AQA English Literature A-level

The Great Gatsby: Character Profiles

Daisy Buchanan

DAISY - THE LOVE INTEREST

OVERVIEW

Daisy is the eponymous character's love interest and the narrator's cousin. Daisy was born in Louisville and hails from 'Old Money'. She lives in East Egg with her husband, Tom Buchanan. During the First World War she meets Jay Gatsby, at that time a military officer stationed near her home. Gatsby did not reveal his **true background** and **claimed** to be from a wealthy family. While Gatsby went off to the war, she **promised** to wait for him but married Tom Bucahan instead. Devastated by the news but equally hopeful that he and Daisy could be together, Gatsby engages in illicit business deals to make his life financially compatible for Daisy's tastes. Daisy, while in awe of Gatsby's **commitment**, is **afraid** to leave the **stable life** that she knows with Tom. When she allows Gatsby to take the **blame** for Myrtle's death for which she is **responsible** and leaves town with Tom instead of attending the funeral, her **true nature** is exposed. She is not the **embodiment** of **charm**, **grace** and **sophistication** she appears to be; instead she is **selfish**, **careless**, **fickle** and **shallow**. Her **perfect facade** has, by the novel's denouement, completely disintegrated.

Daisy's character is based on Fitzgerald's wife, Zelda. Both Daisy and Zelda enjoy **wealth** and **material comforts**. Daisy conforms to the old-fashioned Southern model of femininity, common to the geographic area which she comes from.

CONTEXT

Gender and the 1920s:

In 1920, the 19th amendment was passed which gave women the right to vote. Though this legally afforded more opportunities for women, their role remained relatively unchanged. Women were still **expected** to get married and have children and remain in the domestic sphere.

1920s America is referred to as the **'Roaring Twenties'**: the age of jazz, of Prohibition but liquor in great quantities, regardless, and of the flapper: a woman with a bob and painted lips, found on the dance floor doing the Charleston. Flappers **flouted the rules of respectable womanhood** - they drank, smoked and 'petted' with multiple men. Their bob, short skirts and sheer stockings signalled their **emancipation**.

The emancipated behaviours of the flappers were a **direct reaction** to biological deterministic ideas around femaleness and motherhood, expectations of chastity and purity, and ideas about the private sphere being women's natural sphere. According to historian Gordon A. Craig, the **First World War [had] weakened old orthodoxies and authorities** [...] One result of this was a profound change in manners and morals that made a freer and less restrained society". While

the First World War may have enabled the figure of the flapper to emerge, conservative gendered ideas still persisted. Jordan, Daisy and Myrtle exist in this very contradictory time.

Jordan is the novel's flapper representative and is portrayed as almost masculine - Nick uses terms such as as **"erect"** and **"like a young cadet"** (Chapter 1) when describing her. Jordan is also pursuing a career as a professional golfer, which adds to our image of her as a 'New Woman', someone who resists old gender expectations. Daisy, her cousin, is more **traditionally feminine**, and this is indicated in advance by her name (Jordan's name, in contrast, is gender-ambiguous). Fitzgerald uses colour symbolism throughout *The Great Gatsby* and Daisy's character is no exception to this. The colour white is used 49 times in relation to Daisy, to signal her (outward) purity as well as her ethereality and wealth. Unlike Jordan, Daisy is a wife and a mother. Her delicate appearance together with the traditional role she has accepted for herself signal that she does not outwardly subvert **gender expectations**. Nick also sets apart Daisy from her society peers:

"They moved with a fast crowd, all of them young and rich and wild, but she [Daisy] came out with an absolutely perfect reputation. Perhaps because she doesn't drink." (Chapter 4).

