

F. Scott Fitzgerald

THE GREAT GATSBY

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Sixth Year De Valera 2012

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6th Year DeValera Study Guide

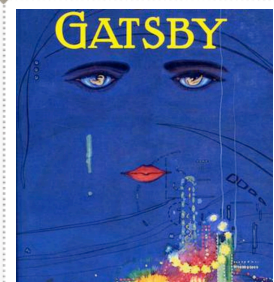
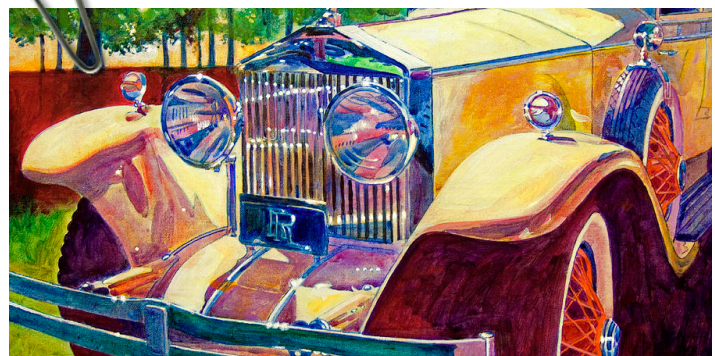
The Great Gatsby is a novel by American author F. Scott Fitzgerald. The story takes place in 1922, during the Roaring Twenties

CHAPTER SUMMARIES AND ANALYSIS

CHAPTER ONE SUMMARY

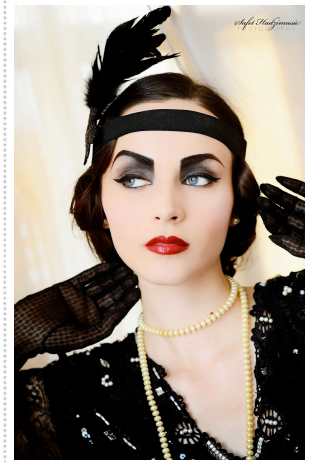
The first important feature of chapter one is our introduction to our narrator; Nick Carraway. We are given an interesting insight into his character when he relays his father's philosophical advice: 'Whenever you feel like criticising anyone, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you had.' This tells us two things about Nick. One, that he had a comfortable upbringing and two, that he isn't judgmental. A further two mentions of the word 'snobbishly' on this page suggest that Nick not only had a comfortable upbringing but that he is of a good family.

Next we are introduced to our title character, Gatsby and Nick says 'Gatsby, who represented everything for which I had unaffected scorn.' Nick's pedigree has taught him to disapprove of greed and obvious wealth and as we are to learn Gatsby makes an art of exactly this. The next insight we are given is into the attitude of the era. Nick describes his war days and then says 'I came back restless'; this shows us the way that the young men returned from the battlefield only to be unsatisfied with their ordinary lives. This explains the feeling of stiflement that swept through a whole young generation throughout



Then wear the gold hat,
if that will move her;
If you can bounce high,
bounce for her too,
Till she cry "Lover,
gold-hatted, high-
bouncing lover,
I must have you!"
-Thomas Parke
D'Invilliers

"a single green light, minute and faraway, that might have been the end of a dock."



the 1920s. This is what gave rise to parties like Gatsby's and people like Gatsby.

The next significant event is Nick's introduction to his new neighbours Tom, Daisy and their friend, Jordan. Tom is an old college peer of Nick's and these people are to make up Nick's social circle.

As they sit down to dinner, Tom begins to talk about a book that he has read 'The Rise of the Coloured Empires'. He believes that it is up to them, as the 'dominant race' to 'watch out or these other races will have control of things'. This conversation highlights the attitude of the era. As Fascism began to rise in popularity in Europe in the inter war years, the idea of racial superiority is shared by some Americans.

Over dinner, Nick begins to notice Jordan Baker romantically. This is a key moment as Jordan is to become his love interest. 'The last sunshine fell with romantic affection upon her glowing face'.

It soon becomes apparent that underneath her happy exterior, Daisy is disillusioned and discontented with her life. We hear that Tom is cheating on her; he has 'some woman in New York'. Daisy tells Nick that she has become cynical about everything. She tells him that she wept

when her daughter was born and hoped that the girl would be a fool because 'that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.'

The final key moment in the first chapter is Nick's first sighting of Gatsby. 'A figure emerged from the shadow of my neighbour's mansion.' Nick notices that Gatsby is trembling as he looks across the dark water. The significance of this is to become clear as the story progresses.

