

# **The Arthurian Legend: An Intertextual Reading of Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby**

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**الأسطورة الأثرية: قراءة تناصية لرواية فيتزجيرالد "غاتسبي العظيم"**

للأسطورة الأثرية تأثير واضح و مكانة كبيرة في الأدب الغربي بشكل عام و الأدب الإنجليزي و الأميركي بشكل خاص. خلال القرون الماضية و حتى العصر الحديث ظهرت كتب كثيرة تتضمن إعادة سرد الأسطورة الأثرية. لقد استهوت قصص الأسطورة الأثرية، و خاصة مغامرات فرسان الطاولة المستديرة، مختلف الأعمار و لمئات السنين الماضية مما جعلها حاضرة في أعمال أدبية كثيرة و منها أعمال أدبية حازت على مكانة مميزة في التاريخ الأدبي. استمرت الأسطورة الأثرية في الخيال الشعبي لفترة طويلة وكان هناك دائماً اهتمام بأسطورة الملك آرثر في الأدب. ظهرت موضوعات و زخارف الأسطورة الأثرية في العديد من الأعمال الأدبية، خاصة بعد نجاح كتاب موت آرثر (١٤٨٥) للسير توماس مالوري. تتضمن الأسطورة عرضاً رائعاً للقصص المعقدة والموضوعات ومجموعة كبيرة من الشخصيات التي تعتبر مادة مثالية لنسخة معدلة. الرحلة الأكثر وضوحاً في كتاب مالوري هي البحث عن "الكأس المقدسة"، وهو كأس مقدس يتمتع بقوة شفائية خارقة تمنح السعادة والشباب الأبدية. مع تقدم القصة، لا تصبح الكأس المقدسة بالنسبة لمعظم الشخصيات في الكتاب أكثر من هدف مغرٍ و بعيد المنال. تكتسب الكأس المقدسة هذه الخاصية لأنَّ الفرسان يفتقروا إلى النقاء الروحي والكمال الفروسي الضروري للوصول إليها بسبب طبيعتهم البشرية. تستكشف هذه الدراسة تناصياً مفهوم الفارس الضال و قتل السعي الموصوف في كتاب موت آرثر للسير توماس مالوري، و رواية فيتزجيرالد. سيكون النهج المتبع في هذه الدراسة هو نهج جوليا كريستيفا حيث ستم إعادة قراءة رواية ف. سكوت فيتزجيرالد "جاتسبي العظيم" (١٩٢٥) بعد تحديد الخلفيات التاريخية والثقافية للرواية. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إيجاد تلميحات بين النصوص في الرواية و لفهم كيفية توظيف التناص للتحكم في إستجابة القارئ. وفقاً لمفهوم كريستيفا عن التلميحات التي يمكن تسميتها بالتناص الضمني، تتعقب الدراسة بعض التلميحات إلى الأسطورة الأثرية في رواية فيتزجيرالد "جاتسبي العظيم". يحدث التناص الضمني عندما يشير النص بشكل غير مباشر أو يستحضر نصوصاً أخرى دون ذكرها صراحةً. يمكن أن تتخذ هذه التلميحات أشكالاً مختلفة، مثل التلميحات الأدبية أو الاقتباسات أو الإصداة للموضوعات أو الزخارف أو الأنماط. تكمن أهمية الدراسة في معالجة نوعين أدبيين مختلفين في الزمان والمكان من أجل معرفة ما إذا كان الأدب الإنجليزي لا يزال يؤثر على مادة الأدب الأمريكي على الأقل بشكل غير مباشر. إنَّ إتخاذ هذا النهج مهم لأنه يقوم على قراءة تناصية كريستيفية. تتناول الدراسة عمل روائي أميركي حديث، ف. سكوت فيتزجيرالد في ضوء النهج التناصي الذي أسسته جوليا كريستيفا مع أحد أكثر الأعمال تمثيلاً في العصور الوسطى. تم اختيار الرواية بشكل انتقائي كونها تمثل الروايات الأميركية الحديثة في سياق الحلم الأميركي. تُظهر رواية فيتزجيرالد "جاتسبي العظيم" مفهوم السعي القائم على المحاولة أو الرحلة لتحقيق هدف في سياق الحلم الأميركي. تبحث الدراسة على نحوٍ ذو أهمية في مفهوم الرحلة و الفارس الضال الذي يتعقب مغامرات يمكن التقاطها وإعادة تفسيرها حتى في سياق مختلف تماماً عن سياق حكايات الملك آرثر. الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسطورة الأثرية، ف. سكوت فيتزجيرالد، التناص، جوليا كريستيفا، جاتسبي العظيم.

