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A Twist on the Twenties: New Criticism on *The Great Gatsby*

A lesson to learn whilst looking at a piece of literary work would be to treat words as living beings. They each hold a special relationship with each other and to the story, creating a unique image in the work. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* would be a prime example. The relationship gives the book life and meaning even when it is simply a collection of words. Through its artistic language, the novel displays multiple tones, creates irony, and illustrates symbolism with heavy imagery.

Firstly, the dynamic tones express light or dark perspectives on characters or events. Nick's comments about Daisy and Gatsby frequently revolve around light, while character conflict receives a heated, grave tone. Daisy is described with "bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth" (9) and as "the golden girl," (120). Gatsby and Daisy brought "twinkle-bells of sunshine" (89) at their reunion. When the heat kicks in, Nick's tone turns from bright to grim. His descriptions during Gatsby and Tom's argument turn to words such as "exploded," (131) and "savagely," (132). He even describes Gatsby looking "as if he had 'killed a man,'" (134). These tones illustrate Nick's bright or grim perspective on the other characters. They showcase Nick's opinion.

Further, irony in the novel is evident in multiple cases. With Gatsby's extravagant parties, people "came and went," (41). Regarding Gatsby's funeral, Wolfsheim, his friend, didn't "like to get mixed up in it," (171). "Nobody came," (174). The irony is

found in how Gatsby's parties were abundances of people and then at his death, no one was interested anymore. This further illustrates the nature of character superficiality. It contributes to the novel by showing how the masses of characters deemed a relationship with Gatsby less important than self-benefit.

In continuation, the novel displays symbolism within its heavy imagery. Daisy is a notable symbol and an image recurrent in the novel. Her voice is portrayed as money. Daisy, or money, was what Gatsby wanted for five years. Nick mentions, "there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget," (9) and "[i]t was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it..." (120). Daisy's voice is important to the plot in Gatsby's sense. His attraction to money made Daisy all the more desirable to him. Gatsby wanted Daisy for himself. Her voice is a significant symbol as being Gatsby's motivation for monetary and romantic success as opposed to his penniless beginning.

To tie loose ends, *The Great Gatsby* holds an abundance of artistic nuances that fuses many sparkling images with literary function. Nick's tone helps determine the reader's feelings toward characters or events. This is due to a one-way perspective. Examining irony throughout the book reveals Gatsby's true importance to the characters in the novel. As Gatsby's motivation, Daisy's "cymbal" of a voice translates into money. With description, Nick's perspective becomes evident in tone, irony is present, and symbolism is a driving force. (Words: 507)