CHAPTER 1 ANALYSIS

Through Fitzgeralds' rich Characterisations, the setting and tone of the novel begin to develop, for example when Nick says "No Gatsby turned out to be all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations" We realise that Gatsby is not nearly as corrupt as the social climate that surrounds him.

Apart from Nick who resists corruption and later describes himself as "one of the few honest people I have ever known" most of the characters are, in some way, polluted by the characteristic self-indulgent excesses of the 'roaring 20's'.

"Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter— tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And then one fine morning— So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

"What foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men."

-NICK CARRAWAY

An example of this is the upper class, Yale educated, Tom Buchanan who comes east from Chicago is "Supercilious" and "Arrogant." His opinions of a need for racial purity are as repulsive as his flamboyant masquerading of his affair. Daisy, his wife is more agreeable, particularly because she makes a mockery of his racist views. We should note that she appears in a "White fluttering dress" which conveys a sense of emptiness.

At the same time, it seems as if America herself, like the characters in the novel bears the stain of this corruption and greed. This will eventually culminate in the stock market crash of 1929; leading to the Great Depression. Fitzgerald who published the Great Gatsby in 1925 is viewing this world as Nick does, he is "inclined to reserve all judgements" but only out of his sensibility that "a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth."

So the Great Gatsby opens by establishing a strong moral vision of a world that seems to be unravelling from the stress of the excess that strains its integrity.

CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY

Chapter two starts off with a description of the area. We are introduced to Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, his eyes are wide and gigantic, and aside from that he is faceless. This introduces us to the theme of facelessness; eyes without soul, face without expression.

Tom brings Nick to meet his mistress; Tom is keen for Nick to meet her- to show her off. She is the garage owner's wife, Myrtle. She is "faintly stout... carried her flesh sensuously". Nick, it is clear, has some degree of distaste for Tom's mistress or rather Tom's flamboyancy of Myrtle. We

see Tom acting superior in front of Wilson, Myrtle's husband, here we see that not everyone was prosperous despite the times. This brings us back to the quote in Chapter one that Nick's father instilled in Nick.

Nick, Tom and Myrtle go to New York City, Myrtle requests Tom to buy her a puppy, an Airedale Terrier, and this shows the impulsiveness of the time. Then the three of them plus the new addition go to Myrtle's top floor apartment, they drink whiskey, it's still daytime- we see their blasé attitude to drinking in the day; no work to do so they drink.

Myrtle's sister, Catherine, arrives and we are introduced to her. It is evident that she is a flapper "solid, sticky bob of red hair... complexion powdered milky white... eyebrows plucked and drawn on again." Myrtle's neighbours arrive and Nick notices a change in her "personality had also undergone a change... her laughter, her gestures; her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment." Later on, Nick is talking to Catherine, she mentions that she attended one of Gatsby's infamous parties "they say he's a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm's, that's where all his money comes from." Gatsby's notoriety becomes known to Nick here. Nick and Catherine go on to talk some more, here we see the recklessness with money at the time "we had over \$1,200 when we started but we got gyped out of it all." It becomes clear to us Myrtle's distaste



"He had one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced, or seemed to face, the whole external world for an instant and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself."

"I have only been drunk twice in my life the second time was that afternoon"

-NICK CARRAWAY

for her husband "I thought he knew something about breeding but he wasn't fit to lick my shoe."

We then hear a recounted tale of how Myrtle and Tom met, the contrast between courtship at this time and ten years previous is strong "his white shirt-front pressed against my arm and so I told him I had to call a policeman but I lied." Again the impulsiveness is clear when we hear of Myrtle's shopping list. Later on in the evening, Nick hears Myrtle and Tom arguing, she is shouting "Daisy, Daisy, Daisy", "making a short deft movement Tom Buchanan broke her nose with an open hand." Here, we see Nick and Mr. McKee's nonchalance in a man hitting a woman, a previous taboo.

Chapter 2 Analysis

A major development in the theme of judgement and morality is the introduction of the billboard of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg. The sign, a faded advertisement for an eye doctor, looms over the dumping ground where Tom's mistress lives. The connection between the geography of the dumping ground and Tom's affair signifies the consequences of a financially unrestrained lifestyle. Just as every wealthy city is bordered by a repository for its physical waste, in Gatsby, the city and her affluent suburbs have their own moral dumping ground. Just as the city exploits the neighbouring land for its waste the heartless aristocrat Tom

exploits the working class circumstances of the Wilson's for his own personal amusement. So it is no accident that Nick has his first, first-hand observations of the affair in this location. And he, like Eckleburg, can only stare at it in silence. Nick says "I followed him over a low white-washed railroad fence and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Dr. Eckleburg's persistent stare. Eckleburg here functions as a metaphor; for the ever present, observant eye of judgement or God. He is a moral doctor, a fading image that cannot speak and, in this way, Eckleburg represents both the narrator Nick and Fitzgerald himself. He is a silent observer, just as they are.

