

"Why might 2 of your Part 3 notes be considered 'linkers'?"

linker  
or  
transitional

F. Scott Fitzgerald's

Allot Gains

The issues raised in The Great Gatsby (1925) and The Struggle (1942) seems to transcend both time and space. The mindset of the characters and themes conveyed in both novels are both relatable and relevant in modern society. In The Great Gatsby, escapism, the search for an identity, greed, elitism, moral degradation, technology and communication, and racial discrimination is still apparent in today's society. Similarly, in The Struggle, racial discrimination and the individual versus society is relatable in modern times.

yes

Escapism in The Great Gatsby is extremely relatable in modern times. Just as how Gatsby is trapped in his unrealistic illusions of Daisy, many indulge in daydreaming or fantasy to escape from the mundanity of everyday life. Fitzgerald's close attention to detail helps to convey the "colossal vitality of Gatsby's illusion". While writing to meet Daisy at Nick's house, "Gatsby's head... rested against the face of a defunct mantelpiece clock". Fitzgerald's description of Gatsby is extremely symbolic as a "defunct clock" suggests that it has stopped at a specific point in time, trapped the love, like Gatsby's life, which stopped when he realised he could never have Daisy due to his lack of wealth. For Gatsby, Daisy was a "goal", a quasi-sacred object of devotion. Hence, Gatsby gets trapped by his dreams of his ideal love with Daisy and gets caught up chasing an insatiable dream, rather than enjoying reality, that he is frozen in time. Hence, Fitzgerald conveys the classic theme of escapism by showing how Gatsby gets trapped in a world he created and falls in love with the vision of Daisy he conceived.

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Fitzgerald also portrays Daisy as indulging in escapism as seen from her affair with Gatsby. At Gatsby's party, when Daisy noticed a dancer kiss a actress, she found the actress "lovely", "but the rest attended her - and magnanimity because it wasn't a gesture but an emotion". Daisy likes the actress as she has no substance and is a gesture committed to nothing more real than her image on the silver screen, divorced from the bitterness of human reality. Fitzgerald's illustration of the emptiness of Daisy's character is emphasised by her obsession with Gatsby's "unbroken series of successful gestures". Daisy's affair with Gatsby separates her from the typicality of her bourgeois life with Tom, and she finds in Gatsby excitement and safety from human reality, which the empty gestures imply. This may be relatable in modern society, where humans struggle to escape from the routine of daily life. However, for Gatsby, his "series of successful gestures" may be

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pack the significance of the given quote to amplify argument

as a reflex of an aspiration towards the possibilities of life, which is entirely different from those vacant images of vanance and sophistication that Daisy pictures.

The struggle in searching for an identity (is still apparent in modern times. Gatsby reinvents himself according to Daisy, portraying how an identity is largely influenced by those around us. Gatsby stated to value himself and his possessions from Daisy's eyes and to win her approval, "he (wanted) her to see his house" that he bought "so that Daisy would be just across the bay". Gatsby is trapped by his own illusions of her when he realised he looked the wealth to be with Daisy. Hence, "he reached everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes". Gatsby's entire perception of the physical world and of himself is subjected to Daisy's eyes as he ultimately wants to impress her. This could be paralleled to modern society, where many reinvent themselves to impress society and to fit in. Instead of reinventing an individual identity, people tend to reinvent themselves according to society's expectations of them.

the effect of this word

what kind of society? <sup>Provide contextual background!</sup>

Greed and materialism as portrayed by Daisy in "The Great Gatsby" echoes in today's society. When Gatsby and Daisy first reunite after five years, Daisy gets overwhelmed by the items Gatsby possesses. "It (made) her sad because (she had) never seen such - such beautiful shirts before." Daisy is clearly only concerned with the overt display of wealth before her, and not so much about her lost love, Gatsby, showing her the materialistic nature. Daisy's voice, a symbol of old money, was "unfilled" in the fabric, symbolic of how Gatsby's shirts, the way he dresses successfully disguises the true origin of his money and values. His greed in obtaining wealth leads to him doing illegal business, is similar to how greed corrupts, an issue which transcends time. Man's obsession with worldly possessions is still apparent today, showing how Fitzgerald's portrayal of materialism is timeless.

Fitzgerald raises the issue of elitism and the fixation on social status in "The Great Gatsby", an issue still being dealt with in modern society. Fitzgerald portrays the aristocrats to be reborn of largesse decadence. With their "gleaming white uniforms" and "fasted wedding-cake" eating, they are seen to indulge in lavish consumption, emphasised by the sensory imagery. The use of the color white serves to further elevate their social standing, as white is usually associated with purity and elegance. This portrayal is extremely ironic as they "smash" up things

social mobility inequality

and overtures, and then (secretly) look into their vast carelessness". The upper class is portrayed to be aristocratic, including <sup>in</sup> excessiveness and moral waste. The geographical division of East Egg and West Egg from the Valley of Ashes display the rich as trying to avoid the wasteland that is the Valley of Ashes, as they view themselves as superior. The aristocrats' superiority complex is evident during Gatsby's party. The aristocrats "were spread around a table on the other side of the garden" intentionally separating and distinguishing themselves from the nouveau riche. They seem to be emphasising on their different social standings and portraying themselves as superior as they find that wealth and their social practices is something that one has to be born with. This elitism results in the exclusivity of the group of aristocrats, never allowing others into their inner sanctum. Such elitism can still be examined in today's society, especially in social classes. The class system is discernible in the contrast between the "white palaces of fashionable East Egg" and the "sprawls of bleak dust which drift collectively over" the Valley of Ashes. This stark contrast emphasises the lower social standing of those living in the Valley of Ashes. Fitzgerald's comparison of the different location displays the different social classes, and the use of geographical division shows how the rich do not want to associate with the poor, a behaviour <sup>as</sup> recognisable now as it was in the 1920s.

