1925:165, 166). As *The Great Gatsby* ends, there is no peaceful “shantih”. Instead, there is still the image of water, but of Fitzgerald’s waste land inhabitants hopelessly attempting to fight its power: “So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past” (Fitzgerald, 1925:186).

Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation has been to trace a clear comparison between F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922), in order to show how the poem relates not only to the post-Great War era it was written in, but how its ideas, themes and concerns resonate in the works of Eliot's contemporaries, and how these factors establish a connection between these particular works of Eliot and Fitzgerald. The Eliot-Fitzgerald connection was discussed at some length in the introduction to show that the two writers did meet and were aware of each other's work, with specific mention being made of Eliot's 1925 letter to Fitzgerald which praises *Gatsby* as a novel that "...interested and excited [Eliot] more than any new novel [he has] seen," (Fitzgerald, 1945:310).

In order to provide some of the relevant context, Eliot's and Fitzgerald's responses to the Great War and its aftermath were compared and contrasted. In Eliot's case, a discussion of *The Waste Land* and its view of post-war society as mostly barren has been useful, while in Fitzgerald's case, a discussion of the author's description of the rise and fall of the Jazz Age has proven to be valuable.

Issues this dissertation set out to investigate included Modernist influences on *Gatsby*, a comparison of imagery and characters in *Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*, the framing of New York as an "unreal city" in *Gatsby*, and the "reverse trajectory" regarding notions of hope and hopelessness of the two texts. The latter was aided by the application of New Historicist perspectives to both works.

In light of this investigation, however, the question may be posed whether the above links are enough to justify the statement that *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* are inexorably linked. The answer is as subjective as history itself, although in setting out primarily to

establish links between *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*, this dissertation has determined that Eliot's poem seems to have had a profound influence on *Gatsby*, as the previous chapters have shown. This is confirmed by critics like Letha Audhuy, Richard Lehan, and John Bicknell, among others discussed in this dissertation.

Eliot's treatment of the (inherently post-war) subject matter of *The Waste Land* specifically shows that Modernism acted as:

...[A] reaction against the conventions of liberal, bourgeois, material, decadent, Western civilization...for the lost generation of post-war Europe, it seemed to be the only way out of either depression or suicide. In a world now proven to be without values, what else was left but experimentation – to try, by putting the pen to the page, what had not yet been accomplished before (Watts, 2015:n.p).

It can perhaps even be said that Modernism and its “newmaking” were as necessary for the post-war individual (such as Fitzgerald and his characters) as the war was to budding Modernist authors. Eliot and Fitzgerald shared the same intense focus on the society produced by the war, since for Eliot and his Modernist contemporaries, as well as for Fitzgerald, “...the impact of the war was multifaceted” (Lynch, 2015:n.p). Lynch describes the Great War as “...a watershed in world history”, adding that “[the Great War] was significant not just in terms of the enormous loss of life and its implications for international diplomacy, but also for its impact on society” (Lynch, 2015:n.p).

What is most important to note when looking comparatively at Eliot's and Fitzgerald's respective works is that their notions surrounding the *impact* of war are inherently similar.

In essence, both *Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* traverse the same post-war landscape. Both search for the same peace, and both address the fundamental “hollowness” of the waste land dwellers: the Daisies, the Belladonnas, the Nick Carraways, the “carbuncular” young men and the scarce Gatsbys, with their “extraordinary gift[s] for hope” (Fitzgerald, 1925:2).

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Figure 1: Brown University Library. 2013. *A photograph of the first edition inscribed copy of The Great Gatsby, addressed to T. S. Eliot.* Digital image. Rhode Island. Accessed 24 July 2019. Available at: <https://library.brown.edu/dps/curio/a-great-gatsby-a-poor-speller/>.

Figure 2: Brown University Library. 2013. *Closer detail from the same photograph as above, showing the inscription regarding Eliot's commentary more clearly.* Digital image. Rhode Island. Accessed 24 July 2019. Available at: <https://library.brown.edu/dps/curio/a-great-gatsby-a-poor-speller/>.