

| | |
|--|--|
| THE GREAT GATSBY 'Riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart' → story of Gatsby's determination and courage to pursue his dreams. In Fitzgerald's grim version of the Roaring Twenties, Gatsby's ruin both mirrors and prefigures the ruin of America itself. | |
| Context | |
| Social Context of 1920s America | <p>Post- WWII America just emerging from dregs of war → many Americans disenchanted with life after the horrors of war they had witnessed first-hand, disillusioned by the truth that life was but fleeting and temporary existence.</p> <p>Gave rise to the Jazz Age → a flamboyant era where many embraced frivolity and lived a carpe diem lifestyle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As shown through the overwhelming extravagance in the lavish spending of money → parties, jewellery, cars, mansions, coveted items of material nature. Social decay in the face of extreme excesses, as many focused on the immediate gain of pleasure and fulfilment of desires, no matter the cost → alcoholism, gangsterism, sex and infidelity with little regard given to the law. (Ban on alcohol) <p>'American Dream' → economic boom and prosperity enabled the meteoric rise in the wealth of many hardworking Americans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gave rise to a new social class → 'nouveau riche', those who had obtained wealth within their generation. Precipitated social conflict among the classes → aristocrats VS nouveau riche. Clash between traditional values VS modern values. |
| NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE | |
| Narrative perspective → first person POV, through the eyes of Nick Carraways | <p>Carraways's consciousness as a narrator: 'only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book' → breaks the 4th wall.</p> <p>Questionable impartiality: Claims that he is objective and 'inclined to reserve all judgements' 'I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires' 'I am one of the few honest people I have even known'</p> <p>BUT, contradicts his own statement as he proves that he tends to judge → 'veteran bores', 'wild, unknown men'.</p> <p>Also, right from the start, NC is enamoured and enchanted by Gatsby → story is skewed towards his favour. 'one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it' 'concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favour' 'not Gatsby' → even defends Gatsby against Tom's accusation that he is but 'some big bootlegger'</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>Internal conflict experienced by Nick in chapter 4</p> <p>→ On one hand, Gatsby the lovesick soldier is an attractive figure, representative of hope and authenticity. BUT on the other, Gatsby the crooked businessman, representative of greed and moral corruption, is not.</p> |
| <p>Characterisation: take note of first impression, development throughout the text, significance to text, qualities of the era that the characters represent e.g. Daisy = typical flapper girl, materialistic, no responsibility</p> | |
| <p>Nick Carraways, comes to the East from the Middle West to learn the bond business.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withholds judgement 'I'm inclined to reserve all judgement' • Down to earth and grounded 'confused and a little disgusted' after leaving the Buchanans • Man of principle and integrity → responsibility and his refusal to abandon Gatsby even though everyone else has done so. 'I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone' 'I was responsible, because no one else was interested' • Maturity 'I shook hands with him; it seemed silly not to' 'felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child' <p>→ Nick is the bigger man despite all of Tom's wealth and social standing, has still stuck steadfast to his moral values despite all the glitz and glamour of the East.</p> |
| <p>Jay Gatsby</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of the image of Jay Gatsby and the following deconstruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building up of anticipation: 'something gorgeous about him' 'extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person' 'signed Jay Gatsby, in a majestic hand' - Mystery surrounding his character 'a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbour's mansion' 'I'm scared of him' 'he doesn't want any trouble with anybody' ○ Rumours: 'somebody told me that he killed a man once' 'German spy during the war' 'the romantic speculation he inspired that there were whispers about him from those who had found little that it was necessary to whisper about in this world' <p>→ Effect: enigmatic, many questions surrounding his background + also creates a sinister air about this influential man whom no one really understands → overall, creates a larger than life character.</p> |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| | <p>Deconstruction:</p> <p>→ Underwhelming character, unable to live up to the hype that surrounded him.</p> <p>‘found to my disappointment, that he had little to say’</p> <p>‘first impression... had gradually faded’</p> <p>‘he has become simply the proprietor of an elaborate road-house next door’</p> <p>‘began leaving his elegant sentences unfinished’</p> <p>‘slapping himself indecisively’</p> <p>→ start to question Gatsby’s credibility</p> <p>‘looked at me sideways’</p> <p>‘and with this doubt, his whole statement fell to pieces’</p> <p>‘wondered if there wasn’t something a little sinister about him after all’</p> <p>‘suspected that he was pulling my leg’</p> <p>→ comically exaggerated past heroics</p> <p>‘lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe’</p> <p>‘collecting jewels, chiefly rubies, hunting big game...’</p> <p>(although, Gatsby is able to provide evidence to substantiate his claims→ BUT, the seed of doubt has already been planted. An honest man would be insulted by Nick’s scepticism VS readily showing proof.