

How does fitzgerald
develop your
responses to gatsby's
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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Fitzgerald explores the wealth and glamour of the 1920s in the opening of chapter three.

It focuses on the gap between perception and reality and is devoted to the introduction of the main character Jay Gatsby and the lavish, showy world he inhabits. Fitzgerald develops the readers' responses to Gatsby's parties by different means. By first exposing Gatsby's status by describing the exceptional extravagance of his house and the preparations of the party enables the reader to imagine what the parties are like. It gives the reader an insight and an expectation so they are eager to read on.

Fitzgerald gradually builds it up until the reader is transported to the magical world of the parties and experiencing the atmosphere for themselves. By also bringing in the social aspect through characters and the anticipation of meeting the host adds to the development of response from the reader. The opening of the chapter presents us with an almost beautiful image of the party from Fitzgerald's delicate description. It portrays the carelessness of Gatsby's guests,"...

In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like moths among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars..." A scene of indulgence and pleasure seeking is established. Guests marvel over Gatsby's Rolls-Royce, swimming pool, beach and hydroplane. These are status symbols which indicate Gatsby's wealth.

Everything is an extremity on such a huge scale, it is trying to be refined yet gives the feeling of lacking taste and class."...

On weekends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus..." Gatsby's Rolls Royce is reduced to just a simple bus for everyone at the weekends so therefore losing its exclusiveness. The preparations for the party are then explained revealing what a great spectacle the party is going to be with its extravagant foods, full array of cocktails and a complete orchestra, again showing a small group of musicians would not satisfy Gatsby but an entire orchestra would.

"...By seven o'clock the orchestra has arrived, no thin five-piece affair, but a whole pitful of oboes and trombones and saxophones and viols and cornets and piccolos, and low and high drums..

." Gatsby's parties can be viewed from two different perspectives. Initially they are a place of the imagination and high spirits. But Nick's narration points out how much physical labour is undertaken by Gatsby's servants to achieve the effects of the party. For example, the unfortunate Butler has to press a button two hundred times to extract the juice from the oranges and lemons. The reality of the servants' lives acts as a contrast to Gatsby's as they are completely different.

By mentioning the role of the servants it underpins the glamour of everything, exposing the veiled truth. Their hard work is taken for granted. Guests devour the endless supply of food and drink without giving a single thought to how much effort has been put in to its preparation just for their own selfish pleasure. The atmosphere of the parties is conveyed by descriptions of guests and how they behave ' according to the rules of behaviour associated with an amusement park'.

At first the party seems an idealistic, enchanting place but the reader questions this due to Nick's comments. Nick's responses are very ambivalent as he has changing feelings from enchantment to repulsion at the same time. The reader is directed by Nick's way of thinking and begins to feel the same, realising that rather than just a scene of pure luxury it is in fact garish and illusory. Exchanges between guests show how artificial it is."..

. casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot, and enthusiastic meetings between women who never knew each other's names..."

Relationships are very fragile and people are exceedingly shallow and superficial. As soon as they enter Gatsby's party they are living in a careless, alcohol fuelled world, which isn't very stable.

Therefore giving a hint to the reader that something drastic is bound to happen. The amount of alcohol is apparent throughout the party scene, ' champagne was served in glasses bigger than finger-bowls'. The fact that alcohol is illegal doesn't seem to worry anyone and just adds to the excitement and revelry of it all. Gatsby's fortune is fuelling these parties. The party gives the first impression of exclusivity but really it is not.

Most guests are not invited and don't even know or see Gatsby. The reader gets the feeling people are moving from party to party. The party is a long description showing the decadence of the Jazz Age. This is shown in chapter three via the speech of guests, their movements and behaviour."

..'I never care what I do, so I always have a good time'..

." This line spoken by Lucille summarises this perfectly, portraying the idea of carelessness and irresponsibility. Another character called Owl Eyes is sitting in Gatsby's 'high Gothic library' trying to sober up after being drunk for a week. As he looks through Gatsby's books, he states that Gatsby has captured the effect of a theatre.

The party itself is a kind of elaborate theatrical presentation, Owl Eyes suggests that Gatsby's whole life is merely a show, believing that even his books might not be real. Fitzgerald explores the sociology of wealth in the Great Gatsby. There is a sense of irony between the guests as Gatsby is part of the 'new rich' yet people from east egg attend his parties. Therefore Gatsby is an enigma.

Both societies mix without restraint losing all their pretences about one another. There is also an apparent distinction between American and English guests."...

They (the English) were at least agonisingly aware of the easy money in the vicinity and convinced that it was theirs for a few words in the right key..."

The Americans seem to possess a rough vitality and are very exciting but the Englishmen seem desperate and predatory, hoping to make connections that will make them rich.

The introduction of the novel's main character has been delayed until this chapter. The reader has seen Gatsby from a distance, heard other characters talk about him and listened to Nick's thoughts but not actually met him."...

It was testimony to the romantic speculation he inspired that there were whispers about him from those who had found little that it was necessary to whisper about in this world..." He is the topic of conversation amongst guests who speculate on how he has made his fortune. The gossip intensifies, as far as rumours saying that he has killed a man and that he was a spy in the war.

The chapter continues to heighten the sense of anonymity and enigma that surrounds Gatsby and this mystery becomes the motivating question of the book. Unravelling of Gatsby's character becomes one of the novel's central mechanisms. Many aspects of Gatsby's world are intriguing because they seem slightly odd. For instance, he is the host of a spectacular party yet he knows hardly any of his guests. He chooses to remain separate from it all, he doesn't drink so he's always in control.

Nick's impression of Gatsby emphasizes his optimism and vitality, he seems hopeful and has a belief in him for the future. Ultimately the reader can see through all the glamour and luxuriousness of the party and observe its artificial, self-indulgent gaudiness. Nick plays a huge role in exposing what the parties a truly like by his subtle comments, influencing the readers' response. On the surface the party can be a wonderful, magical place where you can be transported to ecstasy but underneath it is the complete opposite, full of vulgarity and falseness.

It is very deceiving. Fitzgerald captures the Jazz era wonderfully revealing how people's lives at this time are without purpose, full of dissatisfaction and no direction.