

Carnival Spirit in the Great Gatsby

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Abstract: F. Scott Fitzgerald, who has been regarded as “the angel of the Jazz Age”, has written 5 novels and 178 short stories in his short but legendary life. Most of his works are tangled with the empty and luxurious life of America in 1920s, among which *The Great Gatsby* is his masterpiece. As soon as it was published, this novel had been revised and taken into screen or stage for several times. As a hot subject of critics, it has been studied from various points of view, such as structure, writing skill, way of narration, theme and so on. This thesis attempts to analyze the carnival spirit in *The Great Gatsby* with Bakhtin’s theory of carnivalesque.

Keywords: Carnival Spirit; Bakhtin’s Theory; *The Great Gatsby*

1. Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald, an American writer, is the representative of “the lost generation” as well as the laureate of the “Jazz Age”, a term coined by himself. His life is full of legends. Born in a decayed upper middle class family, he spent his childhood in different places. Under the influence of his father who had a wide reading and a good taste, Fitzgerald began to develop his talent in writing in his childhood. His formative years in Buffalo revealed him to be a boy of unusual intelligence and with a keen early interest in literature. Zelda Sayre, the “golden girl” in Fitzgerald’s terms, was Fitzgerald’s wife who made a great influence on his literary career. Being a girl who was unable to live an austere life, she broke the engagement with Fitzgerald because he could not afford to support her. Not until *This Side of Paradise*, the first important novel of Fitzgerald was published did she resume their engagement. And in many works of Scott, the shadows of Zelda could be found such as in *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Flappers and Philosophers*.

In 1925, the publication of *The Great Gatsby* established his reputation in world literature. *The Great Gatsby* tells a story of a young man named Gatsby who pursued his American dream by chasing his first lover but was damaged by the corrupted society. J. D. Salinger expressed his admiration towards Fitzgerald in letters written in the 1940s and his biographer Ian Hamilton wrote that Salinger even saw himself for some time as “Fitzgerald’s successor” (19). In the 21st century, millions of copies of *The Great Gatsby* and his other works have been sold. And *The Great Gatsby*, a constant best-seller, is required to be read in many high school and college classes. And the novel had been twice adapted into films in 1949 and 1974 accordingly by Paramount Company.

The novel has been discussed from various perspectives. For instance, the theme of the novel is always a hot subject in critics. As Diao Keli puts it, most people believe that the theme of *The Great Gatsby* is the pursuit of

American dream and the desertion of American dream (82). Meanwhile, much attention has been given to the unique narrative techniques of the novel. Cheng Aiming argues that Fitzgerald makes the character the narrator to develop the story skillfully, which reaches an original artistic effect (130). Recently, some scholars have tried to analyze the novel from the perspective of feminism, which also makes a big progress.

This paper, however, attempts to interpret the novel in light of Bakhtin’s theory of carnivalesque from the aspects of carnival atmosphere, carnival rituals and carnival collectives in the novel. Therefore the readers can have a deeper understanding of the novel as well as a wider horizon. What’s more, it is expected that readers can gain an access to the 1920s of America.

2. A Brief Introduction of the Carnivalesque Theory

2.1. Original Sources of Carnivalesque Theory

Bakhtin’s theory of Carnivalesque has a close connection with the word “carnival” which etymologically is “the old Latin ecclesiastical word for the several-day festival of meat-dating before Lent” (Ning Yizhong 17).

According to the research of Samuel Kinseran, an American scholar, the festival of carnival initiated from the Christian countries in Middle Ages and met its climax in 14th to 16th century. And in 17th and 18th century, due to the religious reformation, carnival was inclined to decline. However, instead of disappearing from the world, it came back to life again in 19th century. And during World War II, greater expansion of the festival could be found in both countries and towns. At this time, the content and form of the word “carnival” have been expanded far beyond its origin. Being linked with “Bacchanal Festival”, a festival showing honor for the god of wine, and “Saturnalia Festival”, a festival for the god of agriculture, carnival has absorbed different kinds of activities such as parading and feasting. Just as Ning Yizhong points out

carnival is a festival of mass and folks, in which everybody could be participants, performers and directors despite their classes (66). "Carnival is a cultural utopia" (Ning Yizhong66).

