



# Symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*

English III Honors



# Cars

- “It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hatboxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of windshields that mirrored a hundred suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green conservatory, we started to town. (63)
- During a time when cars were just beginning to become common, Gatsby’s car is used as a symbol of the crass materialism of the 1920s. Factory made cars were normally black, so Gatsby’s specially made car displays his wealth and delight in material possessions.

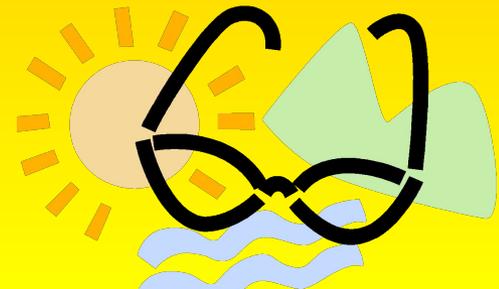
- **Also used in the novel, is the bad driving motif. Jordan refers to herself as a careless driver, but says she'll be alright so long she does not meet anyone as careless as herself. This also shows the theme of carelessness among the rich.**

# **Valley of the Ashes**

- **Description at beginning of chapter 2**
- **The image of a barren wasteland of ashes provides a stark contrast to the lavish parties of Jay Gatsby. The Valley of the Ashes symbolizes the moral decay that Fitzgerald saw behind the façade of wealth and happiness. It is in this dump that Tom Buchanan's mistress lives.**
- **It symbolizes the dull and lifeless style of the working class. It is in between NYC and Long Island and represents the moral as well as social decay.**

# Dr. T. J. Eckleburg's Eyes

- “The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic...they look out of no face, but instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles.”(33)
- In the vast wasteland of the Valley of Ashes stands a solitary landmark: a billboard with an advertisement for an optometrist. Fitzgerald chose these huge, flat, empty eyes to symbolize God staring blindly out at the moral decay of humanity.



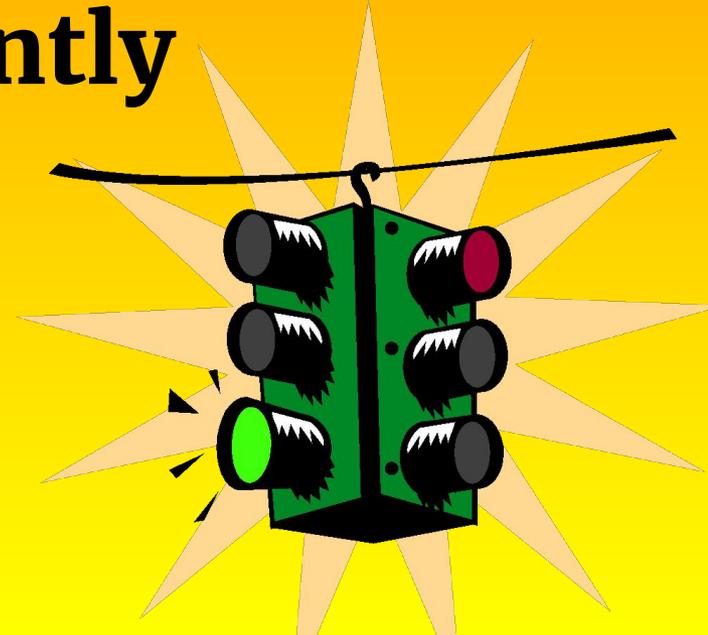
# Flowers



- **Daisy's name is very symbolic. Gatsby's belief in her perfection is based more on the projection of his fantasies of her than on her actual character. Fitzgerald illustrates this with the colors of a daisy: white, for purity, is on the outside; but yellow, for corruption and money, is at the core. Also, the yellow represents the cowardice Daisy displays.**

# The Green Light

- Symbolizes Gatsby's longing for Daisy
- It also stands for all of Gatsby's longings and wants (envy), as well as the money he currently possesses



# **East and West Egg**

- **Represents class and social standing**
- **East (old money) far more refined and well bred**
- **West (new money) people who don't have any real standing, even if they have money**
- **The barrier that the water creates between the East and West Eggs is symbolic of the barrier that keeps people apart from one another and much of what they want.**

# Colors

- **Gold and silver represent money (Gatsby's flashy display and attempt to impress Daisy when he wears the gold tie and silver shirt)**
- **White represents purity (however, with Daisy, it represents her shallowness, careless attitude and lack of responsibility)**
- **Yellow represents the corrupt and cowardice**
- **Green represents the dreams (wealth, envy)**

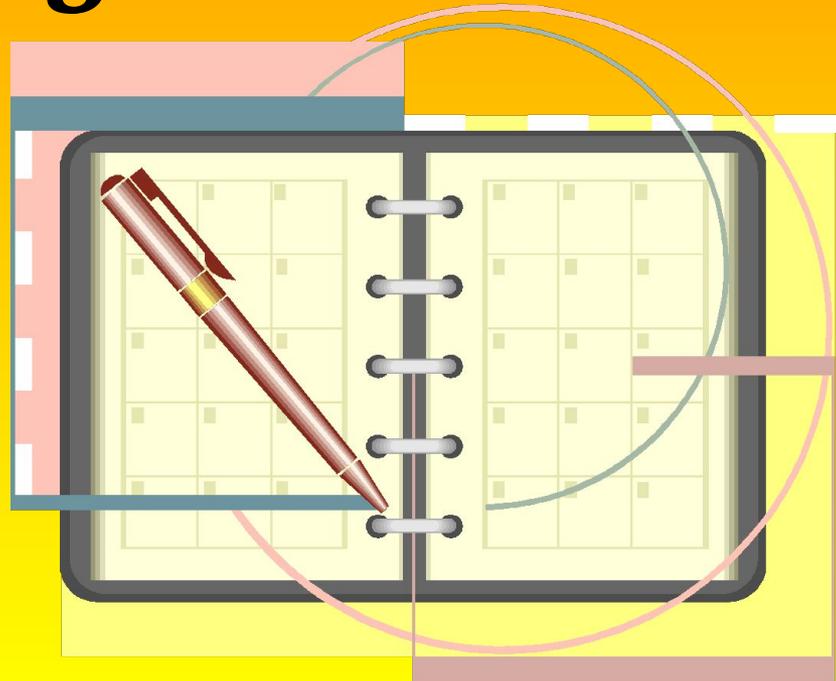
# The Owl-Eyed Man

- This man watches over Gatsby's house all the time. He keeps things safe and shows Gatsby's wisdom by his amusement with all the books Gatsby owns.



# Gatsby's Boyhood Schedule

- This schedule shows the determination that Gatsby had to make something of himself in life.



# Gatsby's Dream

- His dream is to get Daisy and spend his life with her. It is an unreachable dream but it shows how passionate he is.