## Abstract:

The Arthurian legend has an obvious influence and a great status in the western literature in general, and English and American literature in particular. During the past centuries until the modern age, many books had appeared that include a retelling of the Arthurian legend. The Arthurian legend has continued in the popular imagination for so long and there has always been an attention with King Arthur's legend in the literature. The most obvious journey in Malory's book is the quest for the "The Holy Grail", a holy cup with miraculous healing powers to grant eternal happiness and youth. As the story progresses, the Holy Grail for most of the characters in the book becomes no more than a seductive and unattainable goal. It acquires this quality as the knights lack the spiritual purity and chivalric perfection necessary to attain it because of their human nature. This study explores intertextually the concept of the errant knight and failure of the quest depicted in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925). The approach adopted in this study would be that of Julia Kristeva in which F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925) will be reread after setting the historical and cultural backgrounds of the novel. This study aims to find intertextual allusions among the texts in Fitzgerald's novel and to see how intertextuality is employed to control the reader response. The significance of the study lies in tackling two different genres in time and place in order to find out if the English literature is still influencing the subject matter of the American literature at least indirectly. The adoption of this approach is significant because it is based on Kristevan intertextual reading. The study tackles a work of a modern American novelist, F. Scott Fitzgerald, in the light of the intertextual approach founded by Julia

Kristeva with one of the most representative medieval works. According to Kristeva's concept of allusions which can be termed as the "implied intertextuality", the study traces some allusions to the Arthurian legend in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Implied intertextuality occurs when a text indirectly indicates or evokes other texts without explicitly mentioning them. These allusions can take various forms, such as literary allusions, quotations, or echoes of themes, motifs, or styles. The novel is selectively chosen as representative modern American novel in the context of the American dream. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* features the concept of quest based on endeavor or a journey to attain a goal within the context of the American dream. The study significantly examines the concept of the journey and the errant knight pursuing adventures that can be picked up and reinterpreted even in a very different context than that of King Arthur's tales. Keywords: The Arthurian legend, F.Scott Fitzgerald, intertextuality, Julia Kristeva, *The Great Gatsby*

### Introduction

The American novelist and the chronicler of the Jazz age, F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896- 1940), was one of the writers who were inspired by the Arthurian legend. The generation to which he belonged was called the "lost generation", they were group of writers who considered the legend as the best way to express the conditions they were going through. Fitzgerald believed that a legend makes a literary work more vital and contemporary, he Americanised the Arthurian legend using his own way. According to Fitzgerald, "the Grail Quest", can be considered as a metaphor referring to the task of the quest undertaken by a modern man in his attempt to find meaning in his life (Lupack & Lupack, 2001, P. 156). Fitzgerald's interest in the Arthurian legend began early, but this interest increased after entering university of Princeton in 1913. The nature of University of Princeton, which he attended, helped to increase his admiration for the medieval period, and he had a special vision of the romantic hero who strives hard to achieve a gallant goal. This vision became the basis for the fictional characters who appeared in all of his novels. The campus at University of Princeton had a Gothic nature that dazzled Fitzgerald in its splendor and made him take his imagination far to that ideal period of medieval days, such an environment that attracted the young Fitzgerald with the chivalric code and its traditions. In the period of 1913, University of Princeton was known for being a prestigious university, as it was the most well-known university for its highly organized social and academic style, and its society was as close as possible to the chivalry (Le Vot, 1983, PP. 42-46). Fitzgerald admired the football team of University of Princeton, he likened them to medieval heroes and respected them greatly and praised their intelligence and skills. According to Fitzgerald, these team are warriors, defending their community and honor, performing heroic deeds and facing many dangers, they are the heroes of the modern era. In his book, *The Bowl*, Fitzgerald describes the football team as questing knights whose characters are romantic and magical as if they were from another world. These knights, according to Fitzgerald, have a sacred and inaccessible position. The captain of the football team at University of Princeton during that time was called Hobe Baker, he was considered as the best athlete in the history of university of Princeton, so that Fitzgerald was comparing him to Galahad, the well-known character in the Middle Ages, and this is a clear indication that Fitzgerald was influenced by the Arthurian legend (Brucoli, 1981, P. 44). *The Great Gatsby* (1925) is considered as the most famous novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The reader will find various themes revolving in this novel, and the most important of these themes are: the theme of the rich and poor families in the society, in addition to the theme of the East against the West and other themes. The study aims at intertextually exploring the concept of the errant knight and failure of the quest depicted in Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Jay Gatsby can be viewed as "a representation of an errant knight in quest of a grail". Although Gatsby's journey looks chivalric because of his hard quest for wealth and personal sacrifice to obtain Daisy but his quest proves to be futile. His luxurious lifestyle and numerous parties to attract the attention of his "grail" do not achieve their goals.