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immense wealth as seen from his elaborate parties <p>‘his rolls Royce became an omnibus’</p> <p>‘a corps of caterers’</p> <p>‘buffet tables garnished with glistening hors-d’oeuvre’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite his criminal activities and lowly background, Gatsby is still a good and noble man at heart. VS Tom Buchanan’s corrupt character despite all his proper upbringing. <p>‘you’re worth the whole damn bunch put together’</p> <p>‘they’re a rotten crowd’</p> <p>‘incorruptible dream’→ no matter how corrupt his means of attaining his dream were, his intentions were always well meaning and pure.</p> <p>→ <i>Despite the ambivalence he feels toward Gatsby's criminal past and nouveau riche affectations, Nick cannot help but admire him for his essential nobility. Though he disapproved of Gatsby "from beginning to end," Nick is still able to recognize him as a visionary, a man capable of grand passion and great dreams. He represents an ideal that had grown exceedingly rare in the 1920s, which Nick (along with Fitzgerald) regards as an age of cynicism, decadence, and cruelty.</i></p> |
| Tom Buchanan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis of his physicality→ equivalent to his forceful and domineering character <p>‘hard mouth, ‘shining arrogant eyes’, ‘always leaning aggressively forward’, ‘enormous power of that body’</p> <p>‘great pack of muscle’, ‘strained the top lacing’→ animalistic description.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>The confrontation between Gatsby and Tom serves to reveal the major flaws and motivations of both characters. For Tom, the affair between Gatsby and Daisy is evidence of the decline of civilization; he seems less disturbed by his wife's infidelity than by the fact that she is involved with a man of an inferior social class. Tom's gross misogyny and hypocrisy assert themselves with a vengeance. He obviously does not regard his affair with the even lower-class Myrtle Wilson in the same apocalyptic light. He has no moral qualms about his own extramarital affairs, but when faced with his wife's infidelity, he assumes the position of outraged victim. As Nick remarks, Tom moves "from libertine to prig" when it suits his needs.</p> |
| <p>Daisy Buchanan * perhaps Daisy herself is representative of the American dream and the revelation of her corruption and emptiness reveals the corruption of the American Dream itself.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacking substance 'laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh' 'turned to me helplessly... what do people plan?' Charming front but beneath it is a manipulative and seductive character → wants a certain response from men. Looked as if 'promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see' 'Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward her' 'a promise that she had done gay, exciting things' Uncaring mother → child is merely used to entertain and display 'the baby' 'I suppose she talks and eats and everything' 'your mother wanted to show you off' 'you absolute little dream' Cynical 'I hope she'll be a fool' (Actual words said by Zelda) 'that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool' 'laughed with thrilling scorn' Daisy was very much sought-after in her youth 'by far the most popular if all the young girls in Louisville' 'all day long the telephone rang in her house' 'excited young officers from Camp Taylor demanded the privileged of monopolising her that night' |
| <p>Jordan Baker</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detached, cold and haughty 'completely motionless' 'chin raised a a little' 'if she saw me out of the corner of her eyes she gave no hint of it' 'the bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something' Liar → hidden under her façade of detachment 'she left a borrowed car out in the rain with the top down, and then lied about it' 'she had moved her ball from a bad lie in the semi-final round' 'she was incurably dishonest' Foil to Daisy → independent, mind of her own |

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| | <p>'I am careful'</p> <p>Blames carelessness on other drivers → 'other people are'</p> <p>'they'll keep out of my way'</p> <p>'she insisted'</p> |
| Meyer Wolfshiem | <p>'a small, flat-nosed Jew'</p> <p>'business gonnegtion'</p> <p>'he's a gambler'</p> <p>'the man who fixed the World Series back in 1919'</p> <p>'one man could start to play with the faith of fifty million people'</p> <p>'they can't get him, old sport. He's a smart man'</p> <p>→ serves to increase Nick's doubts about Gatsby's virtues, begins to suspect that the rumours may not be entirely untrue.</p> |
| George Wilson | <p>'blond, spiritless man, anaemic'</p> <p>'damp gleam of hope sprang into his light blue eyes' → dependence and therefore subservice of the lower class to the upper class.</p> <p>Tom's threat: 'and if you feel that way about it, maybe I'd better sell it somewhere else after all' → the rich have the poor at their beck and call, know that they have no choice.</p> <p>Parallelism with Gatsby: Wilson seems to be Gatsby's grim double, representing the more menacing aspects of a capacity for visionary dreaming. Like Gatsby, he fundamentally alters the course of his life by attaching symbolic significance to something that is, in and of itself, meaningless. For Gatsby, it is Daisy and her green light, for Wilson, it is the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg. Both men are destroyed by their love of women who love the brutal Tom Buchanan; both are consumed with longing for something greater than themselves. While Gatsby is a "successful" American dreamer (as far as realising his dreams of wealth), Wilson exemplifies the fate of the failed dreamer, whose poverty has deprived him of even his ability to hope.</p> |
