

I'm Sorry about the Clock: Chronology, Composition, and Narrative Technique in The Great Gatsby, 1993, 154 pages, Thomas A. Pendleton, 0945636385, 9780945636380, Susquehanna University Press, 1993

This study begins by demonstrating that literally dozens of temporal incoherences occur in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. It then proceeds to investigate the earlier versions of the novel to discover why its chronology is so often faulty. Since its publication some seventy years ago, *The Great Gatsby* has become one of the most extravagantly commended works in American literature. The dominant note in this chorus of praise is that Fitzgerald has flawlessly integrated his details into a supremely successful artistic whole. It is thus surprising to discover that within this seemingly perfectly rendered fiction, the chronology of both the effective present of the novel (the summer of 1922), the past that continuously informs it, and even the time of Nick's narrating the story are riddled with inconsistencies, improbabilities, and flat contradictions. It is perhaps even more surprising, contends author Thomas A. Pendleton, that virtually none of these temporal incoherences seem to have been noted before. Moreover, this study departs from the critical consensus that the earlier drafts of the novel are evidence of Fitzgerald's consummate artistry. Among the discoveries presented here are that Fitzgerald made no use of the 1922 calendar; that he did not work out the novel's time scheme until after completing about half of the manuscript version (possibly because he intended *Gatsby* to be much longer); and that, quite probably, he attempted to disguise at least some of the book's temporal misplacements and contradictions. Further, this study shows that even the most praised of Fitzgerald's revisions - his relocation of materials dealing with *Gatsby's* past so as to gradually reveal his secret - was apparently without exception accompanied by faulty temporal connections to the plot line. A concluding section of this work attempts to evaluate how significantly these chronological failures affect the achievement of *Gatsby*. It finds that they impact to a great degree on the characterizations of *Gatsby*, *Daisy*, *Jordan*, and especially *Nick*, and it even broaches the suspicion that the moral shortcomings perceived in *Nick* by some critics actually derive from Fitzgerald's own artistic shortcomings. Pendleton also finds that because the narrative insists so strongly on time as symbolic of the limitations that destroy *Gatsby* and his dream - and because it utilizes time so crucially in the formal structuring of the story line - its temporal incoherences considerably lessen the achievement that can be claimed for the novel. While it does not claim that its findings are totally destructive of Fitzgerald's success, this study clearly establishes *Gatsby* as something less than the faultlessly executed fiction it has been previously supposed.

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F. Scott Fitzgerald's *the Great Gatsby*, Harold Bloom, 2010, , 182 pages. Presents a series of critical essays discussing the structure, themes, and subject matter of Fitzgerald's story of the love between wealthy *Jay Gatsby* and the beautiful *Daisy*.

F. Scott Fitzgerald Special Number , , 1961, *Literary Criticism*, 94 pages. .

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Thomas A. Pendleton 0945636385, 9780945636380
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