### *The Great Gatsby*: An Intertextual Analysis

The Arthurian legend has continued in the popular imagination for so long and there has always been an attention with the Arthurian legend in the literature. The themes and motifs of the Arthurian legend appeared in many literary works, specially after the success of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* (1485). The legend includes a great display of complicated narratives, themes and a large cast of characters which are ideal material for adaptation. The most obvious journey in Malory's book is the quest for the "The Holy Grail", a holy cup with powers to grant eternal food, youth, and happiness. As the story progresses the Grail for most of the characters in the book becomes no more than a seductive and distant

goal. It acquires this quality as they lack the spiritual purity and chivalric perfection necessary to attain it because of their human nature. In his article "The Quest Hero", W. H. Auden illustrated the primary features of the quest story in different aspects. One prominent aspect is the invaluable object or an individual to be found or married. A long journey to reach this object or person, as his position is unknown. The hero with authentic personal qualities is the only person who can find the lost valuable object. The hero is revealed through a group of tests in order to exclude ineligible people. The hero confronts the guards of that lost valuable object and overcomes them and gets his goal. This confrontation may be considered as an additional test for the hero, or it may be a malicious purpose behind it. There will be people who help the hero, perhaps with their intelligence or they may have magical abilities, and yet they will not be able to help him to achieve the success (Auden, 1961, P. 92). All of the above features appear in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Daisy is the invaluable object or the important individual that Gatsby is trying to find and marry. For Gatsby, Daisy is like the daughter of a king in a high palace, the green light at the end of the bay represents Gatsby's intense fascination with Daisy, she is an ideal object that he aspires to achieve and reach by all means. Daisy's surname before her marriage was "Daisy Fay", there is a clear reference to the Arthurian legend in such surname, as King Arthur has an evil sister named Morgan le Fay who was trying to harm King Arthur by all means. As stated by Nick: The largest of the banners and the largest of the lawns belonged to Daisy Fay's house. She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 48). The quest of Gatsby also needed a long journey in order to achieve his goal, like medieval heroes. His journey lasted five years, and this is the same period that Percival's journey took in the Arthurian legend. Gatsby's journey began from Louisville, then to Europe and Long Island, and finally met Daisy at the "West Egg" in New York. Unlike medieval heroes who are distinguished by aristocratic stature and other special qualities, Gatsby can be considered a true hero in his quest to achieve his goal despite his humble upbringing. He was a penniless young man with no past. After he became rich and possessed palaces and power, his wealth did not spoil him as happens with most of the new rich, but rather he became more determined to achieve his dream. According to W. H. Auden, there are two kinds of the quest hero: the first is the epic hero whose heroic deeds are known to all, the second type is the hero with hidden truth (Auden, 1961, P. 93). The character of Gatsby is of the second kind, as his good qualities and virtues are hidden despite their greatness, Gatsby stayed faithful to his dream, striving to achieve it until he paid his life for this dream, his commitment to achieve his dream is like a commitment to get his "Holy Grail." The quest hero always passes a severe test, which may be a physical or psychological test, the passing of these tests by the quest hero proves his competence. The test may be a severe storm or facing terrifying creatures, if the hero cannot pass this test, he will not be able to accomplish his mission (Weston, 1913, P. 91). In the case of Gatsby, we find that he faced some tests, only remaining faithful to achieve his dream was a great challenge, and after he became rich, his desire to achieve his goal was not spoiled by his money, but he sacrificed himself for the "Grail", even the tea party in Nick's house where Gatsby met Daisy was a big test for Gatsby, he was hesitant to face Daisy after five years of separation with her, but he finally met her and passed that test. Julia Kristeva's concept in her essay "Words, Dialogue and Novel" focuses on the interconnectedness of texts and most importantly the reader's intertextual knowledge in interpretation. These issues align with the notion of implied intertextuality, where connections and references to other texts are present but may require the reader's active engagement and recognition. Mevlude Zengin argues that "... an author's work will always have echoes and traces of the other texts to which it refers either directly or indirectly and either explicitly or implicitly. It will also have layers of meanings rather than a solid and subtle meaning" (Zengin, 2016, P. 301). Julia Kristeva challenged the established ideas about author's "influences" and text "sources". She argues in her article "Word, Dialogue and Novel" that a literary text is "made of a mosaic of quotes; any text is the absorption and alteration of another," rather than being an isolated entity (Kristeva, 1986, P. 37). Therefore, based on the theory of intertextuality by Julia Kristeva, we can look at the Arthurian legend as a background to Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and thus obtain additional meanings acquired by the characters of the novel. Gatsby represents the errant knight who spent five years searching for the "Grail", and his tragic end was the result of his struggle with the "guards of the Grail". The challenges that prevented him from approaching Daisy were tests for this errant hero, but the results of those tests were fatal in the end. Tom Buchanan is one of these "grail-guards", he is the most obvious obstacle to Gatsby. Nick describes him as "aggressive", "cruel", "hard", "arrogant" and "gruff". Tom tries to destroy Gatsby by all means, so he investigates his origins and history with the intention of



