

## Gatsby essay - symbolism

The Great Gatsby' written by F. Scott Fitzgerald is a tragic novel set in 1920s America. Fitzgerald uses symbols to suggest the life of Gatsby. He uses the green light to represent the hopes and dreams of Gatsby, Dr T.J Eckleburg's eyes to represent the eyes of God, the Valley of Ashes to show the effects of capitalism and the symbol of time is also repeated throughout the novel.

Nick Carraway narrates the events of Gatsby's life through his own eyes after moving next door to Gatsby's mansion. Nick meets this mysterious man who tells him about his past lover, which turns out to be Carraway's cousin Daisy Buchanan, who is married to Tom Buchanan. After a series of event we come to the realisation that Tom has a mistress that Daisy knows about. Gatsby confronts Daisy in New York about her true love for him, however, Daisy cannot say that she never loved Tom. This leads onto the death of Tom's mistress Myrtle Wilson by Daisy's hand when she was driving back from New York in Gatsby's car. Gatsby takes the blame, and this ultimately leads to his death by George Wilson, Myrtle's husband. The green light symbolizes the hope and dreams of Gatsby this is clear through the novel and the colour green is also used to show the rest of Gatsby's life.

The colour green is referred to though out the novel. In chapter one Gatsby is shown to reaching out towards a green light which is at the end of daisy's dock "he stretched out his arms towards the dark water...and... a single green light". This suggests that he is stretching his arms out toward his goals which thought out the novel we have learnt is daisy. It also shows how long he holds on to his dreams for especially his hopes of being with daisy. Again, later on green is mentioned however this time it represents Gatsby's envious character. In chapter seven daisy says "can't say that I never loved tom" after this is said Gatsby realises that daisy might not still love him and because of this he sees that he has to compete with her husband if he has any chance of winning her again. This shows that Gatsby would never be ok if Daisy showed that she was in love with another man.

Doctor T.J Eckleburg's eye's symbolize God to some of the characters in the novel. The eyes watch over The Valley of Ashes and is still watching when Myrtle gets killed towards the end of the novel. "We walked back a hundred yards along the road under the doctor Eckleburg's persistent stare." This symbolizes judgement and Nick feels judged when he is taken to go and visit Myrtle as he knows that George doesn't know about the affair between Tom and Myrtle. "She might fool me but she couldn't fool god." said George, after his wife is killed by Daisy, as if even though he didn't know what was going on god did.

The Valley of Ashes symbolizes the effects of capitalism. To reach New York city the residents of West and East Egg must travel though the filth and degradation that is the Valley of Ashes. "The grey land and the spasms of break dust which drifts endlessly." This emphasizes how empty and dull it is. It

also shows the people from the Eggs, on their way to party in New York, that the world isn't a perfect place as most of them believe. "When he saw us a damp gleam of hope sprang in to his light blue eyes." George is happy to see Tom and Nick as he has business with Tom and it suggests the recurring theme of hope throughout the novel. This also shows how oblivious George is of Tom as he and George's wife Myrtle are having an affair.

Throughout the novel time is a recurring theme and it represents Gatsby's hope of going back to the past. Gatsby was over at Nick's house with Daisy and he knocked his clock off the fireplace. "I think we all believed for a moment it had smashed to pieces on the floor". The clock represents Gatsby's attempt to relive the past by trying to get Daisy back and it fails. This shows Gatsby getting his first hint of doubt that reliving the past with Daisy was impossible. "You can't repeat the past ... can't repeat the past? Why of course you can old sport." This shows Nick sees Gatsby's obsession with the past and getting with Daisy again. This is a warning from Nick to Gatsby that he ignores, Nick can see that he's in danger if he gets back with Daisy and this foreshadow his death at the end of the novel.

In conclusion, Fitzgerald's great use of symbolism shows that events of Gatsby's life. The green light represents his hopes and dreams of being with Daisy again. However, this is not possible as Daisy is happily married to Tom Buchanan. Dr T.J Eckleburg's eyes represents the all-seeing God, which casts judgement over the characters during the time of the affair. The Valley of Ashes, which represents the effects of capitalism, does an excellent job at showing to the main characters that life isn't perfect, and this is the fault of their greediness. The symbol of time represents Gatsby's hopes of returning to the past, when he was with Daisy. However, this is again not possible due to her marriage. I enjoyed the use of symbolism throughout 'The Great Gatsby' as it helped to convey meaning to Gatsby's life and actions.

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