Myrtle's husband George Wilson is clearly a sympathetic character. When he sees Tom, the very idea of possibly selling a car and making some money causes a "damp gleam of hope" to appear in his eyes. George is a simple, hardworking American and his characterisation reflects Fitzgerald's disappointment in the lost values in America, "he was a blonde, spiritless man, anaemic and faintly handsome". But the ironic ending to this chapter best sums up its reflection on greed and hypocrisy, particularly when we hear Myrtle lament that she thought George Wilson "wasn't fit to lick my shoe". The irony, of course, is that Myrtle says this while assuming a privileged

moral stance but in reality, she is the one who is cheating on her husband with a man who is physically abusing her and lying to her about his inability to get a divorce. In reality, neither Myrtle nor Tom is fit to lick George's shoe. But through all these events, no one, neither Nick nor Mr and Mrs McKee nor Myrtle's sister nor Dr. T.J. Eckleburg says anything in protest.

Chapter 3 Summary

Nick describes Gatsby's house and elaborate parties that he throws most nights during the summer. People arrive to either sunbathe on the beach or ride on the motor boats. Many of them never meet Gatsby or know who he is and what he looks like and most were not invited.

Nick then attends his first party at Gatsby's he receives an invitation from Gatsby's chauffeur (one of the few who actually do)

He meets Jordan at the party, who he previously met at Daisy's and everybody gossips about the mysterious Gatsby and how there is a rumor he may have murdered or is in the CIA or something.

Nick goes into the library with Jordan to get away from the party and meets an old man sitting in there (Owl eyes) who is in awe of all the books and the fact that they are real.

He returns to the party and is introduced to a stranger who says "you look familiar" and they chat about the war soon to find out that he

"This is much too polite for me"

-JORDAN BAKER

is actually talking to Gatsby and is truly embarrassed.

Gatsby invites Jordan to talk with him in the library and tells her a secret, which, she tells Nick, she cannot disclose. As Nick leaves the party he witnesses an accident involving the Owl-eyed man, he then continues to give an overview of his summer. We learn he has had an affair with a girl from Jersey City and about his relationship with Jordan whom he is beginning to fall in love with. This chapter is steeped in the decadence of the age.

Chapter 3 Analysis

Before meeting Gatsby, we meet his entourage of summertime revellers who decadently enjoy his hospitality. Gatsby serves as a sort of mythical figure to his guests, who constantly make up stories about his questionable background... "He was a German spy...", "I'll bet he killed a man." No one really seems to know him, no one seems to really have been invited by him so we wonder why does Gatsby continued to throw parties if he has no interest in the guests that attend them. Owl eyes observation of Gatsby's library and his enthusiasm for the real books is significant. While Gatsby could have fake books in the library he chooses to have real ones "Absolutley real... have pages and everything." "What realism!" Despite the superficial nature of his parties, there seems to be something authentic about Gatsby.

His display is really about something else. Gatsby may be a 'West-Egger', he may behave like the nouveau riche, however perhaps there is some substance to him that the bespectacled Owl eyes, whose glasses recall the omniscient eyes of Eckleburg witnesses in the authenticity of his library.

While this chapter suggests there may be something authentic in Gatsby's character, it, at the same time, suggests the growing ambiguity of Nick's character. Just as Gatsby is not all good or bad, all class or no class, all moral or amoral, Nick's character begins to show its flip side here as well. Though Nick claims that "I am one of the few honest people that I know" he still cannot help but fall in love with the dubious Jordan Baker. Nick, while he behaves morally, has a fascination for less grounded characters. His silent observation of Jordan's obvious lying demonstrates a sort of acquiescence just as he demonstrated a silent consent of Tom's behaviour with Myrtle. While Nick wants to be a good person, his lack of action implicates him in the amorality of those around him.

Chapter 4 Summary

To start chapter four, Nick Carraway lists all the people who attended Gatsby's parties that summer naming the country's most powerful and wealthiest people.

Carraway then describes a trip to New York he takes with Gatsby to eat lunch. Throughout the journey there, Gatsby tells Carraway all about his past. The stories he tells are quite unbelievable for Nick; he remains sceptical. Gatsby sees Carraway's scepticism and slight unease so he backs up his stories with apparent proof, showing Carraway a medal from his wartime and a photograph of himself and a cricket team at Oxford University, England. Gatsby's tale consists of him inheriting his wealth from rich, deceased parents from the Midwest – "San Francisco" and that he had spent time in combat during WWI and in European cities "Paris, Venice, Rome" mainly rubies and jewels.

