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***The Great Gatsby* (1925), by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

**Argumentation and Thinking Improvement Assessment (ATIA)**

**Directions:** Answer each of the following questions, making your arguments as evidence-based, well-reasoned, credible, and (where appropriate) responsive as possible. Each of the questions pertains to this debatable issue:

**Who is most responsible (morally rather than legally) for Jay Gatsby’s death?**

**1. Summary**

For this question you are taking the position that Daisy bears most moral responsibility for Jay Gatsby’s death. The argumentative claim you are supporting is that Daisy deceptively destroys Gatsby’s romantic dream of recreating their passionate and obsessive love affair.

Provide the evidence to support this claim by completing this evidence template with a 30 – 40 word (no more, no less) summary of the following passage from chapter 7 of the novel.

Suddenly she threw the cigarette and the burning match on the carpet.

“Oh, you want too much!” she cried to Gatsby. “I love you now – isn’t that

enough? I can’t help what’s past.” She began to sob helplessly. “I did love him once – But I loved you too.”

Gatsby’s eyes opened and closed.

“You loved me *too*?” he repeated.

“Even that’s a lie,” said Tom savagely. “She didn’t know you were alive. Why – there’re things between Daisy and me that you’ll never know, things that neither of us can ever forget.”

The words seemed to bite physically into Gatsby.

“I want to speak to Daisy alone,” he insisted. “She’s all excited now --”

“Even alone I can’t say I never loved Tom,” she admitted in a pitiful voice. “It wouldn’t be true.”

“Of course it wouldn’t,” agreed Tom.

She turned to her husband.

“As if it mattered to you,” she said (118).

Complete this evidence template: “Daisy is morally responsible for Gatsby’s death because it is she and she alone who deceptively destroys his romantic dream of recreating their passionate and obsessive love affair. In the climactic Plaza Hotel scene in chapter 7, just as Gatsby prods her to tell her husband to his face that she never loved him, that she has always loved only Gatsby, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

Write your 30 – 40 word summary of the passage above here:

**2. Argumentative Claims**

For this question you are taking the position that Tom Buchanan bears the most moral responsibility for Gatsby’s death. Create three argumentative claims to support and develop this interpretive position. Be sure that the claims are (a) focused on a single reason that the position is true, (b) concise, (c) consistent, and (d) separate from each other.

(Argumentative Claim 1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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(Argumentative Claim 2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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(Argumentative Claim 3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**3. Evidence**

An academic argument should include a writer’s or a speaker’s analysis that shows how the evidence supplied proves that the claim is true. This analysis – connecting the evidence to the claim – is called **reasoning** in the classic argumentation model used throughout high school and college.

For this question your position is that Gatsby himself was most responsible for his own death. You should provide the missing reasoning in the blank field after each of the two pieces of evidence in the following argument for your position.

Perhaps the most important reason to believe that Gatsby is the character most responsible for his own death is that it is his own naïve and almost childish insistence on restoring his past romance with Daisy – a desire that is apparently filling an emptiness at the core of his being – that triggers the tragic series of events that ends in his murder. The night she first attends one of Gatsby’s extravagant parties in West Egg, Daisy is the subject of Nick’s late-night chat with Gatsby.

“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.

“I’m going to fix everything just the way it was before,” he said nodding

determinedly. “She’ll see” (99)

Earlier in the summer, as Nick starts to get to know his wealthy neighbor, he makes this appraisal of Gatsby’s inner substance.

I had talked with him perhaps half a dozen times in the past month and found, to my disappointment, that he had little to say. So my first impression, that he was a person of some undefined consequence, had gradually faded and he had become simply the proprietor of an elaborate road-house next door (60).

**4. Refutation**

While it is sometimes true that a counter-argument can be critiqued more generically and intrinsic holes can be exposed in its evidence and reasoning, often times a writer’s refutation of a counter-argument is highly inflected by their position.

Refute the following counter-argument from the perspective of a writer taking each of the three subsequently identified positions.

Now, it is true that George Wilson actually shoots and kills Gatsby, which in any court of law would mean that Wilson is by the guiltiest (if not the only guilty) culprit. The New York coroner’s report says that Wilson was a man “deranged by grief” (144), and Nick notes that following Wilson’s murder-suicide, “the holocaust was complete” (143).

Refute this counter-argument, assuming your position is that **Tom** bears the most moral

responsibility for Gatsby’s death:

Refute this counter-argument, assuming your position is that **Daisy** bears the most moral

responsibility for Gatsby’s death:

Refute this counter-argument, assuming your position is that **Myrtle** bears the most moral

responsibility for Gatsby’s death:

**5. Evaluation**

In academic argumentation, **evaluation** is the process of weighing and evaluating competing arguments and explaining why it is, based on logical analysis and the strength of the evidence, your position is the most valid, even if another position is valid up to a point.

Choose a position on the debatable issue and evaluate why stronger arguments support it than support any of the other positions. You can address any of the arguments and counter-arguments included in this assessment, and any others that were raised in class. Use the back, if needed.