| Myrtle Wilson | <p>'carried her flesh sensuously'</p> <p>'the nerves of her body were continually smouldering'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete disregard for her husband, lack of discretion 'walking through her husband as if he were a ghost' 'looking him (Tom) flush in the eye' All that she cares about is the fulfilment of material desires 'he wasn't fit to lick my shoe' 'he borrowed somebody's best suit' 'he had on a dress suit and patent leather shoes, and I couldn't keep my eyes off him' 'I'm going to make a list of all the things I've got to get' |
| Owl-Eyes | <p>'absolutely real—have pages and everything'</p> <p>'thought that'd be nice durable cardboard'</p> <p>'what thoroughness! What realism!'</p> <p>'it fooled me'</p> <p>'this fella's a regular Belasco' → Belasco was a Broadway producer known for the realism of his sets → insinuating that the image of Gatsby was just an intricate albeit still constructed facade?</p> |

| Themes: * LINK TO TECHNIQUE | |
|---|---|
| Contrast between societal ideals in the Midwest and the East → tradition VS modernity | <p>The Midwest seems dreary and pedestrian compared to the excitement of the East, BUT the East is merely a glittering surface—it lacks the moral center of the Midwest.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The East is associated with a fast-paced lifestyle, decadent parties, crumbling moral values, and the pursuit of wealth 'the East excited me most' <p><u>BUT personification of the East as 'a drunken woman in a white evening dress'</u> 'no one knows the woman's name, and no one cares' 'the East was haunted for me like that' 'distorted beyond my eyes' power of correction'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - VS the West and the Midwest are associated with more traditional moral values. 'street lamps and sleigh bells in the frosty dark' 'dwellings are still called through decades by a family's name' <p>In this moment, Nick realizes for the first time that though his story is set on the East Coast, the western character of his acquaintances ("some deficiency in common") is the source of the story's tensions and attitudes. He considers each character's behaviour and value choices as a reaction to the wealth-obsessed culture of New York.</p> <p>→ This perspective contributes powerfully to Nick's decision to leave the East Coast and return to Minnesota, as the infeasibility of Nick's Midwestern values in New York society mirrors the impracticality of Gatsby's dream.</p> |
| Contrast between new and old → social class conflict (CONTRAST in SETTING) (IMAGERY) (CHARACTERISATION) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAST EGG vs WEST EGG <p>East Egg: 'white palaces of fashionable East Egg' → white = pristine 'glittered along the water' → almost magical</p> <p>West Egg: 'less fashionable of the two' 'colossal affair' → ostentatious and opulent 'factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to achieve (upward) social mobility as Gatsby's attempts to integrate into the ranks of the upper class are arrogantly rejected. <p>'Mr Sloane didn't enter into the conversation, but lounged back haughtily in his chair' 'he (Gatsby) didn't see that Mr Sloane had determined he shouldn't' 'she has a big dinner party and he won't know a soul there' 'doesn't he know she doesn't want him?'</p> <p><i>Both the Sloanes and Tom Buchanan treat Gatsby with contempt and condescension, because he is not of the long-standing American upper class. Even though Gatsby seems to have as much money as they do, he lacks their sense of social nuance and easy, aristocratic grace, and is still regarded as socially inferior → part of the reason</i></p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p><i>why the American Dream is unable to be achieved.</i></p> <p>- Gatsby tries too hard to be accepted by them → ends up backfiring 'I'm delighted to see you' 'you must see the faces of many people you've heard about' → as if surrounding himself with rich and famous people would elevate his status.</p> <p>BUT 'the rest offended her' 'she was appalled by West Egg' 'he certainly must have strained himself to get this menagerie together' 'I feel far away from her'</p> <p><i>This chapter makes it clear that Daisy, too, is a part of the same narrow-minded aristocracy that produced her husband. For Gatsby, she became the symbol of everything that he wanted to possess: she is the epitome of wealth and sophistication. Though Gatsby loves this quality in Daisy, it is precisely because she is an aristocrat that she cannot possibly fulfil his dreams. She would never sacrifice her own class status in order to be with him. Her love for him pales in comparison to her love of privilege.</i></p> |
| <p>Contrast between the upper class and lower class → highlights wasteful abandon (CONTRAST) (SETTING)</p> | <p>'just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had' → advantages of wealth, good breeding and class. 'fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boredom of the rich who have obtained the wealth everyone else is seeking → 'drift on forever seeking' 'impersonal eyes in the absence of all desire' 'I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything' Setting of East Egg 'bright rosy-coloured space', 'wine-coloured rug' (use of colour) 'gleaming white against the fresh grass outside' Setting of the Valley of Ashes → symbolises the moral and social decay that results from the pursuit of wealth and riches 'ashes grow like wheat' 'grotesque gardens' 'ash-grey men, who move dimly' → lack of vitality 'impenetrable cloud, which screen their obscure operations from your sight' → those from the upper classes X see their suffering and X empathise with their plight. BUT IRONY → Nick notes later on that men everywhere are one and the same, despite differences in social class. Wilson had 'discovered that Myrtle had some sort of life apart in another world' 'Tom, who had made a parallel discovery less than a hour before' 'there was no difference between men, in intelligence or race' |
