**Title of Work:** The Great Gatsby  

**Author:** F. Scott Fitzgerald  

**Date of Publication:** 1925  

**Genre:** Modernist Novel, Jazz Age novel, Social Criticism  

**Characteristics of the Genre:**  
- The genre of Social Criticism often critiques society’s flawed social structures.  
- Modernist literature is usually set after World War I and focuses on the increasingly industrialized and globalized world. Characters are often seen adapting to this new world and society.  
- The Jazz Age was after World War I, where lifestyles were characterized as “loose.” Jazz clubs represented the new generation’s wild, free and non-conservative nature. This new generation tested the social limits for behavior, fashion, music and lifestyle.  

**Historical Information about the Period of Publication: (mid 1820)**  
- Jazz age was (roaring twenties)  
- Parties were very common as many people moved into middle class and up. Everyone seemed to be very successful.  
- World War I had left America in shock from the violence it caused.  
- After the end of World War I and before the stock market crash of 1929,  
- Spirit of rebellion in the United States.  
- Attempts to quell massive culture change- >18th amendment (1919)  

**Biographical Information about the Author:**  
Francis Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) was born into an upper-middle-class family in St. Paul, Minnesota. His parents came from different backgrounds. His father came from an aristocratic family and a relative wrote the “Star Spangled Banner”. His mother was from an Irish-Catholic immigrant family.  
Fitzgerald’s background definitely impacted his perspective of the American dream. He attended Princeton University where he developed a reputation as a writer. He dropped out to join the army in November of 1917. He served as a second Lieutenant during World War I. While stationed in Alabama, he fell in love with Zelda Sayre, the daughter of a judge. After the war ended, Fitzgerald moved to New York City in search of a job to earn money sufficient for marriage. Zelda, was not pleased by his current salary and broke their engagement. Later, when Fitzgerald published his work This Side of Paradise in 1920, Zelda agreed to marry him. Their daughter was born the following year. In 1924, the couple decided to move to France, where the Great Gatsby was completed. Slowly afterward, Fitzgerald gave into alcoholism, which greatly affected his ability to write and publish. Additionally, his wife was mentally ill and she was admitted to a hospital. The marriage began to fall apart and Fitzgerald began to work as a scriptwriter in Hollywood. He died of a heart attack in 1940.
Plot Summary:
Nick Caraway, a war veteran, narrates his experience living on the East coast the previous summer. He moved to New York City from the Midwest to study the bond business. Nick settles in a house on West Egg, Long Island next to Jay Gatsby’s luxurious mansion. He attends a dinner at his cousin, Daisy, and her husband, Tom Buchanan’s house on East Egg. He is also introduced to Jordan Baker, who informs Nick about Tom’s mistress. A few days after the dinner, Tom takes Nick to the city to meet his mistress, Myrtle. The three of them spend some time in a hotel room where Myrtle changes her outfit in order to appear as though she is a part of the wealthy class. When she offends Daisy, Tom abuses her and breaks her nose.

Nick is invited to a lavish party at Gatsby’s mansion. Most guests do not receive an invitation but know that they will be welcomed. Later in the evening, Nick meets Gatsby, who seems to be isolated from the party. They start to build a unique friendship. Gatsby even takes Nick to meet Meyer Wolfsheim and shares a fictitious story about his past. Later on, Nick learns Gatsby true intention to meet Daisy and becomes a middleman. During the summer, Daisy has an affair with Gatsby, plunging into her previous desires and forgetting about her current life. Tom slowly develops a suspicion towards Gatsby and decides to travel to the city on the hottest day of the summer. On the way, Tom stops by George Wilson’s garage and discovers that George wants to move west with Myrtle. Tom realizes that he will lose both women if he doesn’t do something. Gatsby and Tom get into an argument, each attempting to persuade Daisy. In the end, Tom exposes Gatsby’s corrupt way of living and essentially wins Daisy. Daisy drives the car that Tom drive in the beginning of the day and accidentally kills Myrtle. George thinks that Gatsby killed his wife and decides to take revenge on him. After Gatsby’s funeral, Nick goes back to the Midwest and writes his narration.

Description of the Author’s Style:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example that Demonstrates Style and Explanation:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-First person narrative (Nick Caraway)</td>
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<tr>
<td>-”In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since.” Nick’s experience uses 1st person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>-We don’t meet Gatsby or learn about him until Nick learns about him.</td>
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<td>-Nick speaks with firsthand accounts but switches to accounts from other people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Jordan told Nick about Daisy and Gatsby’s relationship. “When I came opposite her house that morning her white</td>
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roadster was beside the curb, and she was sitting in it with a lieutenant I had never seen before. They were so engrossed in each other that she didn’t see me until I was five feet away.”

