

The Use of Symbolism in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby"

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F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" is a classic novel that has been widely studied and analyzed for its use of symbolism. In this essay, we will closely examine the use of symbolism in the novel and how it contributes to the overall themes and messages of the story.

One of the most prominent symbols in "The Great Gatsby" is the green light at the end of Daisy Buchanan's dock. This green light represents Gatsby's unattainable dream of being with Daisy, as well as the elusive nature of the American Dream. The color green is often associated with wealth and envy, which are both central themes in the novel. The fact that the light is located across the water, and Gatsby can never quite reach it, symbolizes the unattainable nature of his dream and the disillusionment that comes with it.

Another important symbol in the novel is the Valley of Ashes, which represents the moral and social decay that is present in the world of the novel. The Valley of Ashes is a desolate and barren wasteland, symbolizing the emptiness and corruption that lies beneath the surface of the wealthy and glamorous world of the main characters. It serves as a stark contrast to the opulence of East and West Egg, highlighting the disparity between the rich and the poor and the moral decay that comes with excessive wealth.

The eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg are another powerful symbol in the novel, representing the notion of God and the moral judgment that is absent in the characters' lives. The eyes are a recurring motif throughout the story, watching over the characters and serving as a constant reminder of the consequences of their actions. The fact that the eyes are on a billboard in the Valley of Ashes further emphasizes the moral decay that is present in the world of the novel.

The use of cars as symbols in the novel is also significant, as they represent the reckless and destructive nature of the characters' lives. Cars are often associated with freedom and mobility, but in the context of the novel, they also symbolize the characters' recklessness and lack of concern for the consequences of their actions. The car accident that results in Myrtle Wilson's death is a clear example of the destructive nature of the characters' behavior.

In addition to these symbols, the use of colors throughout the novel is also significant. The color white, for example, is often associated with purity and innocence, but in the context of the novel, it also represents the facade of respectability that the characters maintain. The color yellow is associated with wealth and luxury, but it also represents moral decay and corruption. The use of these colors throughout the novel adds depth and complexity to the characters and their motivations.

Overall, the use of symbolism in "The Great Gatsby" is instrumental in conveying the themes and messages of the story. The green light, the Valley of Ashes, the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, and the use of colors all contribute to the overall atmosphere of the novel and provide insight into the characters' motivations and the society in which they live. By closely examining these symbols, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the novel and the complex themes that it explores.

In conclusion, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" is a rich and complex novel that employs a wide range of symbols to convey its themes and messages. The green light, the Valley of Ashes, the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, and the use of colors all contribute to the overall atmosphere of the novel and provide insight into the characters' motivations and the society in which they live. By closely examining these symbols, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the novel and the complex themes that it explores.