| <p>Society's obsession with MONEY and POWER, commonly used as social</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original American Dream 'unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Maecenas knew' |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>leverage→ results in the corruption of the American dream (SETTING) (CHARACTERISATION)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Corruption of the American Dream 'foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams' <p>The American Dream: a set of ideals in which freedom includes the opportunity for prosperity and success regardless of an individual's family history, race or religion, as long as they were willing to work hard enough.</p> <p>Nick, in reflecting on America as a whole, links its fate to Gatsby's. America, according to Fitzgerald, was founded on the ideals of progress and equality. The America envisioned by its founders was a land made for men like Gatsby: it was intended as a place where visionary dreamers could thrive→ 'a fresh, green breast of the new world'.</p> <p>BUT instead, people like Tom and Daisy Buchanan have like other members of the upper class, have betrayed America's democratic ideals by perpetuating a rigid class structure that excludes newcomers from its upper reaches (European origins). Gatsby, for all his wealth and greatness, could not become a part of their world; his noble attempt to engineer his own destiny was sabotaged by their cruelty and by the stunted quality of their imaginations. Fitzgerald's America is emphatically not a place where anything is possible, for Gatsby is ultimately unable to overcome the circumstances of his upbringing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gross materialism of the East and West Egg areas explains the obsessive care that Gatsby takes in his reunion with Daisy→ attempts to compensate for his past poverty with an overt display of extravagance. <p>'my house looks well doesn't it... see how the whole front of it catches the light' 'I keep it (Gatsby's mansion) full of... celebrated people' 'Daisy admired this aspect or that'→ belongings have, in essence, accomplished that which he intended: They impress her. 'white flannel suit, silver shirt, a gold-coloured tie'→ his clothes, like his parties, his house, and his car, are an overt reminder of his newly earned wealth, as if he wants to make sure Daisy doesn't miss the fact that he now has that one thing that eluded him before: money 'I've got a man in England who buys me clothes'</p> |
| <p>Questionable genuineness of relationships</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncertainty at the heart of Nick and Gatsby's relationship. Is Gatsby's friendship with Nick merely expedient? Is he merely using him to draw closer to Daisy or is he genuinely fond of Nick? 'let's go to Coney Island' 'suppose we take a plunge in the swimming pool?' Daisy's love was never true 'Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily' <p>→ Two ways to view Daisy's breakdown: 1) she realizes that Gatsby could have given her the life she chose by marrying Tom (regret) or 2) Daisy is most in love with money and it is Gatsby's wealth that attracts her. → Affair with Gatsby as a means of exacting revenge on Tom?</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Corruption due to greed for money and power has turned American society into a moral wasteland</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As seen from how Fitzgerald reveals the moral decrepitude of those people still living to be worse than any of Gatsby's secrets. <p>The last chapter brings readers face-to-face with the ugly side of the American dream. Throughout the story, Gatsby has been held up as an example of one who has achieved the American dream — he had money, possessions, independence, and people who wanted to be around him.</p> <p>BUT Gatsby is abandoned by his supposed nearest and dearest friends in death: 'I found myself on Gatsby's side, and alone' 'I was responsible, because no one else was interested'</p> <p>- Daisy: 'called her instinctively and without hesitation' 'she and Tom had gone away early that afternoon, and taken baggage with them' 'left no address' 'they smashed things up and creatures and the retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness' 'let other people clean up the mess they had made' 'felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child'</p> <p>- Wolfsheimer: 'was sure he'd start when he saw the newspapers' BUT 'I cannot come down as I am tied up in some very important business and cannot get mixed up in this thing now' Hypocritical character, as he described his close relationship with Gatsby, before declining to attend his funeral in the light of self-interest. 'let us learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead'</p> <p>- Guests who had enjoyed themselves at Gatsby's parties: Even the partygoers disappear. The party is over, and so they move on to the next event, treating their host with the same respect in death that they gave him in life — none at all. Klipspringer is a shining example of all the partygoers when he phones Gatsby's, speaks to Nick, and sidesteps the issue of Gatsby's funeral, shamelessly admitting, "what I called up about was a pair of shoes I left there . . . I'm sort of helpless without them." → would rather go for 'a picnic or something'. The callousness of the people who so eagerly took advantage of Gatsby's hospitality is appalling.</p> <p>- Gatsby's father: In many ways, James Gatz seems a perfectly normal man, yet there is a hint of the superficiality that's similar to Gatsby's former party guests. In one noted example, Nick finds Gatz "walking up and down excitedly in the hall. His pride in his son and in his son's possessions was continually increasing." Apparently Gatz, like so many others, measured Gatsby's merit not on the type of man he was, but on his possessions.</p> |