2.2. Bakhtin's Carnavalesque Theory

It is Mikhail Bakhtin who has made a systematic research and study on carnival, the festival. In Bakhtin's view, carnival is not a literary phenomenon, but "the sum total of all diverse festivities, rituals and forms of a carnival type" (Bakhtin 122). These festivities, rituals and forms that constitute carnival are "very complex and varied, giving rise, on a general camivalistic base to diverse variants and nuances depending on the epoch, the people, the individual festivity [...] carnival is a pageant without footlights and without a division into performers and spectators" (Bakhtin 122). Based on his studies, Bakhtin puts forwards the theory of carnivalesque. In his point of view, "Carnival has worked out an entire language of symbolic concretely sensuous forms—from large and complex which can be transposed into the language of literature" (122). And this "transposition of carnival into the language of literature" is called "the carnivalization of literature" (Bakhtin 122).

The three characteristics of carnivalization are carnival sense of world, carnival rituals, namely crowning and decrowning, and carnival collective.

In the sense of a carnival world, as Bakhtin interprets, "Because carnivalesque life is life drawn out of its usual rut, it is to some extent 'life turned inside out,' 'the reverse side of the world'" (122). All the rules and restrictions in the normal world are out of effect. What comes into power is that of a carnival world, that is "free and familiar contact among people" (123). The inequality of socio-hierarchy or any other forms are suspended.

As for carnival rituals, crowning and decrowning of the carnival king and queen are the primary acts. This ritual has been occurring in all festivals of carnival type. The core of the sense of carnival world lies in the ritual. As Bakhtin understands, it is "the pathos of shifts and changes, of death and renewal" (124). Crowning/decrowning is a dualistic ritual. In the other word, crowning itself contains decrowning. Besides, the person who gains the crown in a Carnival Festival, may, in reality, a slave or a jester.

Carnival collective refers to those people who are "cut off from their native land and folk", and "whose life ceases to be determined by the norms of people living in their own country" (170). Furthermore, their movements and their internal relationships become "unusual, eccentric, and scandalous" (Bakhtin 172). Their lives are full of scandles. Three kinds of representatives of carnival collective are the rogues, the clowns and the fools. The "rogue" is a familiar image for people in carnival. With a sober understanding of people's psyche and car-

nival life, the rogue uses up various kinds of means of boasting, swearing to tease others and fish for advantage. The "clowns" are no less important than the "rogues". People who participate in the carnival put on the clothes of clowns in order to cover their real identity. Therefore, under a clown's mask, they can say what common people dare not to say or do. Also they could do what they trully want to do in real life. The "fools" are the twin brothers of "clowns". In Bakhtin's eyes, the "fools" are "wise" and the "clowns" are "tragic" (150). Just through the innocent eyes of fools, the hypocrisy of the world has no place to hide.

3. Carnivalization in The Great Gatsby

3.1. Carnival Atmosphere in the Novel

The Great Gatsby, as a novel presents the picture of the "Jaze Age", is permeated the atmosphere of carnivalization. The present paper is going to analyse the carnival atmosphere in the novel from the following aspects: the title of the novel, the starting verse of the novel and the carnival performances of the novel.

3.1.1. The Title of the Novel

The process of deciding the title of the novel turns out to be strong evidence revealing the carnival atmosphere in the novel. Fitzgerald showed great confidence in this novel. In one of the letters to his friend, Fitzgerald showed his pride in the novel, calling it "the best American novel ever written" (Brucoli 80). However, regarding to the decision of choosing the title, Fitzgerald could not be so sure. He continuously discussed about the title with his friend Max, even after having sent the manuscript to the publisher. He said: "I have an alternative title: 'Gold-hatted Gatsby'", and "Let me know what you think about the title. Naturally I won't get a night's sleep until I hear from you" (Brucoli 85). Ten days later, in another letter to Max, he changed the title to "Trimalchio in West Egg", and thought that "the only other titles that seem to fit are 'Trimalchio' and 'on the Road to West Egg' " (Brucoli 85). Time and time again, he changed his mind on the title. And he felt "Trimalchio might have been best after all" (Brucoli 97) and "The Great Gatsby' is weak because there is no emphasis even ironically on his greatness or lack of it" (Brucoli 95). It seemed that Fitzgerald preferred the title "Trimalchio" rather than "The Great Gatsby" and even thought about changing the title before the publication. If it were not Perkins, the publisher, who worried that changing the title would delay publication, insisted on the the title "The Great Gatsby", now the book might have been called "Trimalchio".

