

F. Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 novel *The Great Gatsby* captivates readers through action, drama, and the constantly shifting perceptions of its characters. In order to make a judgement on the question 'Is Gatsby Great?', we must understand that our emotional responses to Gatsby are shaped by the author's writing style which echo the thoughts of the narrator. Fitzgerald prompts intense scrutiny of Gatsby's words and actions through his use of literary techniques such as narrator perspective, litotes and symbolism which reveal that Gatsby is far from great. Through the experiences of Nick the narrator, Fitzgerald exposes contradictions in Gatsby's stories revealing a faulty moral compass. By highlighting the contrast between Nick's reflections and surrounding events, Gatsby is shown to lack empathy and ethical goodwill. Ultimately the unravelling of his fabricated stories, his corruption and his role as an accessory to murder shows that he was a delusional con man whose demise was fitting for Fitzgerald's cynical take on the American dream.

Fitzgerald's narrator may seem to depict Gatsby in a positive light, but a deeper analysis shows that his depictions of Gatsby are questionable. Nick is a first person limited narrator who is unreliable in an unconventional sense. Rather than intentionally deceiving the audience, Nick's biases sway his judgements of other characters. From the outset in chapter 1, he expresses his fondness for Gatsby, saying that "there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life." Quotes such as this convey Nick's positive bias towards Gatsby. In contrast, Nick offers sceptical and grating judgements about other characters such as when he describes Tom as being 'arrogant' and "completely without culture, taste, or sensitivity". Rather than leading the reader to wholeheartedly accept Nick's positive evaluation of Gatsby, Fitzgerald casts doubt on the reliability of Nick's narration by exposing his insecurities. For example, Nick implores the reader to accept his accounts saying "Everyone suspects himself of at least one of the cardinal virtues and this is mine: I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known." Nick is seeking approval in his judgement from the audience to justify his bias toward Gatsby. Soon after in chapter 4, Fitzgerald uses Nick's point of view as an observer to make the reader question Gatsby through the lingering rumours, although exaggerated, of fraud and corruption at the party. Examples of this include claims that "he's a bootlegger" and "the second cousin to the devil". The combination of Nick's insecurities and the viciousness of these rumours cause the audience to re-evaluate whether Gatsby is really the beacon of hope described by Nick. Fitzgerald's masterful use of narrator point of view in harmony with the events of the novel acts as a warning to the reader not to fall for Gatsby's perceived kindness as Nick has, suggesting that he is not the great person he is depicted to be.

While Gatsby may be rolling in riches, the way he got there and his actions prove that he is morally bankrupt. The discovery that he earned his money via illegal methods confirms Nick and the reader's suspicion that there was "something sinister about him", undermining Gatsby's so-called greatness. After much speculation of his business partner Meyer Wolfsheimer being involved in the fixing of the 1919 World Series, Gatsby's rival Tom calls him out during their confrontation in chapter 7. He reveals that the drug stores that Gatsby apparently made legitimate money from were in fact a front for bootlegging. Tom stated "I picked him for a bootlegger from the first time I saw him and I wasn't wrong." The use of a double negative creates a firmer assertion of this statement being true, emphasising Tom's confidence. This contrasts with the usual mystery related to Gatsby, shattering his narrative of being an honest man born into old money. In chapter 4 Gatsby claims to be "the son of some wealthy people in the Middle West" and that he was "educated at Oxford" among others. Tom, already doubtful, later confirmed that these claims were fabrications. Furthermore, Tom revealed these indiscretions and fabrications in the presence of Daisy who was the object of Gatsby's affections, presenting a major setback to Gatsby's grand delusion of winning her. This is less than ideal for Gatsby because as he put it, "her voice is full of money" and therefore he not only loses Daisy's trust but also loses value in her eyes as lower class. As a final insult, Tom even allows Gatsby to drive alone with Daisy in triumphant arrogance after this conflict, safe in the knowledge that Gatsby is no longer a threat. The revelation of Gatsby's money laundering shows how his endless ambition has turned into corruption, revealing his evident lack of moral greatness.

Further evidence of Gatsby's questionable morality comes at the climax of action in *The Great Gatsby*, when Myrtle is run over and killed by Daisy with Gatsby at her side. After finding himself at the point of no return with his commitment to Daisy, Gatsby plunges deeper into his now corrupted dream by helping Daisy flee the scene as an accomplice to the hit and run. Fitzgerald uses symbolism to underline the significance of this moment by reintroducing the colour green via Michaelis' description of the coupe. At many points during the novel Gatsby gazes across the water at the green light on Daisy's jetty, imaging the past he wishes to relive. The colour green is used as a symbol of both Gatsby's dreams and his demise. This symbolic moment confirms Gatsby's decline and death at the hands of George Wilson. Similarly to the confrontation with Tom, many will feel as though he was unfortunate to meet this fate, including Nick himself. However, Fitzgerald's writing also provokes outrage at Gatsby's decision to continue his pursuit of the ever fading dream, even if it meant being an accessory to murder. From here onwards, it is impossible for Gatsby to fulfill his American Dream while Daisy and Tom will inevitably succeed, reinforcing the theme of class barriers that he could never overcome. In this scene, we can see that Gatsby's overambition in

achieving his grand dreams caused him to lose his sense of morality and drove him to corruption and horrible acts.

*The Great Gatsby* effectively utilises narrator point of view to reveal the immoral acts that underlie Gatsby's facade of great kindness to the reader despite Nick himself falling for this deceitful trap. By juxtaposing Nick's positive bias with the reality of actual events, Fitzgerald reveals that Gatsby is a criminal, a liar and willing to be an accessory to murder in pursuit of his great delusion. This 'undying' pursuit of Daisy ultimately led to his death, which ties in to the theme of the American Dream's elusive nature. The clear lack of ethics expressed in his quest to achieve his distorted desires show that in the course of the novel he has become a delusional wreck of a human whose boundless ambition corrupted his moral values. Through disparities in Gatsby's words and actions, F. Scott Fitzgerald reveals that he is not the enigmatic and charming nobility portrayed by Nick, and proves that Gatsby most certainly is not 'great'.