

Symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*

1. Introduction

1. Provide background on F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel and its enduring popularity.
2. Note Fitzgerald's renowned use of symbolic imagery and motifs.
3. Thesis: The recurring symbols of the green light, the Valley of Ashes, and the book's titles reinforce the novel's exploration of idealism, social division, and harsh realities.

2. The Green Light

1. Describe the green light at the end of Daisy's dock as first introduced.
2. Analyze how it represents Gatsby's idealistic dream for his future with Daisy.
3. Examine how the light's significance shifts as the novel progresses.

3. The Valley of Ashes

1. Provide details about the bleak, desolate Valley of Ashes landscape.
2. Explore how it symbolizes the moral decay and social stratification of 1920s America.
3. Discuss how characters like George Wilson are trapped by this harsh reality.

4. Symbolic Titles

1. Note how "*The Great Gatsby*" refers to Gatsby's superficial courtship of wealth and status.
2. Contrast this with Fitzgerald's working title "*Trimalchio in West Egg*", referencing a crude arriviste in ancient Rome.
3. Connect this to Gatsby's reinvention and ultimate failure to become part of the elite class.

5. Conclusion

1. Summarize the key symbolic meanings analyzed.
2. Restate how these images reinforce the novel's core themes.
3. Suggest possibilities for further analysis of symbols or other literary devices.