The carnival atmosphere can be sensed just from the Fitzgerald's preference to "Trimalchio". The reason lies in the fact that Trimalchio is an ostentatious party giver

in Petronius' *Satyricon*, a typical carnival figure. Trimalchio and Gatsby have so much in common. For example, both of them become rich overnight but still cannot melt in the society of upper class spiritually. And what matters most is that both of them are fond of giving sumptuous parties. Therefore it is evident that Gatsby is the Trimalchio in the novel, thus making himself the carnival figure. And the author's choice of titling the novel "Trimalchio" proves the existence of the carnival atmosphere in the novel.

3.1.2. The Starting Verse of the Novel

The carnival atmosphere can also be felt from the starting verse of the novel. The following lines are the four-line verse inaugurating the novel:

Then wear the gold hat, if that will move her;
If you can bounce high, bounce for her too,
Till she cry "Love, gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover,
I must have you!" (Fitzgerald 1)

It is quite easy to understand what is depicted in this short verse. A young man, trying to move a girl who is his lover, wears a gold hat and jumps high to reach the girl. The girl who may come from an upper class, is attractive to the young man or his gold hat and his amusing behaviour. She cries happily for him, saying "I must have you". But it seems that she doesn't know the young man's name, for she only calls him as the "gold-hatted, high-bouncing lover". Here bounce means jump.

This is a typical carnival scene, where noisy sounds and amusement are everywhere. The young man's jumping and wearing the golden hat as well as the girl's laughter and shouter paint the picture a colour of carnivalization. What deserves readers' particular attention is the "gold hat", which has two symbolic meanings. In carnival rituals, namely crowning/decrowning, the hat can refer to the crown which is the symbol of king or queen, which makes the young man the king of the carnival. Meanwhile, the hat may also only refer to the hat of the clown, making the young man a clown.

Thus, through the images of the short verse, especially the "gold hat", a clamorous and amusing mood and tone, which is exactly the atmosphere of the carnival, have been established from the beginning of the novel.

3.1.3. The Carnival Performances in the Novel

The whole book is like a carnival, lasting for months. Gatsby's party is the carnival on stage. According to Bakhtin, any place in the literary art can be regarded as a carnival square as long as it becomes a place where people of different social positions gathered and communicated. Here Gatsby's mansion is the carnival square. Because when he held the party, doctors, actors, drinkers, and even dukes came. Besides, a carnival without dancing and drinking cannot be called a carnival. And there, those two things are never out of need. The evidence is

presented in the description of the preparation of Gatsby's party.

Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiter in New York—every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. There was a machine in the kitchen which could extract the juice of two hundred oranges in half an hour, if a little button was pressed two hundred times by a butler's thumb. (Fitzgerald 43).

Also Fitzgerald provided "gins and liquors" and even "cordials" which were "so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another" (Fitzgerald 44). And there are dances among all the people participating the party.

There was dancing now on the canvas in the garden, old men pushing young girls backward in eternal graceless circles, superior couples holding each other tortuously, fashionably and keeping in the corners—and a great number of single girls dancing individualistically or relieving the orchestra for a moment of the burden of the banjo or the traps. By midnight the hilarity had increased. (Fitzgerald 51).

People coming from different class gathered at Gatsby's party, drinking, dancing and laughing. All of these performances fill the novel with a dense atmosphere of carnival.

3.2. Carnival Rituals in the Novel

Crowning and decrowning are the most important rituals in Carnival Festival. As Xia Zhongxian suggests, what influences most on literary mind is the rituals of crowning and decrowning in Carnival Festival (73). And in *The Great Gatsby*, the protagonists of the carnival rituals, namely the king and the queen of Carnival Festival are Gatsby and Mrs. Wilson. As what has been mentioned before, the carnival rituals are dualistic rituals. In other words, crowning itself contains decrowning.

