

The great gatsby by f. scott fitzgerald essay

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



"The Great Gatsby" was written by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and was published in 1925. The story focuses around a man named Jay Gatsby who aspires to achieve a position among the rich to win the heart of his true love, Daisy Buchanan. However, this corrupt desire for one to achieve wealth and true love ends in tragedy.

Throughout Jay Gatsby's experiences through New York in the West Egg and his mansion, F. Scott Fitzgerald uses symbols and motifs around Gatsby to emphasize two themes: the American Dream can lead to a corrupt desire for wealth; no matter how much effort you put into a dream, it can lead to sacrifices and emptiness.

Fitzgerald develops the theme that the American Dream can lead to a corrupt desire for wealth through the use of motif about cars. In the novel, Gatsby's car is described as, "His station wagon scampered like a brisk little bug" (Fitzgerald 15). By letting anyone use his car to get back and forth from the city, Gatsby does this to show off his status of a wealthy man.

However, his materialistic goods did not allow for society to take him seriously making it impossible for Gatsby to fulfill his American Dream. Gatsby owns many cars, but the main one that was focused on was his yellow Rolls Royce. Nick Carraway describes the car as, "It was a rich cream color, bright and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with labyrinth of windshields that mirrored a dozen suns" (Fitzgerald 68). Gatsby believes that buying materialistic items will intrigue the people of West Egg into loving him, as well as Daisy. The car motif reflects a way for the rich to show off.

The car motif continues to develop through the second half of the story as well. For example, after the fight between Tom and Gatsby Nick says, " So we drove toward death through the cooling twilight" (Fitzgerald 136). This will foreshadow what is to come, which is the death of Myrtle. Gatsby's car in this instance plays a part as death and the corruption of the American Dream.

Also, Daisy then accidentally hits Myrtle with Gatsby's yellow Rolls Royce, " It was a yellow car" (Fitzgerald 139). When Myrtle is struck and killed by Gatsby's car, this brings out the irony when Myrtle thought the person driving the car was Tom. Tom is who would of lead/brought her to the American Dream, however it's the American Dream that ultimately kills her. Fitzgeralds development of the American Dream through the power of cars effectively generates the theme: the American Dream can lead to a corrupt desire for wealth.

Fitzgeralds develops a motif about a green light to create the theme: no matter how much effort you put into a dream, it can lead to sacrifices and emptiness. For example, Nick went to see what Gatsby was looking at and all he could see was, "... nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of the dock" (Fitzgerald 25). The green light first appears when Nick sees Gatsby stretching his arms out towards the water or the green light.

The light is at the end of Daisy's dock, which represents Gatsby's longing for Daisy and his hope to win her over. However, the green light represents all of what Gatsby longs for: money, success, acceptance, and of course Daisy,

his dream. To continue, when Gatsby speaks Daisy about the green light after the reunion, Nick observes, " Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever...His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one" (Fitzgerald).

The green light shows that Gatsby and Daisy existed in the same world and that the two would one day meet again. The green light forces Gatsby to struggle and fail to reconcile his dream with reality. The green light motif reflects what Gatsby goes through in accepting his loss of hope with reality.

The green light continues to develop through the second half of the story as well. For example, " Minutes later, Wilson concludes that the driver was Myrtle's lover, who deliberately ran her down, saying, " He murdered her. ... She ran out to meet him and he wouldn't stop" (Fitzgerald 158).

Daisy was the one that killed Myrtle, and when Gatsby discovers this news that he takes the blame for her death. Gatsby's dream (to be with Daisy) is so strong that he's willing to take the blame and sacrifice himself for Daisy. Then, Gatsby is killed by George Wilson, ending Gatsby's dream of ever being with Daisy. In addition, at the end of the book Nick referred to the green light, " Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us" (Fitzgerald 180).

Gatsby is having a hard time moving on from the past. He wants the past to return so he tries to recreate it. His dream was already behind him, but he could not get over his dream or ever achieve it. Fitzgeralds development of Gatsby's dream to be with Daisy through the green light effectively

generates the theme: no matter how much effort you put into a dream, it can lead to sacrifices and emptiness.

Fitzgerald develops the two themes of the book very effectively. The first theme, which is that the American Dream can lead to a corrupt desire for wealth, is developed very well through the use of the motif cars. Cars portrayed the wealth status of a man and power.

Additionally, the theme no matter how much effort you put into a dream, it can lead to sacrifices and emptiness is also represented through the symbol/motif of the green light. The green light portrays Gatsby's hope and dream to one day be with Daisy, but the light is forever out of reach. Overall, the American Dream is an illusion that causes men to reinvent themselves to fit in or be "liked" by society.