

Book study 1: the great gatsby

Literature, American Literature



Book Study 1: The Great Gatsby Some page numbers may not align with the book as I read the book using my I-pad and a copy of the book, sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. " I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool. " (Daisy, 22) Daisy tells this to Nick and Jordan as her hopes for her baby girl. This quote offers us a glimpse into the character of Daisy who herself is not a fool but just the product of her environment that does not value smart women. Though in her quote she refers to the social values of that time, she does nothing to argue them. Instead she describes how bored she is with her life and implies that a girl will get further in life if she is beautiful and foolish. LD: caesura, character " The light grows brighter as the Earth lurches away from the sun, and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. " (Nick, 42) At this point Nick is at Gatsby's party and the party is in full swing. He is talking of how the party is progressing on into the night getting better and bigger as the night progresses. Nick's description of it gives us an amazing image of the happenings at the party by painting a picture in our head, through the descriptive words like " lurches away from the sun" and " pitches a key higher". LD: imagery, setting " 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. " (Nick, 171-172) These words conclude the novel The Great Gatsby and Nick returns to that same theme of the past and the dreams of the future. It also talks about their struggle to turn their dreams into reality. The metaphor talks about

both Gatsby's struggle and living the American dream. LD: metaphor, character " That's my Middle West — not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns, but the thrilling returning trains of my youth and the street lamps and sleigh bells in the frosty dark. . . . I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all—Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life. " (Nick, 167) This quote is in Chapter 9 that brings the theme of geography to an end. During the novel places are linked with the themes, characters and ideas of the novel. The East is a lifestyle with parties, low morals and very wealth-based. Both the West and Midwest are very traditional with traditional values and morals. His perspective on the Western characters and their attitudes and the choices they've made, contributes almost solely to Nick's decision to leave the East Coast and head back to Minnesota, a place where he is much better suited. It also shows how Nick's values in New York parallel Gatsby's unfeasible dream. LD: character " He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen year old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end. " (Nick, 94) This quote is from chapter 6 where Nick finally describes Gatsby's earlier life. The author uses this quote as a comparison between Jesus and Gatsby, because he creates his own identity. The person that Gatsby envisioned himself to be was decided at seventeen and he did a great job at keeping it up even through hardships and pressures. LD: metaphor, character " It was 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. " (Nick, 47) This quote is said in Chapter 3 and in Chapter 3 Nick goes to Gatsby's party and has his first close up with the mysterious Gatsby. The description of Gatsby's smile gives us an idea into who Gatsby is as a person. It also gives us an idea of how Gatsby is portrayed throughout the book before we learn more and more about him and obviously the way that this man can make a person feel just simply by smiling at them. " And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. " (Nick, 7) Nick has just recently moved to the East and he was feeling lost by the change. When this man came to him and simply asked for directions, he changed. He thought of himself as something more than he had before and became more to the people around him than before. LD: asyndeton, character " I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes - a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. " (Nick, 171) This quotes signifies both Gatsby and Nick's view of the American Dream and

Gatsby's eternal hopefulness to reach the American dream in his own life. It emphasizes certain aspects several times to get this idea across, which you only realize through reading the book and understanding Gatsby and his ultimate goals. LD: personification, repetition, character " There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired. " (Nick, 76) The pursued are busy while the pursuing are tired. It refers to the love within the story because trying to pursue a person while in love and trying to make them want you is incredibly tiring for that person, they are trying to make it bloom. While the people who already have the love are busy trying to keep up with it so it doesn't their love doesn't wither away into nothing. LD: " And I like large parties. They're so intimate. At small parties there isn't any privacy. " (Jordan, 48) This quote sums up Gatsby in different sort of way. Gatsby is a man of privacy and little is known about him and what lots of people think they know is a lie. Gatsby throws these parties because he likes his privacy. At a smaller party you are forced to socialize with everyone or you seem rude and everyone knows everything because you cannot hold a small group conversation. At a large gathering there are so many people it is not considered rude staying with your smaller group because there are far too many people for you to associate yourself with. A large party is epitome of privacy. " Let us learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead. " (Meyer Wolfsheim, 163) Meyer Wolfsheim is the main that claims he made Gatsby, he is one of those people who believes that without a doubt he is right. His idea is that by not showing up to Gatsby's funeral he is ultimately showing the man respect but this man knows deep down that it is disrespectful. This man ultimately believes that you should

