

Symbols in the great gatsby

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A symbol is a sound, object, or image that is often used by authors to represent beliefs or ideas that they want the readers to understand. In *The Great Gatsby*, author F. Scott Fitzgerald uses symbols to portray the kind of person Gatsby is and what would eventually lead to his end.

Jay Gatsby is a rich man who obsesses over materialistic things in life and is trying to win young Daisy's heart. The symbols Fitzgerald uses in his novel are the green light and Gatsby's flashy, luxurious car to show what really mattered to Gatsby and how it affected him.

Fitzgerald uses Nick, Gatsby's friend, to describe Gatsby indirectly by commenting on his car. Gatsby shows up at Nick's house with his car, telling him they are going to grab some lunch together. Nick looks at Gatsby's car with admiration and describes it saying it is a "rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes..." (Fitzgerald 64).

Based on Nick's description of Gatsby's car, it is clear that Gatsby's Rolls Royce is meant to be a very showy and very over the top. Nick describes Gatsby's car as this monstrous thing that is very flashy. He says it in a negative connotation with his word choices. He uses the words swollen, almost as if to describe Gatsby for being as someone who is puffed up and materialistic. That same day, Nick goes on to say that the car is, terraced with a labyrinth of windshields that mirrored a dozen suns (Fitzgerald 68). The fact that Gatsby's car windshields were mirrored and reflective in the sun, represents Gatsby's own hidden secret identity. During the 1920's, the car you owned, represented where you stand on the social status. Cars were

still new and just introduced to the world. If you had a nice car, it showed that you were living the American Dream. Gatsby hid behind his large windshield, fools gold covered, monstrous car. Gatsby's car was widely known in town because of its appearance. The car symbolizes Gatsby's need for materialistic satisfactions and him appearing to be having the American Dream life.

The second symbol is the green light that Gatsby sees in chapter 1. The green light represents Gatsby's hopes and dreams for the future. In chapter 1, Gatsby's neighbor, Nick, watches Gatsby one evening as he goes outside and watches the green light from his mansion. Nick says, ...he (Gatsby) stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and far as I was from him I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness (Fitzgerald 20). Nick sees Gatsby reach out towards a light. At first Nick isn't sure what Gatsby is looking at, but then he sees one tiny faraway light. Nick doesn't know why Gatsby is stretching his arms toward the light and is quite curious.

Gatsby sees the green light all the time since his mansion faces it. The green light for him symbolizes a hope that he and Daisy will reunite and will fall in love once again one day. Later on in chapter five, Gatsby and Daisy go and look towards the green light together. If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay,' said Gatsby. ' You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock.' Daisy put her arm through his

abruptly, but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever.

Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one (Fitzgerald 94). Gatsby and Daisy watch towards the green light together. Gatsby is so in the moment and is soaking everything in. Gatsby and Daisy are finally together but it seems like the green light which symbolizes his dreams, vanishes. The question is, since the green light vanishes, does that mean that when you get your dream and finally achieve it, it somehow loses its meaning and value and disappears? Sometimes, people focus so much on what they want in life, their hopes and dreams lose their value because they don't appreciate what they have in their life at that moment.

In conclusion, Fitzgerald uses other people around Gatsby, such as his friend Nick, to really give the readers an inside peek of Gatsby's American Dream. He also uses Gatsby's symbolic green light to symbolize a dream that in the end wasn't enough for Gatsby himself. People will go through any measures to attain that wealth and status. They will give up their morals and beliefs to try to gain something that in the end won't make the happy. True happiness isn't in wealth or status. True happiness is being content with what you have and being true to yourself.