James Gatz “that was really, or at least legally, his name. He had changed it at the age of seventeen and at the specific moment that witnessed the beginning of his career — when he saw Dan Cody’s yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior.”

-Gatsby’s last moments before his murder. No one was there to know what he was thinking, but Nick infers. James Gatz — that was really, or at least legally, his name. He had changed it at the age of seventeen and at the specific moment that witnessed the beginning of his career — when he saw Dan Cody’s yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior.

-In the end, he uses his imagination to formulate Gatsby’s final thoughts

Memorable Quotations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotation</th>
<th>Significance:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. “I hope she’ll be a fool—that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.” -Daisy</td>
<td>This is important because it shows how Daisy feels about women and their importance in society. She wants her daughter to be a beautiful little fool because she thinks that is what will give her happiness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. “It excited him, too, that many men had</td>
<td>Nick explains what he</td>
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already loved Daisy - it increased her value in his eyes.”

3. “Americans, while occasionally willing to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry”

4. “Life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all”

5. “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.”

-thinks why Gatsby loves Daisy. This shows Gatsby’s way of making Daisy into a object. The idea that he loves her because of her place in society, she signifies all that he wants to be thus that is why he wants her.

Americans are often portrayed as servants. They will willingly work low wages. But they draw the line at the conditions that identify them as poor. They want to be able to appear wealthy.

Nick would rather have a single perspective of life. In a way, this shows that he wants the easy way out. He does not want to encounter so many views. Additionally, since he is the narrator, the reader is also invited to one perspective.

-This is our first impression of Gatsby but this is also significant because Nick begins to judge his character based on his smile (though he supposedly says he doesn’t). It’s a mysterious, understanding kind of smile that is his signature feature.
6. “They were careless people, Tom and Daisy - they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money of their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together and let other people clean up the mess they had made.”

This quotation describes the mentality of the current wealthy class. They were oblivious to their surroundings and they felt that everything would be alright if they had money. It also describes Nick’s thoughts about them. He is repulsed by their careless attitude saying how they “smash up” things.

7. “After Gatsby's death the East was haunted for me like that, distorted beyond my eyes' power of correction. So when the blue smoke of brittle leaves was in the air and the wind blew the wet laundry stiff on the line I decided to come back home.”

This shows Nicks final conclusion of the East. After Gatsby's death he realizes that there really is no life and to the community. It seems the only reason he was staying was because of Gatsby. Now that Gatsby passed away Nick is disgusted by how shallow the people of east and west egg are.

8. “He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would never romp again like the mind of God.”

Previously, Gatsby had a regime to improve himself daily. His imagination was endless and he could climb up into the heavens to suck the palp of life. But only alone. When he kissed Daisy, this wonderful image of climbing up into the heavens dropped down to only Daisy. He became
infatuated by daisy that he worships her. He is restricted by the goal of obtaining Daisy. Afterwards. Then what? 

Daisy appeared to be an object in Gatsby’s eyes. He viewed her as a reward or trophy. He actually had to work hard to be with her and he was possessive of her. The green light represents his wish to have her. When he finally attained her, the light starts to disappear.

This shows how Gatsby's life was an illusion. He is so set on getting Daisy that he does not realize that he is changing his whole life for her. He does not realize that Daisy and Tom have a child together and it would be impossible to repeat the past.

9. “His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one.”

10. "Can't repeat the past?... Why of course you can!” -Gatsby

**Major Characters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character’s</th>
<th>Role (What role)</th>
<th>Significance (Why is this character significant to)</th>
<th>Character Traits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>does this person have in the story?:</td>
<td>the story?:</td>
<td>(What sort of person is this?):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nick Caraway</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>Cousin of Daisy comes to NYC to study stocks becomes friends with Gatsby. Besides telling the story Nick adds his own commentary on characters in the story.</td>
<td>Honest Judgemental Sincere</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Gatsby</td>
<td>Protagonist</td>
<td>Gatsby is new money and represents the fulfillment of the american dream. Also represents the irony of accomplishing everything but that is what ends up destroying him.</td>
<td>Ambitious, Pretentious, Naive Hopeful, Committed</td>
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<td>Daisy Buchannan</td>
<td>Gatsby’s goal/love Tom’s wife</td>
<td>Representative of the elite social class women of the time. Gatsby’s obsession.</td>
<td>Mesmerizing Fickle behaves superficially</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Buchanan</td>
<td>Gatsby’s obstacle to get to Daisy Daisy’s husband</td>
<td>Old Money/aristocracy His actions led to Gatsby’s demise. Prevents Daisy from returning to Gatsby.</td>
<td>Prideful Commanding Sardonic Arrogant hypocritical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jordan Baker</td>
<td>Daisy’s friend. In a relationship with Nick Golf Player</td>
<td>Represents the wealthy class. Learn about Gatsby and Daisy’s past</td>
<td>Beautiful, dishonest, self-centered, prideful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrtle Wilson</td>
<td>Tom’s Mistress George Wilson’s wife</td>
<td>One of those who wants to become part of the higher class. Died and caused Gatsby’s death</td>
<td>Envious Phony materialistic full of vitality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Wilson</td>
<td>Myrtle’s husband Auto Shop owner</td>
<td>George appears to be a simple man who symbolized the world of poverty. He appears to be inferior to the other characters. He takes his revenge by killing Gatsby.</td>
<td>Dull, abused, lifeless vengeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meyer Wolfshaim</td>
<td>Gatsby’s Business partner</td>
<td>Represents people who do anything to gain materialistic values. He appears to be inhumane when he does not attend Gatsby’s funeral.</td>
<td>Deceptive sly corrupt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Henry C. Gatz | Gatsby’s father | Represents parenthood and the sense of pride when a child becomes independent. He is amazed by what Gatsby achieved. He is the only other person that came to the funeral despite his disconnection with his son. This shows that parents will always be there.