In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald conveys how wealth comes with moral decay. The symbol of T.J. Eckleburg in the novel serves as an observing presence, seemingly passing judgement on the characters in the novel. The eyes of T.J. Eckleburg were "dimmed a little by wayward palms, ~~for~~ sun & rain, loomed on over the solemn dimpled gaud". The visual imagery of the dilapidation of the board represents the decay of moral values in the 1920s, due to excessive consumerism & commodification. To Wilson, the eyes of T.J. Eckleburg are the eyes of god, which is ironic as in the early 20th century, god has abandoned and has been replaced to an advertisement, an illusory representation as a flat surface, with the desolate Valley of Ashes behind it. The idea that moral decay occurs due to excessiveness & the greed for wealth is displayed here by Fitzgerald and is still relatable in the 21st century.

Fitzgerald also seems to be hinting at the growing use of technology for communication. However, he counterpoints this by how the presence of such technology results in the greater difficulty in communicating with each other. This is conveyed by Fitzgerald's strategic use of apostrophes in dialogues. For example, when Gatsby meets Daisy again for the first time, he stutters, "I can't - when I try to -", signifying how he is unable to express himself. This reinforces an impression of verisimilitude, echoing the way sentences are left unfinished in real-life conversations.



This climactically the characters in The Great Gatsby face in connecting with each other is ironically challenged by the presence of technological means of human connection available in the 1920s, the telephone. The "shrill metallic urgency" of the telephone enables Myrtle's voice to invade the Buchanan's house, causing Nick's first visit to collapse into "broken fragments". The use of "fragments" could be an allusion to the fragmentation of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land". This is significant as both Fitzgerald & Eliot faced the challenge of representing the fragmentation of modern life in the 1920s. This allusion emphasises that humanity is trapped in its own cruel wasteland, of violence, moral decay and death. Hence, Fitzgerald emphasises how technology fragments relationships. In modern society, it is also observable that the use of technology has hampered human connection and communication. What about cars → symbol of progress too?

Americans love their cars!!

as well as symbol of wealth?

In both The Great Gatsby and The Outsider, the issue of racial discrimination is being conveyed by both Fitzgerald and Camus, and is still evident today. In The Great Gatsby, Tom is openly racist in his assertion of the dominance of the white race. He feels that "it is up to (them), who are the dominant race, to watch out or (these) other races will have control of things". Tom feels threatened by the other races and the "rise of the colored peoples". However, Tom's racism here could be an index of Tom's intellectual backwardness. Many in today's society still possess such intellectually antiquated ideas about the dominance of a certain race, making the issues conveyed in this novel timeless.

In addition, in The Stranger, racial discrimination is portrayed by the flawed judicial system of the French court, where justice was not served for the killing of the Arab by Meursault. Although Meursault was brought to court for killing an Arab, the Arab was not mentioned during his trial and Meursault was accused "of behaving at his mother's funeral in a way that showed he was already a criminal at heart", instead of for murdering someone. In addition, the Arab's sister and friend were not called out as a witness on either side, reflecting the French court's ideology of assimilation and as if it is a concerted effort to deny the Arab any existence. A flawed judicial system due to racial prejudice can still be examined in modern society hence, the struggle of racial discrimination conveyed here can be interpreted to be timeless.

Camus raises the theme of the individual versus society in The Stranger. Meursault is a hedonist who lives with the sensations, both pleasurable and painful. However, it is his inability to look beyond the

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with features

sensation of the moment that influences his actions. Neither the external world in which Meursault lives in nor the internal world of his thoughts and attitudes possess any rational order. This can be seen from how he was influenced by the sensations of the sun to kill the Arab. The next metaphor by Camus is "a fiery gust came from the sea, while the sky cracked in two, from end to end, and a great sheet of flame parcel down through the rift. Every nerve in (Meursault's) body was a steel spring; and (his) grip closed on the revolver", emphasises how Meursault was influenced by his own perception of his sensations. Hence, Meursault's lack of reason for his actions results in society considering him a stranger. He is a stranger to all societies, as is our father, his actions or the way he behaves. The idea that things may happen without reason is disruptive and threatening to society and the trial sequence in the novel represents society's attempt to manufacture rational order. In Camus' treatment of the individual versus society, society eventually triumphs when Meursault is sentenced to death. This shows how an individual who refuses to succumb to society's expectations and who "doesn't play the game" will be castigated. This is apparent in modern society, that gets threatened by individuals who oppose their beliefs and ideals, mirroring Camus' *The Stranger* timeless in this aspect.

In conclusion, the thematic roles portrayed by Fitzgerald and Camus in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Stranger* are not constrained to their specific time period but are able to transcend time.

insufficient for Camus' work

- A: 4 <sup>4</sup> lots of relevant quotes! <sup>but do keep an eye on cultural aspects!</sup>
- B: 5 clear on issues/themes that are relevant
- C: 4/5 many features noted
- D: 4
- E: 5

23  
excellent