Meanwhile, the automobile drives speedily in through the city. A policeman pulls Gatsby's vehicle over but as they slow down Gatsby flashes a white card to the officer who then apologises to Gatsby for bothering him.

The two men then go to lunch where a man named Mr. Wolfshiem waits. Gatsby introduces Nick to him. Gatsby claims that Wolfshiem is the man responsible for the 1919 World Series fix. Carraway is then under the impression that the shady, sly, wealthy Wolfshiem is the source of Gatsby's prestige and wealth. Carraway begins to link the two men in his head and perhaps, in his view Gatsby is part of organised crime or gambling.

"I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool."

"...and for a moment I was sorry that I'd ever set foot upon his over-populated lawn"

-NICK CARRAWAY

Nick meets with Jordan Baker, friend of Daisy, after the lunch. Baker expresses to Nick that the mysterious conversation she had secretly with Jay Gatsby was about the fact that he is still in love with Daisy and that he had moved to West Egg purely to be closer to her once again.

Jordan then details the story of Gatsby and Daisy's history to Nick. She describes that Daisy was once a young beautiful girl whom everyone wanted to marry in Louisville, Kentucky. Daisy fell for Gatsby and he fell for her in turn. But upon Gatsby's departure, Daisy accepted it as goodbye and married Tom Buchanan instead. She numbs herself the night before her wedding day with alcohol upon receiving a heartfelt letter from her former lover, Gatsby.

Daisy's husband Tom has not remained faithful within their marriage whereas Daisy has.

Baker reveals that Gatsby has asked her to reunite the former loves; Daisy and Gatsby, at his house for tea. Although, Jay Gatsby does not want Daisy to know about this planned reunion.

Chapter 4 Analysis

The melancholic tone of the novel resonates in this chapter which begins with a catalogue of Gatsby's guests and ends with a story of his loss of love. The irony of the story is that Gatsby who has the money to possess and attract anything or

anyone to his house, most wants and desires the very thing he cannot have or buy, his past love with Daisy. Gatsby, a man who continues to reinvent himself still years for a piece of his past. Later, in chapter six, Nick tells of him "he talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy..." "...his life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could once return to a certain starting place and go over it all slowly..." "...he could find out what that thing was."

Gatsby's search for authenticity within himself and in his relationship with Daisy is embodied in the image of the "real" or authentic books in his library. His past romance with Daisy is Gatsby's idea of himself. His invented history or his "real self" for which he continues to strive. In this way the character of Gatsby serves as an image for America. Gatsby's nostalgia for his old self and the love that it symbolises is like Fitzgerald's portrait of America's nostalgia for her lost values. Like Gatsby, America seems to have everything in the midst of the booming twenties but she has lost something in the process.

So, in the midst of the bustle of Gatsby's hectic and corrupt world lies a hope in his love for Daisy. She is his dream, for which he has sacrificed everything including his own respectability. But ironically what this

dream symbolises is respectability. Daisy has the class and the money and well bred background that Gatsby can only fabricate. He can only stare in his dream symbolised by the green light on Daisy's dock, from across the harbour. But if he will ever be able to attain that dream remains a question the novel continues to ask.

Chapter 5 Summary

The chapter begins with an image of Gatsby's house blazing with light, indicating that perhaps Gatsby was aware of Daisy's visit the next day. Nick then meets Gatsby on Gatsby's lawn. Gatsby offers Nick a position in his 'secret' business, but Nick immediately declines this offer, knowing that it will bring no good to him.

Nick calls Daisy and invites her to come for tea the next day; however she is unaware that Gatsby will be there. Nick demands that she does not bring Tom. The following day Gatsby arrives for tea in a striking ensemble of 'white flannel suit, silver shirt and a gold coloured tie'

Moments later, Daisy arrives. She questions Nick as to why she had to come alone, but she soon realises, after walking into the living room, that she is not alone. There appears to be tension between the two, as they haven't seen each other for years.

As Nick leaves, the two to reconnect, Gatsby awkwardly begs for him to stay. After half an hour,

“Nobody’s is coming to tea. It’s too late”

-JAY GATSBY

Nick returns to the house, to find that the tension had cleared and Daisy is fixing herself as she had been crying.

Gatsby invites the others to his house, to impress Daisy with his wealth. When they reach the garden, Gatsby talks about the green light near Daisy’s home. ‘It compared the light to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it seemed very near, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon’

Gatsby calls on Mr Klipspringer to play the piano for the guests, and as he plays it, the love between Gatsby and Daisy is reconnected. As Nick goes over to say goodbye, he sees that the expression of bewilderment has come back into Gatsby’s face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness. Nick then leaves as Gatsby and Daisy rekindle their love.