3.2.1. Crowning and Decrowning of Gatsby

Gatsby is no doubt the carnival king of the novel. As Wu Jianguo has interpreted, in the first three chapters, instead of making the readers see this mysterious figure face to face, the author describes lots of scenes and rumors to indicate the special position and meaning of Gatsby (175). In chapter three, readers are easy to find that people participating the party were not invited and they "came and went without having met Gatsby at all" (Fitzgerald 44). And people discussed Gatsby's identity, guessing he was a murderer, an American soldier or a German spy, but it seemed that nobody believed that he came from Oxford. All of these rumors thickened the mysterious colour of Gatsby.

In order to meet Daisy, Gatsby's first lover, he asked Nick to invite her to Nick's house where Gatsby gained his crown. Before Daisy came, Gatsby began to prepare his

palace of receiving the crown. He sent a person to cut the grass in the house of Nick and decorated the place with beautiful flowers. Then he came "in a white flannel suit, silver shirt and gold-colored tie" (Fitzgerald 90). This could be regarded as the robe of the king. However, now he was not yet the king, and he was "pale and there were dark signs of sleeplessness beneath his eyes" (Fitzgerald 90). And "with his hands plunged like weights in his coat pockets", he was "standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically" (Fitzgerald 92). Gatsby now was a clown in a king's robe. But just half hours later, Gatsby changed. He "literally glowed; without a word or a gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room" (Fitzgerald 95). This is a typical crowning ritual. In Liu Ting's opinion, Gatsby, a clown wearing the mask of the king, turns to be a real king (43). It is Daisy, the girl representing the wealth and power, who gives the crown to Gatsby. It is also Daisy, the representative of the empty and meaningless American upper society indicates that the decrowning of Gatsby in the future. Gatsby's decrowning is accomplished through the hands of Daisy and her husband Tom. At the last gatherings of the main characters of the novel, Tom dragged Gatsby from his throne.

In front of all of the people who admired Gatsby as the king, Tom said: "You're one of that bunch that hangs around with Meyer Wolfshiem" (Fitzgerald 141) and "I found out what your 'drug stores' were" (Fitzgerald 142). He threw the truth in front of the eyes of everybody: "He and this Wolfshiem bought up a lot of side-street drug stores here and in Chicago and sold grain alcohol over the counter. That's one of his little stunts" (Fitzgerald 142). And here is more: "you left him in the lurch, didn't you? You let him go to jail for a month over in New Jersey. God! You ought to hear Walter on the subject of YOU" (Fitzgerald 142). Step by step, Tom took Gatsby's crown away. At first, Fitzgerald was still calm, but later he looked like "as if he had 'killed a man'" (Fitzgerald 144). At last, he was killed by Mr. Wilson, a carnival fool in the novel, only in swimming pants which makes a contrast with his "white flannel suit".

Gatsby is a typical carnival figure, who came out as a king and ended up as a clown. And as XiongYi expounds, he is a person always wondering between decrowning and crowning (90).

3.2.2. Crowning and decrowning of Mrs. Wilson

Mrs. Wilson, though showing only four times in the novel, is the carnival queen in the novel. Mrs. Wilson was just the wife of a common repairer and should live a dull and poor life. However, in the novel, after receiving the crown, she became the queen of the carnival.

Her name appears firstly at chapter one, turning into a ring of the phone, disturbing the gatherings between Nick and the family of Tom. And through the introduction of

Miss. Beck, her identification was described as the disgraceful lover of Tom, a woman without morality.

Her first formal appearance was at the garage.

She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crepe-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 smoldering. (Fitzgerald 28)

This scene was full of carnival tastes. She stood on the threshold, symbolizing the threshold of life and death, sanity and insanity. At this time, she was still a common people with nobody noticing. But later, people could not find a least trace of the Mrs. Wilson. What people see is a woman of upper class. She had changed her dress to brown figured muslin which stretched tight over her rather wide hips" (Fitzgerald 30). She spent money casually, buying some cold cream and a small flask of perfume and holding a pet dog. Her action of selecting the car is exactly her crowning ritual. "Upstairs, in the solemn echoing drive she let four taxi cabs drive away before she selected a new one, lavender-colored with grey upholstery, and in this we slid out from the mass of the station into the glowing sunshine" (Fitzgerald 30). When she sat in the car, she turned herself into the carnival queen. Being a queen, she continued her crowning ritual. "Throwing a regal homecoming glances around the neighborhood; Mrs. Wilson gathered up her dog and her other purchases and went haughtily in" (Fitzgerald 32). Then the following party at the small living room at the top, Mrs. Wilson enjoyed her queen's position. She "had changed her costume some time before and was now attired in an elaborate afternoon dress of cream colored chiffon" (Fitzgerald 34). People participating the party began to flatter her, praising her dress. But just as Bakhtin has studied, the core of the sense of carnival world lies in the ritual -"the pathos of shifts and changes, of death and renewal" (124). The crowning also means decrowning. At the end of the little party in this small living room, "making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand" (Fitzgerald 41). That pride carnival queen was decrowned in short time by her own lover.

