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A comparative essay of the beginning and ending of *Jane Eyre* and *The Great Gatsby*

In Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator conforms to the literary genre of the time, as well as their own political agenda, inevitably causing major differences in their respective openings and endings. For example, the Victorian manner of writing, under the subgenre of the Gothic novel, to which Charlotte Brontë conforms to, contrasts greatly with the psychological nature of the modernist novel, which amply characterizes *The Great Gatsby*. Furthermore, the purpose of writing contrasted greatly, since in *Jane Eyre*, the narrator is telling her story about her personal empowerment, whilst in *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator is ultimately criticizing the American Dream. Nevertheless, there are similarities in the opening and ending of the novels, especially due to the point of view taken, which is in the first-person retrospective. Because of the nature of this point of view, both narrators are judgmental and petulant, although the two narrators use even this technique in differing manners. However, because of the need to construct their novels in conformity with their given genre and literary time, the ending contrasts substantially, albeit important characters pass away in both conclusions. This essay, therefore, seeks to compare and contrast the two respective openings and endings, through discussing the point of view, character introduction and the ending in line with the given literary genre and political agenda.

Jane Eyre commences *in media res*, giving an abrupt beginning to the novel. "There was no possibility for taking a walk that day", she says, pointing out that "that day" is one to be distinguished above all others. Indeed, despite lacking any preamble or back-story, because of the incident of her cousin abusing her, which occurs on that precise day, her character and petulance is introduced effectively. Her abuse and her need for a form of redemption are amply demonstrated, even without a preamble, conforming to the standard Victorian novel. On the other hand, *The Great Gatsby* has a profoundly telling preamble, which establishes a simple back-story for the narrator. "In my younger and more vulnerable years..." the narrator commences his story thus, in order to establish the mood of retrospect, although quite unlike that of *Jane Eyre*.

However, these qualities of the respective novels also aids in establishing the Point of View of each narrator. While both are clearly retrospective, through giving a sufficient preamble, the narrator of *The Great Gatsby* establishes, even prior to the commencement of the actual narrative, that the narrator is not telling the story in perfect chronological order, but