| <p>Decadence of society → erosion of morality (IRONY) (PLOT)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decadence and wealth of the upper class 'gleaming white against the fresh grass outside' 'frosted wedding cake of the ceiling' → fairy tale setting Daisy and Jordan were 'buoyed up as though upon an anchored |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>balloon' → simile, materialistic and lacking substance. 'both in white... dresses rippling and fluttering' → given a dainty, ethereal and elegant quality.</p> <p>=> IRONY in the reader's first encounter with Daisy and Jordan → predominantly described in white, as if to convey purity, peacefulness and positive feelings, BUT morals have been corrupted by money.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illegal and widespread consumption of alcohol despite the Prohibition → nonchalant and flippant attitude towards alcohol consumption, even though it is in actuality, a crime. 'took down his drink as it were a drop in the bottom of a glass' 'in the main hall a bar... was set up' → displayed brazenly Extramarital affairs not even given a second thought, accepted by everyone as if it were a normal way of life. 'Tom's got some woman in New York' → Daisy is resigned to his affairs, has no choice but to bear the pain in silence. 'the fact that he had one (mistress) was insisted upon wherever he was known' 'turned up in popular cafes with her' <p>At Gatsby's party: 'most of the remaining women were now having fights with their husbands' 'one man was talking with curious intensity to a young actress' 'his wife...broke down entirely'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A thriving underworld, where gangsters and criminals reign supreme → criminal activities and nature are concealed by an elaborate web of deceit, allowing them to be functioning members of society → irony, as high status figures are the ones involved in crime. Meyer Wolfsheimer Gatsby's bootlegging, corrupt ties with the police force 'taking a white card from his wallet' 'know you next time, Mr Gatsby' 'I was able to do the commissioner a favour once, and he sends me a Christmas card every year' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gatsby is constantly interrupted by mysterious phone calls → suspicious nature 'Chicago was calling him on the wire' 'Philadelphia wants you on the phone, sir' |
| Oppression of women in society (CHARACTERISATION) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daisy as an obedient but unhappy wife → stuck in a loveless marriage as she is trapped by her financial dependence. Daughter was 'less than a hour old and Tom was God knows where' 'I hope she'll be a fool' 'that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool' → Daisy is not a fool herself but is the product of a social environment that, to a great extent, does not value intelligence in women. The older generation values subservience and docility in females, implying that a girl can have more fun if she is beautiful and simplistic. Daisy conforms to the social standard of American femininity in the 1920s, in order to avoid such tension-filled issues as Tom's affairs. |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's passiveness when it comes to making decisions about their own future, left in the hands of men. Daisy 'staring terrified between Gatsby and her husband' 'the voice begged again to go' 'please Tom! I can't stand this anymore' 'she looked at Tom, alarmed now' <p>Daisy remains characteristically passive throughout Chapter VII; she is only a spectator to the argument between Gatsby and Tom. Her weakness is particularly important during this confrontation. Tom and Gatsby fight over who can possess Daisy and provide for her. Gatsby, tellingly, does not say that Daisy is leaving Tom, but that Tom is "not going to take care of her anymore"; both men regard her as being incapable of independent action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women subjected to the whims and fancies of men in power → Myrtle Wilson 'Tom Buchanan and his girl' 'Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand' ⇒ For men to advance = business ⇒ For women to advance = choosing the right person to have an affair with. BUT, the rise of the 'flapper girl' → rebelling against the stereotypes of society, women of the younger generation value thoughtless giddiness and pleasure-seeking. 'a great number of single girls dancing individualistically' 'girls were putting their heads on men's shoulders in a puppyish, convivial way' 'girls were swooning backward playfully into men's arms' 'French bob' |
| Appearances VS Reality (CHARACTERISATION) (CONTRAST) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual nature of Myrtle reflects her desire to climb up the social hierarchy Before: 'brown figured muslin', 'sat discreetly in another car' After: - Materialistic → 'bought a copy of Town Tattle and a moving-picture magazine... cold cream and a small flask of perfume', 'I want a dog', selected a taxicab that was 'lavender-coloured with grey upholstery' - Bearing → 'regal homecoming glance around the neighbourhood', 'haughtily', 'impressive hauteur', 'become more violently affected' 'high, mincing shout' - Garish décor of the apartment, as Myrtle overcompensates for her life of poverty → 'tapestried furniture entirely too large for it', 'over-enlarged photograph', 'elaborate afternoon dress of cream coloured chiffon' Superficiality of society 'introductions forgotten on the spot' 'enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names' |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The truth of how Gatsby attains his wealth through illegal means “drug stores” → actually ‘sold grain alcohol over the counter’ Callous and uncaring nature of Daisy towards Gatsby |