**Description of the Setting(s)**
The four different settings that this book takes place in Manhattan, East Egg, West Egg and Valley of Ashes.

- East Egg represent those who have has money in their families for generations. (old money)
- West Egg represents those who have just come into money. (new money)
- Valley of Ashes represents the working class neighborhood.

**Significance of the Opening Scene:**
The Opening scene shows us Nick Caraway’s viewpoints on society. It also gives us background to Nick and his family. He thinks himself to be nonjudgmental which causes others to confide in him (even though it may not be so good). Nick is our narrator so it is important to learn his background and mentality so we can understand how reliable he is. We learn that he no longer lives in New York and that he is writing the novel a year after the events. We are also almost immediately introduced to the Buchanan family and the setting in Long Island with West Egg (Gatsby and Nick/New money) and East Egg (Buchanan/Old money)

**Major Symbols, Motifs, Images:**

- **The eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleberg**
  The eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleberg symbolize god because he not only looks down at everyone but is also the all knowing and all seeing. After Myrtles death George Wilson is shown looking at billboard as he talks about how Myrtle fooled him, but can’t fool god.

- **Green Light**
  Represents Gatsby’s goal of being with Daisy. From far away the green light is mysterious and exciting which is very similar to his feeling about getting Daisy. The light also represent a continuous reminder because it is situated right in front of Daisy’s house and can be seen across the house from Gatsby’s home.

- **Clock Falling**
  Represents Gatsby need to preserve the past. Gatsby is attempting to rekindle his relationship with Daisy that is

**Significance of the Ending/Closing Scene:**
The ending scene shows Nick’s Caraway’s perspective of the American dream. The American dream is very short lived. Money can lead to corruption. There will always be people like Tom, who is born with everything he needs. Others have to work hard to attain success. There is no real shortcut.

**Themes:**

- **Lost Love**
  The idea that Gatsby will do anything for the love of Daisy. It is so powerful
essentially broken.

Yellow Car
This represents the idea that Gatsby is new money. This car is very showy, expensive, and not classy. Definitely not something someone from old money would drive.

Valley of Ashes
This place is literally the dumping ground for ashes. The place represents poverty and utter hopelessness. As Tom Buchannan looks at the place, he doesn’t even give a glance to symbolize the ignorance of the wealthy and the misfortune of those who though work hard, are still stuck to die in the bottom of an obscure valley. Symbolize the American Dream and how it is often ineffective.

Gatsby’s Parties
Gatsby’s parties signify the extravagance of the “New Money.” Unlike the graceful aristocracy of the New Money, Gatsby’s parties are the definition of the word vulgar.

Pammy (Daisy’s Child)
Symbolizes living proof of Tom and Daisy's romantic relationship. Gatsby is set on the idea of repeating the past but Pammy is the only thing that proves he and Daisy did separate at some point.

that he himself does things that are out of character or plain crazy. For example he threw extremely lavish parties just so he could run into her and he mowed Nick’s lawn because she was coming over for tea.

American Dream
The book focuses on the idea that everyone has big dreams for themselves but reaching such dreams may not always lead to happiness. Many characters are wealthy and have achieved the American Dream but they are very unhappy.

The power of money and social status
This theme represents that different classes represented in the novel and their power over one another. East Egg and West Egg are divided by the wealthier and poorer families. Gatsby desperately wants to fit in and even creates a fake persona in order to be accepted.

Marriage
Marriage is supposed to be a sacred relationship between two committed people. The Great Gatsby show another side where people cheat on each other, have mistresses, and other types of dishonest in a marriage.