eliminating him, and he finally succeeded when George was deluded by Tom that Gatsby killed his wife, so, George killed Gatsby. The quest hero in medieval literature has people who help him with their intelligence or they may have magical abilities, and yet they will not be able to help him to achieve the success. In the Arthurian legend, Merlin employs his capabilities to help King Arthur, also we note in Percival's journey that he gets useful advice from his mother. In Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Nick and Jordan are helpers of Gatsby. They organize the meeting between Gatsby and Daisy at the tea party, and they try to bring them closer but they cannot help him to achieve the complete success in his quest. Nick also supported Gatsby psychologically and spiritually. Nick describes his assistance to Gatsby, saying: " I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone" (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 104). Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* may seem to reflect the contemporary life in the United States during the twenties, but in its structure it reflects ancient traditions, including the traditions of the Arthurian legend. For example, the aristocracy in the United States is depicted in the novel as the nobility in the Middle Ages. There is a similarity between the character of Tom Buchanan and the medieval princes who are characterized by arrogance and cruelty, there is also a similarity between the character of Daisy with distinguished ladies in the Middle Ages such as the king's daughter, Nick Carraway, in the context of his speech about his family, presents a similarity with the noble knights in the Middle Ages, he speaks about his family's origins as a descendant of the Dukes of Buccleuch, saying: My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this Middle Western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan, and we have a tradition that we're descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 4). According to Mandel, Fitzgerald also borrows an important element of medieval romance when he narrates about his modern romantic relationship, this element is represented in the existence of a world of lovers that brings together only lovers, in this world the lovers ignore the rules of society and live in courtly love away from a "second world" in which ordinary laws prevail in community, political interests, and other manifestations of proper behavior (Mandel, 1988, P. 547). In Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's house represents a mini-community where parties were held continuously and these noisy parties were attended by guests representing the nobility. These tumultuous parties, in which luxurious banquets are served, are similar to the banquets of princes in the Middle Ages. However, after Daisy makes it clear to Gatsby that she does not want such an atmosphere, Gatsby fulfills her desire and tries to create a world of their own, it is the world of lovers. Gatsby left his palace at one of the parties, leaving the palace for the guests, taking Daisy away from the noise of the party, he ignored the world and went to the garden of Nick's house. There is a clear reference to the "courtly love" in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. It is certain that Gatsby dies in the service of the woman he loves. A hidden power destroyed him and prevented him from achieving his dream and reaching his goal, like the errant knight in the Arthurian legend, who finally falls victim to supernatural powers that prevent him from reaching his beloved and destroy his goals. This clear reference to "courtly love" and to the chivalry of the lover also appears in the novel when Gatsby takes responsibility for killing Myrtle to divert suspicion away from Daisy, as the chivalrous lover was doing in the Middle Ages trying to protect his beloved. Gatsby can't act realistically, he only acts romantically, like the romantic heroes of the Middle Ages. Gatsby does not admit Daisy and Tom's marriage, trying to persuade Daisy to abandon him. Gatsby also tries to give a legitimacy to his relationship with Daisy, which he considers an ideal and spiritual love affair, in a clear reference to the "courtly love" of the medieval knights. When Nick tries to convince Gatsby that a person cannot repeat the past, Gatsby retorts that he can, trying to turn back time five years ago, making him lost in his memories. I wouldn't ask too much of her, I ventured. 'You can't repeat the past.' 'Can't repeat the past?' he 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 (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 70). Such a disregard for time by Gatsby can be found in a similar case in the Arthurian legend, when Percival reaches the "castle of the Grail" and fails in the task of asking questions, he tries to go back in time, so he begins the process of searching for that castle again, trying to correct his previous mistake and repeat the test again. Gatsby is also trying to revive the perfect period in his life, which is the period that witnessed the beginning of his relationship with Daisy five years ago, when his humble origins prevented him from marrying her. The humble past continued to pursue Gatsby even after he became rich. Tom Buchanan tried to destroy Gatsby, taking advantage of Gatsby's past and his illegitimate wealth, which he obtained through illegal projects and smuggling. Thus, Gatsby realizes that his past will continue to haunt him and he cannot get rid of it. Gatsby's humble past differs from that of the traditional knights of the Arthurian legend who are of noble descent, accordingly, Gatsby can be seen as an errant knight less heroic