Chapter 5 Analysis

Chapter 5 elaborates on many of the novel’s themes and motifs, for example, the melancholic tone that pervades the novel resurfaces during Gatsby and Daisy’s reunion in the image of the pouring rain. Gatsby’s melancholic longing, painted on his face “pale as death” temporarily resolves itself during his reunion with Daisy. Nick makes this passage explicit saying “it stopped raining” for a brief moment it seems the sun is shining and Gatsby has his dream within his grasp. Just as the rain

returns Gatsby says to Daisy “you always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock.”

Nick expands upon Gatsby’s comment in his narration saying “Possibly the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever...” “Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her.” Where it not for the returning rain we might believe that Gatsby’s quest had come to an end, however the rain tells us that his brief taste of happiness must be short lived and that difficult times are ahead.

The colour of this light can also signify many things. On one level, the green could signify money, for example the money that Gatsby must earn before he can satisfy and win the heart of Daisy. On another level, since green is the colour for ‘go’ the colour could also signify the never-ending-ness of Gatsby’s pursuit. Daisy is like a whimsical ghost who will always lie just outside his reach. Nick says her voice “couldn’t be over-dreamed-that voice was a deathless song.” And we recall how in Chapter 1 the depiction of Daisy’s house conveyed a sense of an empty dream in which the potential for happiness had nothing substantial to uphold it. So, on a third level, we can see how these two connotations of the colour green are conflated or combined into a whole. Just as Gatsby will continue

to chase this ephemeral ghost, Americans in the 20s, chased their dreams of riches.

Chapter 6 Summary

The chapter starts with a question of Gatsby’s mysterious past. A young reporter arrives on his doorstep asking if he had anything to say. Gatsby is polite but gives him no reason to stay.

Jay Gatsby was a mysterious man, or should we call him James Gatz? At seventeen he had changed his name when he first saw Dan Cody’s boat drop anchor off the coast where he was walking. He rowed out to it to warn Dan Cody of worrying winds to come. Gatz’s ‘overwhelming self absorption’ had led to a strain in his relationship with his unsuccessful parents, ‘his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all’. However this new figure in his life hired him for several trips across the continent spanning five years. ‘To young Gatz resting on his oars and looking up at the railed deck, that yacht represented all the beauty and glamour in the world’.

Back in the present Tom Buchanan and some friends drop into his house along with Nick Carraway. Gatsby utters words that Tom may later wish he’d never heard “I believe we’ve met before, Mr. Buchanan.” Tom pretends to remember and Gatsby continues “I know your wife.” Tom moves the conversation swiftly onward but is clearly phased as in

"Oh, yes," said Tom very gruffly polite but obviously not remembering, "so we did, I remember very well"

-TOM BUCHANAN

Gatsby's absence he ponders "I wonder where in the devil he met Daisy. By God, I may be old fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me. They meet all kinds of crazy fish."

"Tom was evidently perturbed at Daisy's running around alone, for on the following Saturday night he came with her to Gatsby's party.' As they enter with Nick and Gatsby, Daisy says in her excitement "If you want to kiss me at anytime during the night, Nick, just let me know and I'd be glad to arrange it for you."

Daisy and Gatsby later dance together and then sit alone on Nick's porch steps; Nick remains watchfully at Daisy's request "In case there's a fire or flood."

After this they return to the drunken night and Tom and Gatsby's ever-present jealousy. Gatsby reveals his disappointment to Nick. He dwells on the thought that Daisy didn't enjoy the night; 'he wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say "I never loved you". After she had obliterated those four years with that sentence they could decide upon more practical measures to be taken.'

Chapter 6 Analysis

Some of the best examples of the time motif occur in chapter 6. Throughout Nick's narrations it is often unclear how much time is elapsing between episodes. Also time

is particularly significant in this chapter because it begins with a description of Gatsby's real past and it ends with Gatsby revealing how he desires to recover that past. Time seems to mean nothing to Gatsby and perhaps this is because he believes he can repeat history. It's no mistake that in his reunion with Daisy he carelessly knocks a clock off the mantelpiece and catches it just in time.

The tragedy of Jay Gatsby is that he spends the novel trying to recover some idea of himself, through Daisy, that has never really existed in the first place. Almost like Sophocles' tragic hero Oedipus, the person whom Gatsby imagines himself to be is not who he is at all. In this way he is constantly performing a sort of violence on himself because the real Jay Gatsby or James Gatz, the working class Clam Digger never seems good enough. So Gatsby constantly erases James Gatz in his longing to be someone else.

