

Liu Shuyue

*School of Foreign Languages, Beihang University
Beijing, China*

**Apple of Sodom: Interpretation of Nick in *The Great Gatsby* from
the Perspective of Ethical Literary Criticism**

Based on ethical literary criticism, this article focuses on Nick, who is often ignored by scholars, to analyze his moral weaknesses as a character in the story level and explore how he abuses his narrative functions to cover up his defects in the discourse level. Opposed to previous articles praising Nick as a moral benchmark, this study finds that with complete control over the narration, the implied author has left clues for the implied readers to spot Nick's moral problems: under the drive of animal factor, he indulges himself in frivolous relationships and sexual life, and makes a wrong ethical choice facing Daisy's extramarital affair, then triggering the final tragedy. Besides that, Nick has a mental paralysis of speculating on others with snobbish values without realizing it, which renders him a representative of the Jazz Age. Moreover, he tries to hide corruption by abusing his narrative power, and thus descends to the satirized object of the implied author. This ethics – centered perspective not only offers the implied readers a novel understanding of the character and the theme, but also invites them to participate in the story interpretation to obtain moral enlightenment. Additionally, this article emphasizes the implied author's appeal for the return of orders through Nick's characterization, and then restores the ethical nature of literature.