| Love (CHARACTERISATION) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Innocent young love between Gatsby and Daisy: Looked at Daisy ‘in a way that every young girl wants to be looked at sometimes’ ‘mother had found her packing his bag one winter night to go to New York and say good-bye to a soldier who was going overseas’ but was prevented and ‘wasn’t on speaking terms with her family for several weeks’ ‘flat-footed, short-sighted young men’ → still pining over Gatsby. BUT eventually moves on, marries Tom: ‘with more pomp and circumstance than Louisville ever knew before’ ‘gave her a string of pearls valued at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars’ ‘thought I’d never seen a girl so mad about her husband’ ‘used to sit on the sand with his head in her lap by the hour’ ‘looking at him with unfathomable delight’ ‘wanted her life shaped now, immediately’ ‘decision was made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand’ Gatsby’s devotion to Daisy: ‘Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay’ ‘he came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendour’ → Daisy is his animating force. ‘waited five years and bought a mansion where he dispensed starlight to casual moths—so that he could come over some afternoon to a stranger’s garden’ ‘he wants her to see his house’ ‘half expected her to wander into one of his parties’ The effect of winning back Daisy on Gatsby ‘change in Gatsby that was simply confounding’ ‘literally glowed’ ‘a new well-being radiated from him’ ‘he hadn’t once ceased looking at Daisy’ ‘revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes’ Question just how genuine Gatsby’s love for Daisy is—does he merely see her as a status symbol to be coveted? ‘her voice is full of money’ ‘the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell’ ‘high in a white palace the king’s daughter, the golden girl’ Excited him that ‘many men had already loved Daisy—it increased her value in his eyes’ Daisy ‘gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor’ BUT GATSBY’S DEVOTION shines through and we realise just how genuine it is, Gatsby’s decision to take the blame for Daisy demonstrates the deep love he still feels for her and |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>illustrates the basic nobility that defines his character. 'of course I'll say I was (driving the car)' I'm going to wait here and see if he tries to bother her about that unpleasantness this afternoon' '(wait) all night, if necessary' 'till Daisy goes to bed'</p> <p>VS</p> <p>'Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other' his hand had fallen upon and covered her own' 'looked up at him and nodded in agreement' 'watching over nothing'</p> <p>→ <i>Disregarding her almost capricious lack of concern for him, Gatsby sacrifices himself for Daisy. The image of a pitiable Gatsby keeping watch outside her house while she and Tom sit comfortably within is an indelible image that both allows the reader to look past Gatsby's criminality and functions as a moving metaphor for the love Gatsby feels toward Daisy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also question Daisy's love for Gatsby—is he merely a means of getting back at Tom? Evidenced through her fickle affection for Gatsby, as she readily goes back to Tom once Gatsby's shady activities are revealed. <p>She's certainly not leaving me (Tom) 'not for a common swindler who'd have to steal the ring he put on her finger' "drug stores" → actually 'sold grain alcohol over the counter' 'picked him for a bootlegger' 'betting laws' 'denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made' 'but with every word she was withdrawing further and further into herself' 'dead dream' 'her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had, were definitely gone'</p> <p>→ <i>The distinction between "old" and "new" money is crucial in this chapter. While Gatsby earned his fortune, Daisy is an aristocrat, a woman for whom wealth and privilege were available at birth. As Gatsby himself remarks, even her voice is "full of money." This is what he loves in Daisy's voice, and in Daisy herself: for Gatsby, Daisy represents the wealth and elegance for which he has yearned for all his life. Gatsby thus loses Daisy for the same reason that he adores her: her patrician arrogance.</i></p> <p>→ <i>Tom, for all his crudeness, possesses a subtle knowledge of his wife: he realizes that Daisy's innate snobbery is ultimately identical with his own. She would never desert her aristocratic husband for "a common bootlegger," regardless of the love she felt for the bootlegger in question. Daisy refuses to submit to Gatsby's pleas, and will not say that she has never loved Tom. Gatsby is ultimately unable to recapture his idyllic past; the past, the future, and Daisy herself ultimately belong to Tom.</i></p> |
| Reinvention of identity → the power of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gatsby's humiliation at having to work as a janitor in college contrasts with the promise that he experiences when he |

| | |
|---|--|
| dreaming. | <p>meets Dan Cody, who represents the attainment of everything that Gatsby wants. ‘worked as a clam-digger and salmon-fisher’ ‘despising the janitor’s work with which he was to pay his way through’</p> <p>VS Dan Cody (Gatsby’s millionaire mentor who brought the “violence of the Eastern brothel to his yacht” is a conceptual amalgamation of Daniel Bloone and Bill Cody, pioneers who exploited the native Americans):</p> <p>‘made him many times a millionaire’ ‘the yacht represented all the beauty and glamour in the world’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘The self-made man’→ Gatsby’s act of rechristening himself symbolizes his desire to jettison his lower-class identity and recast himself as the wealthy man he envisions. Part of the original American Dream. <p>‘his parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all’ ‘Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself’ ‘to this conception he was faithful to the end’ ‘his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot’</p> <p>Discipline to move up to the life of wealth that he dreams of: ‘schedule’ ‘read one improving book or magazine per week’ ‘practice elocution, poise and how to attain it’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gatsby’s immense capacity to dream→ BUT Gatsby's great mistake was loving Daisy. He chose an inferior object upon which to focus his almost mystical capacity for dreaming. <p>Nick suggests that all symbols are created by the mind—they do not possess any inherent meaning; rather, people invest them with meaning. Nick writes that Gatsby must have realized “what a grotesque thing a rose is.” The rose has been a conventional symbol of beauty throughout centuries of poetry. Nick suggests that roses aren’t inherently beautiful, and that people only view them that way because they choose to do so. Daisy is “grotesque” in the same way: Gatsby has invested her with beauty and meaning by making her the object of his dream. Had Gatsby not imbued her with such value, Daisy would be simply an idle, bored, rich young woman with no particular moral strength or loyalty.</p> |