Mrs. Wilson, similar to Gatsby, is the queen of the carnival who in reality can only be a slave or a jester. They are crowned by hypocritical representatives, Tom and Daisy who care nothing but money and luxurious life, thus their crowns are doomed to be taken away.

3.3. Carnival Collective in the Novel

In The Great Gatsby, the participants of Gatsby's parties, no matter the so-called "gentlemen and ladies" who come from upper society or the people of various occupations, have forgotten their own identities. Under the influence

of champagne and music, they get together, neglecting their differences of classes, dancing and drinking. All of these people could be called the carnival collective.

3.3.1. The Rogues

As what has been mentioned above, with a sober understanding of people's psyche and carnival life, the rogues are good at using various kinds of boasting and swearing to tease others and fish for advantage. In *The Great Gatsby*, the typical representative of the rogues is nobody else but Daisy, the most beautiful but unstable symbol of Gatsby's American Dream as well as a daughter of the upper class family.

Daisy, whose target of life is to pursue wealth and entertainment, cheats everybody in the novel, including herself. When Nick first visited her and her husband, Tom, he was told that "Tom's got some woman in New York" (Fitzgerald 18). Therefore, it is no doubts that Daisy had known it long time ago, however she cheated herself, saying that "I'm p-paralyzed with happiness" (Fitzgerald 10). The highest goal of Daisy's life is money and enjoyment, besides which everything such as value, love, morality and friendship could be banished. When Gatsby came to her in a white flannel suit, silver shirt, and gold-colored tie, driving his Rolls-Royce, She could not help herself into loving him again or the wealth belonging to him. So, "suddenly, with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily" (Fitzgerald 99). And in front of Gatsby's giant wealth, she was almost immediately indulged in her new love. She went to date Gatsby in Nick's house. And later, she even began to flirt with Gatsby in front of Nick and Jordan. Asking Tom to bring them some cold drink, she "got up and went over to Gatsby and pulled his face down, kissing him on the mouth", and murmured to him "You know I love you" (Fitzgerald 123).

But at the time when Gatsby was pulled down from his king's throne, Daisy, the rogue, of course had no reason to love him anymore and naturally went back to Tom. At the end of the novel, it was Daisy reconciling with Tom, taking advantage of Gatsby's pure and sincere love toward her, who made the plot to make Gatsby undertake the consequences of murdering Mrs. Wilson which led to Gatsby's death.

As the rogue in the novel, Daisy plays her role excellently and through her wonderful carnival performance, the cruelty and hypocrisy of the so-called upper class people are presented vividly.

3.3.2. The Clowns

The clowns in *The Great Gatsby* are of different kinds. In reality, some of them are politicians, some actors, and some may drug sellers. However, in Gatsby's party, the carnival square, they are of no difference. Wearing the clothes of the clown, they laugh, dance, cry and become

the sources of other people's laughter but the tragedy of their own.

Fitzgerald had depicted successfully an image of the clown. She is the red-haired young lady from a chorus. She had drunk a quantity of champagne and during the course of her song she had decided ineptly that everything was very very sad—she was not only singing, she was weeping too. Whenever there was a pause in the song she filled it with gasping broken sobs and then took up the lyric again in a quavering soprano. The tears coursed down her cheeks—not freely, however, for when they came into contact with her heavily beaded eyelashes they assumed an inky color, and pursued the rest of their way in slow black rivulets. (Fitzgerald 56)

No longer being the elegant singer who sings a pleasant song on the stage, the lady has become a clown, with her destroyed makeup as the clown's mask. As a clown, what she did may make the audience laugh, she sang and wept. On the other hand, she was not a happy clown but a tragic one. Instead of laughing, she wept and her tears coursed down. In carnival, people wearing a clown's mask not only dare to say what others could not say, but also are able to do what they themselves cannot do in reality. Just as the singer, she could not express her emotion freely in daily life. Only in this carnival square could she cry out her sadness.