than the knights of the Arthurian legend. On the other hand, Daisy, who represents the “Grail”, but she is considered as less valuable Grail compared to the Holy Grail known in the Middle Ages that makes the seekers endure and face risks in order to complete the task of quest for it and obtaining it because it is an invaluable Grail. While Daisy is described as superficial, cruel, and other bad qualities that make her less than an ideal of the Holy Grail. For Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes. All night the saxophones wailed the hopeless comment of *the Beale Street Blues* while a hundred pairs of golden and silver slippers shuffled the shining dust. At the grey tea hour there were always rooms that throbbed incessantly with this low, sweet fever, while fresh faces drifted here and there like rose petals blown by the sad horns around the floor (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 96). Gatsby is fully aware that Tom's wealth motivated Daisy to marry him because she loves extravagant appearances, so, Gatsby was eager to make a fortune more than Tom's in order to catch her attention and regain her love. Wealth was not Gatsby's goal during the period of quest, but rather his means to achieve his goal of winning Daisy's heart and regaining her affection. This wealth is not important to Gatsby at all, as it is only a means to reach to Daisy who represents his ultimate goal. Gatsby emulates the knights of the “courtly love” when he uses his fortune and all his means to please Daisy. Nick describes Gatsby's efforts to fulfill Daisy's wishes when he takes her for the first time to his palace: He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy, and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes. Sometimes, too, he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way, as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real. Once he nearly toppled down a flight of stairs (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 59). Daisy's maiden name indicates a malicious part of her personality. As her maiden name was "Daisy Fay", it is a clear reference to the evil witch Morgan le Fay, who was mentioned in the Arthurian legend. According to Gatsby, Daisy possesses magical powers, as he is one of the "enchanted objects" who are enchanted by her beauty (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 60). Daisy's beauty also described as: “the pale magic of her face” (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 97), her magic, according to Gatsby, is the most powerful magic of all, because she uses her innocent beauty to create an illusion, and he lives in this illusion till his death. Daisy's voice is described in the novel as charming. Nick feels the magic of Daisy's voice, he described her voice after his first meeting with her saying: The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my 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 (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 13). Gatsby remains captive to Daisy's charm and loyal to her, even after she abuses him and her husband, Tom, insults him. Gatsby's constant infatuation with Daisy due to the "colossal vitality of his illusion" (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 61), so he will remain attached to this illusion until his death. The most obvious intertextual reference in the novel is when the grail is explicitly mentioned by Nick when describing Gatsby. This reference helps the reader to understand Gatsby's dream. Nick describes Gatsby saying: “He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go - but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail” (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 95). The Grail mentioned in the above quotation is an explicit reference to the Holy Grail that appeared in medieval Arthurian legend and was never found. Likewise, Gatsby's goal of winning Daisy and marrying her turns out to be as impossible as the quest of the Holy Grail. The reference to the Holy Grail is a reference to the futile quest for an ideal goal, as King Arthur's knights did this task and never found that Holy Grail. The word “grail” appears in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* with a small letter, and this case indicates the abolition of the characteristic of sacredness from Gatsby's mission, which makes it a secular mission and not a sacred religious mission, such as the quest of the Holy Grail, which was mentioned in the Christian heritage as the Grail from which Jesus Christ drank in his last supper. Daisy is described in the novel with descriptions that make her as close as possible to medieval princesses. She was compared to precious metals when Gatsby described her as "gleaming like silver" (Fitzgerald, 1993, P. 95). Gatsby's attempts to rid Daisy of her husband, Tom, are similar to a medieval knight's attempt to rid his sweetheart of marrying a man she does not love him. Daisy is considered the Holy Grail of Gatsby, as he believes that she is the only one who can make him happy and heal him emotionally by restoring his happy days with her, so for years he has believed that Daisy is the ultimate goal he can wish for. Just like the legend of the Holy Grail, Gatsby's mission to get Daisy is impossible, but he believes for the last moment of his life that he would achieve his goal. He faced many difficulties and endured many years of trouble in order to meet with Daisy and complete the rest of his life with her. Gatsby did not have chances to succeed in his mission, his wealth did not help him because he

was not elite like the Buchanans, Gatsby's wealth was very large but he recently collected it, all these reasons prevented Daisy to leave Tom for Gatsby. Gatsby made a fortune illegally in order to be worthy of Daisy, who was his Grail. He was looking for her like the quest of King Arthur's knights for the Holy Grail. Also, Gatsby's fate was like the fate of those knights. He failed in his quest which ended with his death. Gatsby's attempt to improve his character during his journey highlights the theme of quest for the Holy Grail. Gatsby's mission to get Daisy back involved throwing wasteful parties. He intended from these parties to draw Daisy's attention to him, he did not enjoy those parties, he devoted them to introduce himself again to Daisy and try to attract her, he wanted to prove to her that he belongs to the same lifestyle as her, Daisy believed that the poor man could not marry rich girl. These reasons encouraged Gatsby to take illegal ways to accumulate wealth, he was not realistic at all when he thought that wealth could create love. The quest of Gatsby is doomed to failure because of the cheap means he used to achieve his goal, his quest ended in a disaster that destroyed him and ended his life .Some American writers have reshaped the Arthurian legend in order to suit the reality of modern American society. The legend of King Arthur has inspired many writers, people, and even children, because it has remained for centuries open to readers for more interpretations. Modern American writers tried to promote the semi-ideal qualities of King Arthur's knights because of their nostalgia and to promote the virtues of that era, focusing on the values of equality and democracy and not necessarily focusing on the social values that were prevalent in the Middle Ages, these writers, including F. Scott Fitzgerald, objected to a corrupt political system or harsh social conditions, so their imaginations went far so that their literary works tell the story of an errant knight emerging from the heart of this society and trying in his quest to achieve a goal that may seem impossible to others .In his *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald uses elements of the Arthurian legend, he suggests that fantasy gives the middle class an impulse to pursue its goal. He also comments on the Jazz Age positively using the Arthurian legend, unlike many people of that period who were scornful of the medieval traditions. So Fitzgerald made the protagonist of his novel, *The Great Gatsby*, trace a "Grail", which is represented by his beloved Daisy, as if he was an errant knight from the Middle Ages looking for the Holy Grail. Fitzgerald employs themes of the Arthurian legend and reinterprets them in a modern American style. Gatsby's mission to obtain Daisy fails, despite of his serious efforts and sacrifices for her, such as the failure of the knights of the Arthurian legend to obtain the Holy Grail. Thus, the study has explored the concept of the errant knight and failure of the quest depicted in Malory's *Le Morte D'Arthur* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* .The Holy Grail has always been a symbol of happiness, success, and wealth for those who can obtain it, and Daisy represents the Holy Grail for Gatsby. According to the intertextual theory, we can see Gatsby as the errant knight who quests for the treasure represented by the Holy Grail. Like the knights of King Arthur, Gatsby works hard to obtain Daisy. For the knights, the Holy Grail is considered worthy of quest for, so, they engaged in impossible tasks in order to obtain it. The same thing happens with Gatsby in his quest for Daisy, he realizes that she is out of reach but he did not hesitate to pursue her in an impossible task that will cost him his life. The themes of honor and chivalry which are well known in the Arthurian legend can be seen in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. The Knights of the Round Table used to follow a strict system that regulated their behaviors. This system encouraged the knights to take risks in order to reach their supreme goal. On the other hand, Gatsby is characterized by romantic idealism as well as courage. His adventures, risks and sacrifices in order to achieve his goal can only be described as the actions of brave knights. In the Arthurian legend, King Arthur's knights, such as Percival, had to be pure and loyal. What is meant here is that the heart of the knight is pure. Gatsby represents the errant knight and the purity of his heart is represented in his sincere love for Daisy, this love that no obstacle can stop it. According to Gatsby, Daisy is a healing element and has healing powers, So he strives to get her to heal his soul and heart, she represents the utmost idealism and positivity for Gatsby. Gatsby begins his arduous quest to obtain this healing element which is also found in the Holy Grail just like King Arthur's knights . Like Percival, Jay Gatsby is on a quest to win the heart of his beloved, Daisy Buchanan. He achieves great wealth and success, not through illegal activities. Percival's journey to find the Holy Grail is not without its moral ambiguities, as he struggles to balance his desire for glory with his sense of duty and honor. Both characters also struggle with issues of identity and authenticity. Percival starts his journey as an inexperienced and naive young man, unsure of his place in the world, also, Jay Gatsby reinvents himself as a wealthy and sophisticated gentleman to win the favor of Daisy, hiding his humble origins and criminal activities. However, both characters ultimately come to realize the importance of being true to oneself and one's values.