This violence to the self is very much a part of Gatsby's working class origins. Gatsby has had to reinvent himself in order to move up the social ladder, however no matter how hard he tries to pass himself off as a trust funded Aristocrat, the gaudiness of his cars and clothes, not to mention his West Egg address betray his claims.

Chapter 7 Summary

Chapter 7 begins with Nick calling on Gatsby after he failed to have a party one Saturday night. On arrival he is met by a rude new butler who turns him away. Nick's finn explains to him how Gatsby has fired all his old house servants and hired new ones, who have some connection to Wolfshiem Gatsby later explains. When Gatsby calls Nick the following day he explains how this was to prevent gossip as Daisy was now calling over regularly. Gatsby invites Nick to lunch in the Buchanans on behalf of Daisy.

The next day Nick catches the train to East Egg to Tom and Daisy's and is met by Daisy, Gatsby and Jordan Baker. Tom is believed to be in the hallway on the phone to "his girl" When Tom is out of the room Daisy stands close to Gatsby, even kissing him on the lips, and telling him she loves him. Gatsby is then introduced to Daisy's daughter for the first time and can hardly believe she is real. Daisy seems in the whole, uninterested in her daughter.

They have luncheon in the dining room and complain about the heat. Daisy is especially frustrated. Tom becomes aware of Daisy and Gatsby's affair after catching the two staring at each other over dinner. "She told him she loved him, and Tom Buchanan saw" They finish eating and decide to go to town, Tom and Gatsby have an awkward and strained conversation. When Daisy

“I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. nobody from nowhere make love to your wife.”

-TOM BUCHANAN

calls out something Nick explains to Gatsby that she has an indiscreet voice, and Gatsby replies: “her voice is full of money” a sentence which sums Daisy up as a person and once again returns to the importance of money at that time.

The group decide to go to town for the afternoon, Daisy rides with Gatsby. On route (accompanied by Jordan and Nick) Tom stops at Mr. Wilson’s garage, where he learns that Mr. Wilson has made “a parallel” discovery to his, and that he is forcing Myrtle to move away. It is decided that the group will rent out a parlour suite at the Central Plaza hotel. In the heat of the day an argument breaks out between Tom and Gatsby, during this argument Gatsby explains on behalf of Daisy about the affair and their past. Gatsby explains to Tom how Daisy has never loved him and that she is leaving him for Gatsby. Daisy reluctantly agrees with Gatsby at first but Tom’s arguments of Gatsby’s mysterious past seem to win her over. Tom sends them both home in Gatsby’s car confident that Daisy is still his.

On Tom, Nick and Jordan’s journey home they come across a car wreck beside Mr. Wilson’s garage. They soon discover that Myrtle has been the victim of a hit and run. Tom remains composed despite losing his lover and nearly his wife in the one day. He tells Wilson to pull it

together and leaves. It becomes clear that it was Gatsby’s flashy yellow car that killed Myrtle, and when Nick meets him lurking in Daisy’s garden that night, Gatsby explains it was Daisy who had been driving it. Daisy does not go back out to Gatsby that night.

Chapter 7 analysis

In this chapter when Tom and Gatsby argue, we see old money and new money head to head, for example Tom first remarks that you can buy anything at a drug store these days which implies that Gatsby’s connection to drugstores suggests that he is actually a ‘bootlegger’. He then calls his car “a circus wagon” and mocks Gatsby behind his back for wearing a “pink suit.” These petty remarks finally culminate in his direct confrontation with Gatsby about his affair with Daisy. Nevertheless what bothers Tom the most is not so much the affair but that Daisy’s fling is with a nobody, “I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife”. Tom cannot stand the fact that he is being out-trumped by a nouveau riche bootlegger who clearly has a working class background. But while class tensions heighten Tom and Gatsby’s battle with each other, it is Daisy who functions as the prize that inspires their competition. In many ways this quarrel presents a somewhat derogatory depiction of

women, with Daisy as the helpless damsel who Gatsby and Tom fight over to protect and provide for. However at the same time we see how Daisy has a choice in the situation, she can leave Tom if she wants or stay with him but of course the option of being an independent woman would never have even occurred to her.

So, Fitzgerald’s portrait of 1920’s women is somewhat shallow in that they only become significant if the male characters are attracted to them. Daisy and Jordan are not much more than the sum of the desires that Gatsby and Nick project onto them and Myrtle is nothing but the victim of Tom’s heartless sprees and her husband’s controlling jealousy.