The fact that people overflow their true emotion only when they wear a clown's mask just expounds the hypocrisy and emptiness of the Jazz Age of America.

3.3.3. The Fools

Compared with the rogues and the clowns, the fools show no less importance in a carnival festival. In *The Great Gatsby*, Mr. Wilson is totally a fool throughout the novel. He never doubted the relationship between his wife and Tom. Ironically Tom was treated as a man who would do him a great favor by Mr. Wilson. At last, Mr. Wilson was fooled by Tom again, believing Gatsby was the murderer of his wife and committing suicide after shooting Gatsby. But, seeing from another angle, Mr. Wilson could also be seen as a man who held deep love to her wife and kept an innocent heart toward the dark world.

Besides Mr. Wilson, there is another image of fool in the novel. He was the man appearing at Gatsby's library, "a stout, middle-aged man with enormous owl-eyed spectacles, sitting somewhat drunk on the edge of a greatable, staring with unsteady concentration at the shelves of books" (Fitzgerald 49). Without being given a name, he was mentioned as "Owl Eyes". Also being a guest of Gatsby's party, instead of seeking fun outside, he stayed alone in Gatsby's library. When Nick and Jordan came in, he also behaved like a fool. 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 50). Furthermore, he claimed that he knew “very little about driving—next to nothing” (Fitzgerald 59). As Xiong Yi interprets, in an age when almost every adult male is familiar with cars, his not knowing about machine just indicates his innocence and foolishness (157). However, just as Bakhtin explained, the fool in carnival was wise. “Owl Eyes” attended Gatsby’s funeral even though he even had not seen Gatsby before. He apologized for being late and showed his sympathy, saying that “The poor son-of-a-bitch”. Though the words are vulgar but his heart is sincere. Seeing through the emptiness and falseness, this “foolish” man remains sympathetic and innocent, thus making him a wise man.

By the contrast between the two fools and the so-called intelligent person, Fitzgerald produced a great irony to those upper-class people. And the ridiculous atmosphere similar to the Carnival Festival is created.

4. Conclusion

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*, depicts a panorama of the upper society in 1920s of America. In the novel, Gatsby, the hero, tries to recapture his lost lover, Daisy, but in vain. Finally he is destroyed by the influence of the wealthy and corrupted people coming from the upper society, or to be more exactly by the disillusionment of American Dream.

The present paper has discussed Bakhtin’s theory of carnivalesque firstly. The tradition of carnival, presented in the form of Carnival Festival, has been existed for hundreds of years. And with the time passing, it has also been extended, thus forming a system of its own. And it is Bahtin who made profound research into it and applied it to literary. Using Bakhtin’s theory of cainivalesque, this paper has made an attempt to analyze the novel from the perspectives of the carnival atmosphere, carnival rituals and carnival collective in the novel.

The whole novel leaks out an atmosphere of carnival. First Fitzgerald’s preference to the title of “Trimalchio”, a well-known party giver, indicates the trace of the atmosphere of carnival of the novel. Then the very starting verse establishes a clamor and amusing mood, similar to that of a Carnival Festival. And the performances practiced in the novel make the carnival atmosphere denser.

Crowning and decrowning, as the main carnival rituals, also have been described in the novel. Thus the crowning and decrowning of two characters, Gatsby and Mrs. Wilson, are discussed in the paper.

As for the carnival collective, the rogues, the clowns and the fools can find their representatives in the novel. Through the cheating behaviour of Daisy, the rogue has been made. And the clowns can find something in common with all the participants of Gatsby’s party. At last, by depicting two fools such as Mr. Wilson and “Owl

Eyes”, Fitzgerald expressed his criticism toward American upper society.

Through all the analysis, it can be concluded that *The Great Gatsby* is a book with the spirit of carnivalesque. And the very spirit of carnivalesque, namely the carnival atmosphere, the carnival rituals and the carnival collective presented in this novel, exposes the empty and superficial mental state of people in the 1920s of America.

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