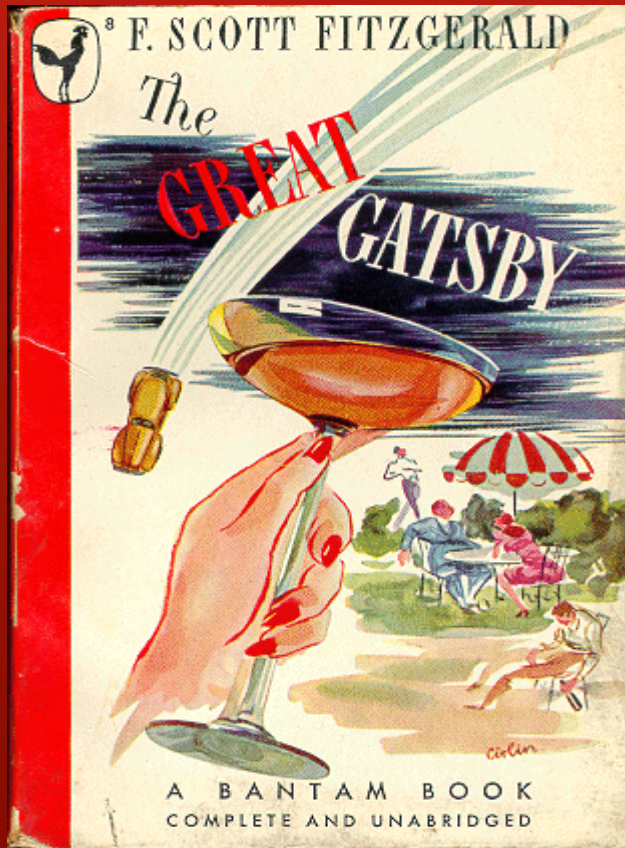
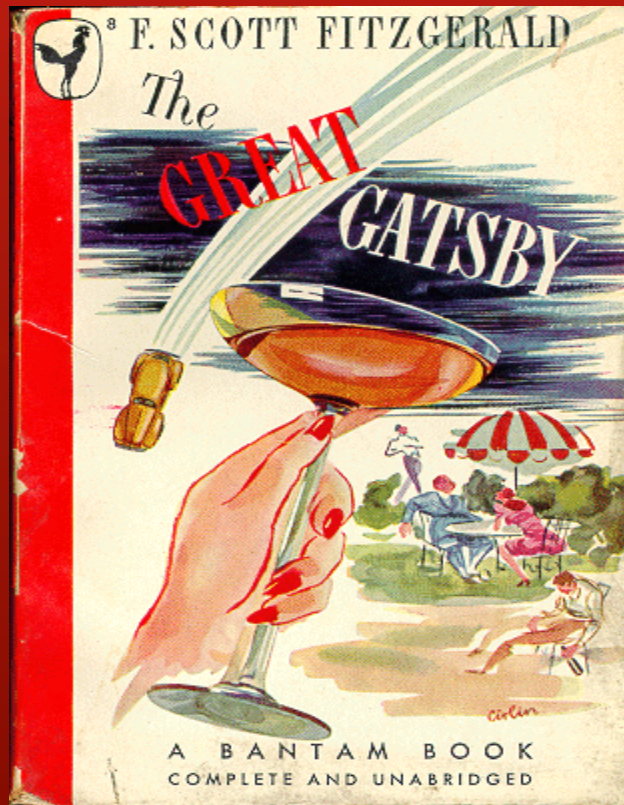


