**Eng21 with Mr. B: Essay #7 – *The Great Gatsby* Hybrid Essay**

**Due electronically by the start of class Friday 1/31/20**

Write a 2-4-page essay in response to *The Great Gatsby* that uses the tools of creative nonfiction *and* analysis. Try to make insight into the book *and* yourself/human beings/the world that you could not achieve without this duel look and hybrid style.

Not sure what topic to take up? Here are some that have come up in our discussion. This list is not exclusive, but it might just get you going. You are welcome to design your own topic.

Nick says, “Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.” Have you ever been “within and without” at the same time? Or “simultaneously enchanted and repelled”? Reflect on what Nick means, and compare your experience to his.

Is there another single sentence in the book that is lyrical yet elusive, whereby your personal experience may help illustrate, expand, or refute its meaning? Which one? How?

Nick at times praises Gatsby for his character, and elsewhere criticizes him for his personality. What is the difference between personality and character? What have you experienced that has shown you the difference, and which is more valuable? Do your experiences seem to affirm or reject the novel’s portrayal of this distinction?

Nick praises Gatsby for his “romantic readiness”—his belief in the power of the imagination over reality—yet also seems to reveal the consequences of *illusion*. What has been your experience of these similar faculties: imagination and illusion? How do we know which is which, when to give over to them and when to be wary of them?

Wellesley bears similarities to West Egg and East Egg: it is a commuter town with notable affluence and privilege among many of its residents. Is this where the similarities stop, or are there more? To what degree does Nick’s portrayal of the Eggs reflect your experience of attending school and/or living in Wellesley?

Nick criticizes *insincerity* in multiple people and instances. He may also be guilty of it himself. What have you experienced and learned about insincerity in your life, and how does it compare to Nick’s portrayal of it.

(over)

Here is a list of memorable approaches students have taken in the past that don’t necessarily/obviously fit one of the above topics:

A *history* style essay about the book (e.g. *context/agency*)—doesn’t have to be personal

3 very short unrelated essays about GG (that are actually related)—innovative structure

Telling of one’s own morally/legally questionable means of income, and comparing to Gatsby’s

Considering Gatsby and self through the figure of *rally car*—extended metaphor

Portraying one’s *reading* experience of Gatsby using a particularly iconic psychological test

Comparing one’s experience as an approval seeker—through social media—to Gatsby’s

Perfectionism, as it relates to Gatsby and self (and Yoda and Gandolf)

Knowledge/experience of *sailing* that informs a deeper interpretation of novel’s last sentence

Personal experience and staunch opinion about the overachieving culture of WHS as it relates

to the American Dream and Gatsby

Not sure how to go personal or creative? We’ll read and discuss a handful of hybrid-style essays, and try to identify moves/elements we might put into our own practice. Use the rest of this page to take notes: