The Great Gatsby: The Limits Of Wonder

Richard Daniel Lehan

The Great Gatsby (1925) by F. Scott Fitzgerald is a short novel which takes place on Long Island during the Jazz Age and is commonly cited as one of the greatest novels of the 20th century. In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since. "Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

The Great Gatsby is valued for the vividness with which it renders an historical era; perhaps more than by any other American novel written in the 1920s, we are convinced that we hear the voices of people speaking from that decade before the advent of talking motion pictures. As narrator, Nick is the medium by which those voices are heard and, as principal speaker in