

# Symbols and Symbolism Essay - Symbolism in The Great Gatsby

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## Symbolism in The Great Gatsby

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* tells of a man's attempt to regain his long lost love and the happiness he once had in life by way of wealth and material possessions. Jay Gatsby is representative of the American man because he believes that with great wealth comes great happiness. This is evidenced throughout the novel by way of Gatsby himself, through the portrayal of the Buchanans, and through the use of the word green which symbolizes hope, renewal, and promise.

The character [Jay Gatsby](#) is the most symbolic element of the story due to

Fitzgerald's details about Gatsby's entire life. Gatsby who was the son of poor farmers was determined to better his life. As Gatsby's father later showed Nick, when Gatsby was a child he had laid out a detailed plan on how to run his life. This plan he felt would make him more successful in life. By the time Gatsby left to join Dan Cody, he had already set himself apart from his old way of life, hence his name change. Gatsby leaving his old life to

start a new and more successful one parallels almost identically to those of the early colonist who left their old cultures and traditions in search of a new and more prosperous life in America.

During his army days, Gatsby falls in love with the well-to-do Daisy. He falsely

allows her to believe he can support her but when she realizes he can not she marries Tom Buchanan, a man who is able to care for her financially. Not until he loses her does Gatsby realize that the time with Daisy was the [happiest](#) of his life. Realizing that only with money can he regain Daisy's affection, for years he runs dishonorable businesses to become rich in hope that one day his wealth will bring her back. This hope of happiness through money is believed in by countless Americans today, no matter what the problem, people believe that wealth and material possessions can make things right.

Along with Gatsby's life being a symbol on its own, his discovery that once he had

Daisy in his arms the enchantment that surrounded her disappeared parallels the belief that Americans have, that wealth brings happiness.

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