| The past VS our future → our past is inescapable and unalterable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gatsby tried earnestly to erase and rewrite history, and would only be content when Daisy tells Tom that she had never loved him. <p>‘after she had obliterated four years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken’ ‘they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house—just as if it were five years ago’ ‘I’m going to fix everything just the way it was before’</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>→ as if by saying those words, Gatsby could pretend that the 4 years apart had never happened, that they could continue exactly where they had left off all those years ago.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of time and the past manifests itself in the confrontation between Gatsby and Tom. Gatsby's obsession with recovering a blissful past compels him to order Daisy to tell Tom that she has never loved him → needs to know that she has always loved and been emotionally loyal to him. <p>'she only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me' 'it was a terrible mistake but in her heart she never loved anyone except me' 'just tell him the truth... and it's all wiped out forever'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BUT: GATSBY'S DREAM CRUMBLES → ultimately, the past cannot be rewritten 'Kapiolani', 'Super Bowl', 'husky tenderness in his tone' 'I can't help what's in the past' 'I did love him one—but I loved you too' <p>→ Pleading with Daisy, Tom invokes their intimate personal history to remind her that she has had feelings for him; by controlling the past, Tom eradicates Gatsby's vision of the future. That Tom feels secure enough to send Daisy back to East Egg with Gatsby confirms Nick's observation that Gatsby's dream is dead.</p> <p>'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.'</p> <p>He focuses on the struggle of human beings to achieve their goals by both transcending and re-creating the past. Yet humans prove themselves unable to move beyond the past: in the metaphoric language used here, the current draws them backward as they row forward toward the green light. This past functions as the source of their ideas about the future (epitomized by Gatsby's desire to re-create 1917 in his affair with Daisy) and they cannot escape it as they continue to struggle to transform their dreams into reality. While they never lose their optimism ("tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther . . ."), they expend all of their energy in pursuit of a goal that moves ever farther away. This apt metaphor characterizes both Gatsby's struggle and the American dream itself.</p> |
| TECHNIQUES *that enhance the literary value of the text | |
| TENSION created in the lead-up to Gatsby and Daisy's reunion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CONTRAST of Gatsby's visible disconcertedness with his usual confident demeanour 'he was pale, and there were dark signs of sleeplessness beneath his eyes' 'added hollowly, '... old sport'' 'pale as death' |

| | |
|--|--|
| | NOTE: Gatsby's character throughout his meeting with Daisy is at its purest and most revealing. The theatrical quality that he often projects falls away, and for once all of his responses seem genuine. He forgets to play the role of the Oxford-educated socialite and shows himself to be a love-struck, awkward young man. |
| TENSION during the lunch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tension mirrored in the SETTING (WEATHER) 'the next day was broiling' 'simmering hush' 'the straw seats of the car hovered on the edge of combustion' Daisy's blatant indiscretion 'as he left the room again she got up and went over to Gatsby and pulled his faced down, kissing him on the mouth' 'you know I love you' 'she's got an indiscreet voice' Gatsby and Daisy unable to conceal their feelings for each other 'their eyes met, and they stared together at each other, alone in space' 'you always look so cool' 'she had told him that she loved him, and Tom Buchanan saw' Tom's rising temper 'his temper cracked a little' 'trembling with his effort at self-control' |
| Climax | <p>'sit back and let Mr Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife'</p> <p>→ Tom's gross misogyny and hypocrisy assert themselves with a vengeance. He obviously does not regard his affair with the even lower-class Myrtle Wilson in the same apocalyptic light. As Nick remarks, Tom moves "from libertine to prig" when it suits his needs.</p> |
| Palpable TENSION created in Gatsby and Daisy's first awkward meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHARACTERISATION of Gatsby, Daisy and Nick Gatsby 'reclining against the mantel piece in a strained counterfeit of perfect ease' Daisy was 'sitting, frightened, but graceful, on the edge of a stiff chair' Nick's 'own face had now assumed a deep tropical burn' |