The racism and sexism of the 1920s has evidently inscribed itself on the characters and the story of *The Great Gatsby* and we can easily consider this novel as part of the history of the time period. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the moral commentary in the novel, personified in the eyes of Dr. Eckleburg, is flawed. We can recognise this weakness in Tom’s comment that “nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they’ll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white” Tom is clearly meant to be an unsympathetic character. And it is easy to look disapprovingly on many

"They're a rotten crowd, you're worth the whole damn bunch put together"

-NICK CARRAWAY

of his actions yet as the book opens by inviting us to take the non-judgemental stance of Nick, it also reveals to us the flaws of such moralising.

Chapter 8 Summary

After the day's traumatic events, Nick passes a sleepless night. Before dawn, he rises restlessly and goes to visit Gatsby at his mansion. Gatsby tells him that he waited at Daisy's until four o'clock in the morning and that nothing happened—Tom did not try to hurt her and Daisy did not come outside. Nick suggests that Gatsby forget about Daisy and leave Long Island, but Gatsby refuses to consider leaving Daisy behind. Gatsby, melancholy, tells Nick about courting Daisy in Louisville in 1917. He says that he loved her for her youth and vitality, and idolized her social position, wealth, and popularity. He adds that she was the first girl to whom he ever felt close and that he lied about his background to make her believe that he was worthy of her. Eventually, he continues, he and Daisy made love, and he felt as though he had married her. She promised to wait for him when he left for the war, but then she married Tom, whose social position was solid and who had the approval of her parents.

Gatsby's gardener interrupts the story to tell Gatsby that he plans to drain the pool. The previous day was the hottest of the summer, but

autumn is in the air this morning, and the gardener worries that falling leaves will clog the pool drains. Gatsby tells the gardener to wait a day; he has never used the pool, he says, and wants to go for a swim. Nick has stayed so long talking to Gatsby that he is very late for work. He finally says goodbye to Gatsby. As he walks away, he turns back and shouts that Gatsby is worth more than the Buchanans and all of their friends.

Nick goes to his office, but he feels too distracted to work, and even refuses to meet Jordan Baker for a date. The focus of his narrative then shifts to relate to the reader what happened at the garage after Myrtle was killed (the details of which Nick learns from Michaelis): George Wilson stays up all night talking to Michaelis about Myrtle. He tells him that before Myrtle died, he confronted her about her lover and told her that she could not hide her sin from the eyes of God.

The morning after the accident, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg, illuminated by the dawn, overwhelm Wilson. He believes they are the eyes of God and leaps to the conclusion that whoever was driving the car that killed Myrtle must have been her lover. He decides that God demands revenge and leaves to track down the owner of the car. He looks for Tom, because he knows that Tom is familiar with the car's owner—he saw Tom driving the car earlier that day

but knows Tom could not have been the driver since Tom arrived after the accident in a different car with Nick and Jordan. Wilson eventually goes to Gatsby's house, where he finds Gatsby lying on an air mattress in the pool, floating in the water and looking up at the sky. Wilson shoots Gatsby, killing him instantly, then shoots himself.

Nick hurries back to West Egg and finds Gatsby floating dead in his pool. Nick imagines Gatsby's final thoughts, and pictures him disillusioned by the meaninglessness and emptiness of life without Daisy, without his dream.

Chapter 8 Analysis

Chapter 8 begins with the birth of Gatsby's dream and ends with his death. Gatsby's description of how he fell in love with Daisy is significant. She is the first 'nice girl' that he has ever met. Daisy has class, Gatsby does not but he identifies with Daisy's class and desires it. He loves Daisy but how much he loves Daisy for herself versus what she represents is hard to say.

At the close of the chapter Gatsby relaxes at the pool while he waits for Daisy's phone call. It never comes of course and Gatsby is shot. He is killed for protecting Daisy and because of Tom's conversation with Wilson. Gatsby never fulfils his dream, instead he dies for it and this symbolism is an important commentary on class relations

“...and one fine morning, so we beat on,
boats against the current, borne back
ceaselessly into the past.”

in the 1920s.

Throughout the novel, the upper class as represented by Tom, Daisy and the ‘east Eggers’ is not presented favourably. And at the close of the novel we see three working class characters; Myrtle, Wilson and Gatsby all dead. If we read Gatsby’s dream as a metaphor for the American dream the meaningless death of these characters expresses the emptiness of the cause. Gatsby “paid a high price for living too long with a single dream.” Nick recalls.

Chapter 8 expresses a deep scepticism of disillusionment with the mechanisms of the American society as they relate to Gatsby.

A number of other quotations allude to this disillusionment as well. Nick’s sudden distaste for Jordan shows that he is disassociating himself with her upper class allure. Instead he sees the working class Gatsby as more heroic “you’re worth the whole damn lot of them put together” he says.