show a friend your friend friendship while they live and not after they die by attending their funeral. LD: “ Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. ” (Gatsby, 5) What Gatsby means by this is that we sometimes willingly discard our disbelief when we see someone behaving badly. We do this because we hope for the best and we try our hardest to not recognize bad character. In this book though we learn towards the end that we have to give up on our hopes and come to terms with what we’ve seen all along, giving up all false hopes that we seemed to have before. LD: “ Whenever you feel like criticizing any one, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had.” (Nick’s Father, 5) For Nick to have received this advice from his Father it says something about the closeness that him and his Father had. Nick has received a lot of advantages over the rest of society coming from the very strong leadership of his Father and a very privileged background in terms of wealth. The fact that Nick ponders this quote over and over again gives me the idea that Nick is on his way to becoming an amazing leader. “ Every one suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues, and this is mine; I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.” (Nick, 57) For this quote I believe that it refers to Jordan and her lying. A double standard is given and Jordan is the route of the quote making it controversial in my opinion. Nearly 10 lines before Nick says something about how it is virtually okay for a woman to be dishonest and she can’t be blamed and then seems upset with the fact that he is one of the only trustworthy people he knows. LD: “ Can’t repeat the past?...Why of course you can! ” (Gatsby, 105) This quote means that if you do not learn from your past mistakes then you repeat those same very

mistakes. LD: " It takes two to make an accident. " (Jordan, 57) Two people are required in accidents. There would be no accident if it were only the one person. This quote means that in an accident there isn't only one person to blame in the happenings, no matter how minute the other person's contributions were they're still there. Jordan says this while driving when her bad driving skills are brought up. " No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart. " (Nick, 92) This means that the actuality of Daisy to Gatsby is much more beautiful and amazing than who she actually is. This is because he has built up so much adoration and thought of her as nearly perfect. Because of this Daisy will never truly live up to the memories Gatsby has in his head of her. " Her voice is full of money, " (Gatsby, 114) Daisy represents material wealth and everything that seems to come with it. Daisy was brought up in a home where wealth was very prominent. The expectations upon her and the surroundings she lived in cause her to speak with class and sophistication. LD: " Until long after midnight a changing crowd lapped up against the front of the garage while George Wilson rocked himself back and forth on the couch inside." (Nick, 164) This quote shows that even though Wilson's wife was very much not in love with him anymore he had deep feelings for her that wouldn't go away. Wilson was terribly distraught about the death of her and was having immense amount of troubles trying to deal with that. LD: character "... then he blurted out that a couple of months ago his wife had come from the city with her face bruised and her nose swollen." (Nick, 148-149) This instance is from when Tom punched Myrtle in the nose when talking about Daisy. To me this quote is the final understanding I needed in

knowing, for certain, that Daisy did not love her husband. If you love someone even minimally then you would get divorced or you would make him or her aware of what you have done. Sometimes it may not even be the lack of love for a person that makes you keep it a secret but keeping it private also signifies you're lack of respect towards a person. LD: "' Even alone I can't say I never loved Tom,' she admitted in a pitiful voice. 'It wouldn't be true.'" (Daisy, 127) Daisy had constantly told Gatsby that he was the only person she had ever loved and he believed her. He believes that their love is so powerful that even when he had no money she still loved her. To find out in this chapter that Daisy has loved Tom and that the only reason she loved Gatsby was because of his money, breaks Gatsby's heart. LD " Americans, while occasionally willing to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry. " (Nick, 85) Americans don't mind being a serf because they are working for someone and maintaining a job. Being a peasant is terrible because it means that they are failing because they are of even lower status than those who work for someone. Americans refuse to be modest when it comes to things like that and don't want to live a simple life. LD " Absolutely real- have pages and everything. I thought they'd be a nice durable cardboard. Matter of fact they're absolutely real. " (Drunken Man, 50) This shows what this drunken man thought of Gatsby. This man believed that Gatsby was unintelligent and that his library would be full of fake books. Gatsby having books that were real in his library proved to this man that yes Gatsby is rich but this man is also not an unintelligent man. Most of the people that the made had known had put in fake libraries to seem intelligent. " I'm paralyzed with happiness." (Daisy, 13) This gives us insight into Daisy

as a character and how she exaggerates almost everything she says to receive attention. LD: hyperbole " Life is much more successfully looked at from a single window. " (Nick, 8) IT is easier to look at everything from single window because you don't go through the trouble of seeing others perspective and putting yourself in another's shoes. By doing this you take the easier route but it is a route that would lack compassion, sensitivity and love because of the lack of a global perspective. LD: character, epigram " It makes me sad because I've never seen such--such beautiful shirts before. " (Daisy, 89) The context of this quote is this is the first time that Daisy has seen Gatsby since he left for war. Gatsby showing the shirts and throwing them up is a demonstration of his wealth and how important he is. Daisy's reaction to this is her understanding of the fact that she chose to marry Tom over Gatsby and ultimately regrets it now because of the money. This is another quote that gives us immense insight into Daisy's character. LD: character