| MOTIF of green light → representing dreams/desire/reality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motif of the green light, representing Gatsby's burning desire to be with Daisy 'stretched his arms toward the dark water... trembling' 'single green light, minute and far away' 'you always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock' Representing Gatsby's unrelenting hope and romantic optimism Representing the American Dream itself <p>It is important to note that the Buchanans lived in East Egg, and Gatsby in West Egg; therefore, in gazing at the green light on Daisy's dock, Gatsby was looking East. The green light, like the green land of America itself, was once a symbol of hope; now, the</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>original ideals of the American dream have deteriorated into the crass pursuit of wealth. In committing his extraordinary capacity for dreaming to his love for Daisy, Gatsby, too, devoted himself to nothing more than material gain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realisation/fulfilment of the dream 'consumed with wonder at her presence' 'had been full of the idea so long, dreamed it right through to the end' 'the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever' 'his count of enchanted objects had diminished by one' <p>→ NOTE: could Daisy have been merely another of his enchanted objects? Signifies the ultimate fulfilment of the American Dream, gaining the love of an aristocratic lady and hence representing Gatsby's acceptance and integration into the much-coveted aristocratic social circle.</p> <p>It is easy to see how a man who has gone to such great lengths to achieve wealth and luxury would find Daisy so alluring: for her, the aura of wealth and luxury comes effortlessly. She is able to take her position for granted, and she becomes, for Gatsby, the epitome of everything that he invented "Jay Gatsby" to achieve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life after the fulfilment of his dream after 5 years 'must have been some moment even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams' Due to 'the colossal vitality of his illusion' 'it had gone beyond her, gone beyond everything' 'decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way' <p>→ <i>How does one go about the business of reordering his life after bringing a fabrication, a fantasy, to life?</i> <i>His relentless pursuit of his dream has allowed him ample opportunity to construct scenarios in his head and to imagine her not necessarily as she is, but as he perceives her to be.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BUT: GATSBY'S DREAM CRUMBLES→ the past cannot be rewritten 'Kapiolani', 'Super Bowl', 'husky tenderness in his tone' 'I can't help what's in the past' 'I did love him one—but I loved you too' <p>→ Pleading with Daisy, Tom invokes their intimate personal history to remind her that she has had feelings for him; by controlling the past, Tom eradicates Gatsby's vision of the future. That Tom feels secure enough to send Daisy back to East Egg with Gatsby confirms Nick's observation that Gatsby's dream is dead. 'realises that his presumptuous little flirtation is over'</p> <p>*see Daisy's love for Gatsby→ fickle and not genuine, was merely a way for her to get back at Tom for all his past affairs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daisy was not a deserving recipient of Gatsby's love and devotion→ destroyed him in the end. Nick, in his reflections on Gatsby's life, suggests that Gatsby's greatest mistake was loving Daisy. He chose an inferior object upon which to focus his almost mystical capacity for dreaming. Just as the American Dream itself has degenerated into the crass pursuit of material wealth, Gatsby, too, strived only for wealth |
|--|--|

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>once he had fallen in love with Daisy, whose trivial, limited imagination could conceive of nothing greater. It is significant that Gatsby is not murdered for his criminal connections, but rather for his unswerving devotion to Daisy. As Nick writes, Gatsby thus "[pays] a high price for living too long with a single dream."</p> |
| <p>MOTIF of the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg → representing the human conscience, God</p> | <p>'blue and gigantic, their retinas are one yard high' 'his eyes, dimmed a little by many countless days, under sun and rain' 'brood on over the solemn dumping ground' 'persistent stare' 'the giant eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg kept their vigil'</p> <p>=> as if reprimanding and dismayed at the corrupted state that American society has regressed to.</p> <p>'she might fool me but she couldn't fool God' 'God know what you've been doing, everything you've been doing' 'God sees everything'</p> |
| <p>MOTIF of cars → representing the American society and their pursuit of consumerism.</p> | <p>FORESHADOWING the crash and burn of the American Dream and hence Gatsby's death 'violently shorn of one wheel' 'harsh, discordant din' 'it went in the ditch'</p> <p>→ Car accident (materialism) was the cause of Myrtle's death, putting an end to her dreams of living the life of the upper class through her affair with Tom 'the death car' 'choked a little in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long'</p> <p>Gatsby's car epitomises the height of consumerism attained by wealthy Americans as well as his social standing → extremely wealthy, a fact known by everyone: 'bright with nickel' 'everybody had seen it' 'monstrous length'</p> <p>BUT Tom distastefully calls it a 'circus wagon'</p> |
| <p>The weather/environment</p> | <p>'there was an autumn flavour in the air' 'I've never used that pool all summer' 'promising a cool, lovely day'</p> <p>→ Gatsby's death takes place on the first day of autumn, when a chill has begun to creep into the air. His decision to use his pool is in defiance of the change of seasons, and represents yet another instance of Gatsby's unwillingness to accept the passage of time. The summer is, for him, equivalent to his reunion with Daisy; the end of the summer heralds the end of their romance.</p> |