## Conclusion

Intertextuality is a critical field that studies how an earlier literary text is reshaped and modified by later writers. The process of linking textual elements reveals the new meaning of the text. While most of the studies read and interpreted F. Scott Fitzgerald as representative of the American dream based on his own period's cultural and economic backgrounds, however, no established study yet clearly and intertextually read such novel in light of the Arthurian legend allusions being the possible parable of the American dream in terms of the futility of the quest. *Gatsby* represents a modern version of an errant knight who pursues his love and is characterized by idealism and honor like King Arthur's knights. The events of the Arthurian legend take place in ancient Britain in the medieval period, when the rules of chivalry and honor prevailed at that time, while the events of Fitzgerald's novel take place in the United States in the 1920s, when moral decay and social disintegration prevailed at the time. Fitzgerald's nostalgia for the past is evident in his novel, trying to create a spirit of perseverance, risk-taking, and determination to succeed in the American society. According to Kristeva's concept of allusions which can be termed as the "implied intertextuality", some allusions to the Arthurian legend can be traced in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Implied intertextuality occurs when a text indirectly indicates or evokes other texts without explicitly mentioning them. These allusions can take various forms, such as literary allusions, quotations, or subtle echoes of themes, motifs, or styles. The intertextual reading of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* reveals the proximity between the character of Gatsby and the character of Percival in the Arthurian legend in terms of the errant knight striving in his quest of self, love and honor. Percival embarked on a hard journey to seek the Holy Grail. He faced harsh challenges and obstacles, such as fighting monsters and rugged terrain. All of these obstacles did not prevent him from completing his quest. His strong belief in the Holy Grail made his determination to obtain it unwavering. Percival's quest for the Holy Grail symbolizes willpower in pursuit of the goal. Percival's story reminds us that the path to the supreme goal is fraught with dangers, but those dangers will not stop that errant knight who remains steadfast in his faith and committed to perseverance until the achievement of his goal, like Jay Gatsby who is considered a modern version of the errant knight who strives for his Holy Grail which is represented in Daisy, but his quest ended in failure and he sacrificed himself for his goal.

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