The Great Gatsby



by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Chapter Eight



Characterisation

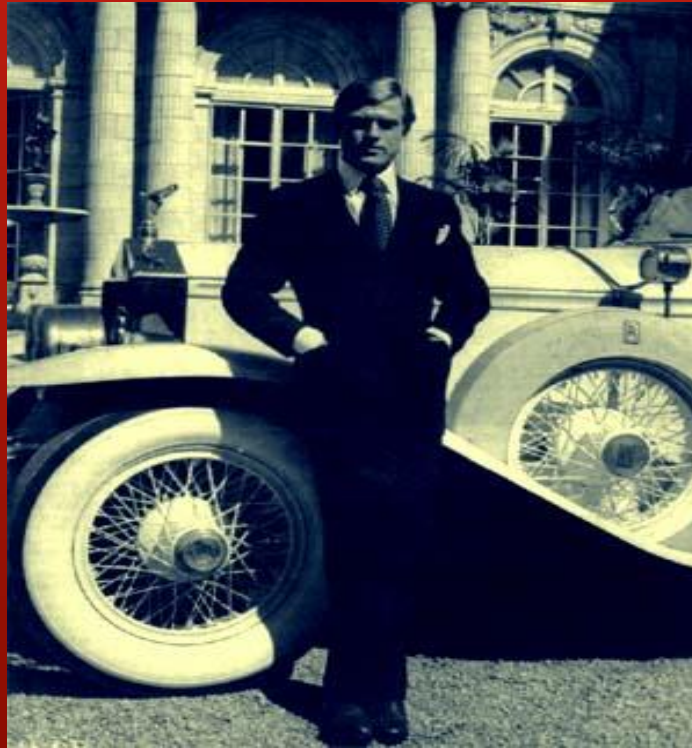
Gatsby, Nick

Theme

American Dream

Symbolism

Characterisation - Gatsby



Characterisation - Gatsby

- He was attracted to Daisy because of her wealth and privilege and he idolised both wealth and Daisy – the two are intertwined in his mind.
- When he enters her house as a poor soldier, he knows he has no real right to be there.

Characterisation - Gatsby

- "I don't think she ever loved him," Gatsby turned around from a window and looked at me challengingly. "You must remember...she was very excited this afternoon."
- Gatsby is not prepared to admit that he has lost Daisy as it is to him like losing his entire world. He continually refuses to accept that his dream is dead.

Characterisation - Gatsby

- Discussion: How does the reader feel about Gatsby's inability to accept the truth? Is this denial a negative or positive aspect of his character? What does this denial ultimately bring about?

Characterisation - Nick

- “They’re a rotten crowd...You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together.’ I’ve always been glad I said that ... because I disapproved of him from beginning to end.”
- Discussion: Is this true? Why does Nick say this?
- Is Gatsby ‘worth the whole damn bunch put together’? What quality is it that makes him different?

THEME – The American Dream

- Gatsby is a symbol for America in the 1920s. The American Dream has, in the pursuit of happiness, degenerated into a quest for mere wealth.
- Gatsby's powerful dream of happiness with Daisy has become the motivation for lavish excess and criminal activities.

THEME – The American Dream

- Task: Consider all of the characters in the novel. For each one note down how they symbolise different elements of the American Dream.

SYMBOLISM – ‘Grail’

- “...but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail.”
- A Grail is a sacred object of a quest undertaken by a loyal and devoted knight.
- Gatsby has been transformed into a chivalric hero – a knight. His shining armour is his ‘beautiful shirts’, his horse is an expensive car.
- Discussion: Do you think that Gatsby could rescue Daisy and take her to a better life?

SYMBOLISM - Weather

- “The night had made a sharp difference in the weather and there was an autumn flavour in the air.”
- The ‘fire’ has gone out of Gatsby’s life with Daisy’s decision to remain with Tom. This is symbolised by the cooling weather and autumn slowly creeping in.

SYMBOLISM – The swimming pool

- 'I've never used that pool all summer?'
- In some ways Gatsby is clinging on to the hope that Daisy will love him the way she used to symbolised by his insistence on swimming in the pool as though it were still summer.
- Important – both his downfall in Chapter 7 and his death in this chapter result from his stark refusal to accept what he cannot control – the passage of time

SYMBOLISM – Eyes of Dr T J Eckleburg

- “but you can’t fool God!... Doctor T.J.Eckleburg ...God sees everything,’ repeated Wilson.”
- George takes this to be the all seeing eyes of God.
- He mistakenly believes that Myrtle’s lover must have been her killer and must be punished by “God”.

SYMBOLISM – Eyes of Dr T J Eckleburg

- BUT remember that these eyes are blind – they are the advert for an opticians.
- The connection between these eyes and 'God' exists only in Wilson's grief stricken mind.
- Discussion – How important has been the idea of eyes/seeing within the novel?

SYMBOLISM – The rose

- “He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is ...”
- The rose has been a symbol of beauty for centuries, but Nick says that they are not inherently beautiful and people only view them as beautiful because they choose to.

SYMBOLISM – The rose

- Daisy is grotesque in the same way. Gatsby has made her beautiful and the object of his dream but in reality she is an idle, bored and rich young woman with no moral strength or loyalties.
- Discussion: How does the reader now feel about Daisy? Consider that she has abandoned Gatsby in his hour of need.

SYMBOLISM - Holocaust

- "...gardener saw Wilson's body a little way off in the grass, and the holocaust was complete"
- Indicates the wholesale destruction of Gatsby's life, of his dream and his love for Daisy.
- Also indicates the destruction of Wilson's life, his dream and of his world.