Nick, in his role as narrator functions something like the all-seeing Dr. T. J. Eckleburg. They are moralising, if not God like figures. Motioning to the billboard, Wilson says “God knows what you have been doing.” However, Wilson’s connection between God and the billboard indicates the absence of morality at work rather than suggesting its presence. God, for the churchless Wilson is merely an

advertisement, a silent image that does nothing more than excite people to buy with its image of a faded advertisement being mistaken for a divine presence, the novel seems to suggest that greed and desire for materialism are replacing God and morality in America.

chapter 9 summary

At the beginning of chapter 9, Nick Carraway is trying to organise the funeral of Gatsby. He phones Gatsby’s friends but all seem strangely reluctant to commit to being there. Daisy and Tom have gone on holiday so Nick is unable to contact them about Gatsby’s death.

Nick gets a phone call from one of Gatsby’s business contacts, who mistakenly presumes that he is speaking to Gatsby, and starts talking about a deal that went badly wrong. Nick tells him of Gatsby’s death and he only seems worried about what he has let slip to a stranger. Nick receives a telegram three days after Gatsby’s death from a Henry C. Gatz who says he is on his way to Gatsby’s house and to hold the funeral until he arrives. When Gatsby’s father arrives Nick shows him the body of his dead son. Gatsby’s father seems very proud of how well his son did and what he had achieved.

Nick receives a phone call from Klipspringer, who seems to brush Gatsby’s death aside and request that his tennis shoes be sent to him from Gatsby’s house. Nick tries to convince

him to come to the funeral, but to no avail. This appears to be yet another person that does not seem to feel the need to pay their last respects to a man who frequently opened up his home to anyone who wanted to come.

On the day of Gatsby’s funeral, Nick and Gatsby’s father are the only people who bother to turn up. When they make their way to the graveyard to bury the body, they come across the man with the owl glasses (who was always in the library during Gatsby’s parties). He is the only person who seems to feel sorry for Gatsby calling him a “poor son-of-a-bitch”. Before Nick leaves for the west, he goes to see Jordan Baker who he seemed to have forgotten about. He explains what happened, and apologises for any hurt he caused her. She seems not to care and tells him that she is already engaged to another man. He doesn’t believe her, and she seems to still hold a grudge for the way he treated her. He leaves feeling a mixture of jealousy and regret, but believes he has done the right thing. Nick bumps into Tom Buchanan one day shortly after seeing Jordan, and shows that he has not forgiven him for the part he had to play in Gatsby’s death. Tom admits that he told Wilson that it was Gatsby’s car who had killed Mrs. Wilson. Tom either doesn’t know, or doesn’t care, that it was Daisy who was driving at the time. Nick can



Nick can know see clearly that Tom and Daisy are careless people who go along destroying people's lives, and then retreating into their safe, carefree world free of guilt.

As Nick leaves West Egg, he sees how Gatsby's house has been forgotten, as was the man himself in his last hour. He notices the green light at the end of the dock beside Daisy's house and can finally see how Gatsby saw it as a symbol of hope.

CHAPTER 9 ANALYSIS

In the final chapter Fitzgerald concludes the novel's geography motif with a lengthy rumination by Nick. He calls the novel "a story of the west" and speaks about how he and the other major characters were influenced by east coast morality. "I see now that this has been a story of the west- Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan I were all westerners and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life"

Throughout the Novel, New York has been associated with greed, immorality and pretension while the mid-west is associated with morality and traditional values. Because Nick considers himself "one of the few honest people he has ever known," he concludes that he is no longer capable of

living in the "at once conventional and grotesque west Egg."

The Novel closes with Nick during his last night in west Egg, once again reflecting Gatsby "believed in the green light, the orgasmic future that year by year recedes before us." "it alluded us then but that is no matter- tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther....and one fine morning, so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

Along with the green light, Fitzgerald uses the image of a boat fighting against the current to metaphorically illustrate the pursuit of the American dream. Gatsby, like many Americans before and after him reached for his dreams with great optimism. He believed that his wishes were attainable and that his personal history was insignificant. But, like a boat fighting against an incessant tide, Gatsby was unavoidably pushed backwards, away from Daisy and forced to face the reality of his past.

"I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited--they went there."

“I spoke to her, -and I said ‘God knows what you've been doing. You may fool me but you can't fool God”

-WILSON



Religion Marriage
Society America
Vices Deceit
Lies
Wealth Isolation
Love Dissatisfaction Education
Morality
Memory
Compassion
Nostalgia
Class

Themes