Close Reading Chapter 5
Skill Focus: Diction

As I went over to say goodbye I saw the expression of bewilderment had come back into Gatsby’s face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness. Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own

fault but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with al creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart.

1. Why does Nick describe Gatsby’s expression as one of ―bewilderment‖ in this scene? What does it mean to be bewildered? Why would Gatsby be feeling this way?
2. Examine the phrase ―Almost five years!‖ What does the syntax of this line contribute to our understanding of Gatsby’s feelings at this moment?
3. What does the author mean by ―decking it out with every bright feather...‖ (ll. 10-11)? What does the pronoun ―it‖ refer to?
4. Why might the heart be described as ―ghostly‖ in the last line?

Chapter 5 Response: Describe Gatsby’s complex feelings toward Daisy in this passage, and describe Nick’s attitude toward Gatsby.

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