It seems that Daisy is the perfect pure woman, a seeming island of purity in a sea of debauchery. Nevertheless, Linn Karlsson argues, if Daisy does not reflect the New Woman in her actions, she does in her thoughts, and this is signalled by her cynicism about her role and her daughter's future role. When Daisy says she hopes her daughter will be **"a beautiful little fool"** because **"that's the best thing a girl can be in this world"**, this signals "she has realized that she, like all women, is just a pawn in the game", a trophy to be desired. The **gender contradictions** inherent in American society in the time the novel is set have their counterpart in Daisy's **outward submissiveness** versus her **inner cynicism**.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Beautiful and Charming:

Daisy's name captures her key attributes: she is delicate and decorative. This is also revealed by her attire when she first meet her: her white dress **"rippl[es] and flutter[s] as if [it] had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house"** (Chapter 1). Daisy can afford to be airborne - wealthy enough to have her child taken care of by a nurse, her only role is to be a trophy for Tom - a trophy that Gatsby will attempt to snatch. Daisy's beauty and charm is what makes her the central female character. Nick is so **captivated** by her that for a while, her **exquisite beauty** appears to **mask** her essential lack of character and her reluctance to take any **responsibility for her life and her actions** (she marries Tom because it is convenient and fitting, she lets Gatsby pay the price for her manslaughter of Myrtle).

Strikingly, though we have a clear sense of Daisy's charm and of her surroundings and her dress, we rarely get a sense of her physical appearance: her features or body. This contrasts

with Jordan, whom is immediately described as having an **"erect carriage", "grey sun-strained eyes"** and being **"slender [and] small-breasted"** (Chapter 1). It seems that Daisy's charm lies as much - or more - in her **mythology** than in her **physical persona**. Daisy is surrounded by an **aura of wealth** and this manifests in her **"low, thrilling", "glowing and singing"** voice (Chapter 1), which Nick is struck by but only works out the secret to later:

"Then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too [...] (I've heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean towards her, an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming)" (Chapter 1)

Later, Gatsby points out **"suddenly" "'Her voice is full of money,'"** and it is then it clicks for Nick. Therein, he realises, lies its **"inexhaustible charm [...] the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it…"** (Chapter 7)

Fitzgerald employs pathetic fallacy to suggest how people feel about Daisy; even the sun adores her face:

"The last of the sunshine fell upon her glowing face with romantic affection"

Daisy's mythology is one of **money, purity and ease**. Her childhood is white and golden - **"'Our white girlhood was passed together there. Our beautiful white…"** (Chapter 1) **/ "High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl…."** (Chapter 7) - and her **"world"** is **"redolent of orchids and pleasant".** It is **to these associations that people are attracted**, rather than to Daisy's actual characteristics: passive, cynical and charming but superficial.

Artificial:

The fact that she seems to **stutter** frequently appears **playful** but also suggests her to be a constant **performer** as she acts out her responses:

"I'm p-paralyzed with happiness" (Chapter 1)

"Then from the living-room I heard a sort of choking murmur and part of a laugh, followed by Daisy's voice on a clear artificial note: 'I certainly am awfully glad to see you again.'" (Chapter 5)

Nick catches onto Daisy's **artificiality** here; she appears to be in **performance mode** all the time when around other people. Later, he repeats the word: **"Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids".** Daisy's prioritisation of beauty means she buries her head in the sand to the grim reality of life - which is made clearest by the Valley of Ashes - and this makes her artificial.

Daisy's maiden surname - Fay - evokes **fairylike connotations**, associating her with **romantic supernaturalism**, rising above the realistic. Gatsby also idealises her, projecting onto her and

ignoring her true nature. The innocence that is projected onto Daisy - which she herself encourages with her reminiscences about her **"white girlhood"** as well as through her self-presentation **"She dressed in white and had a little white roadster"** (Chapter 1) **-** is an illusion that is shattered by the end of the novel. …

An alternative reading of the excessive reference to white with regards to Daisy is the **emptiness** and **void** in her life, as opposed to the supposed **purity**. The white could be used to represent a lack of **intellectuality** and **conscience** as she conforms to the declining **moral values** of the American 1920s.

Sardonic/ Cynical:

In 1920s **patriarchal** society, Daisy appears to be very **aware** of the **dominance** of men. She understands that she cannot do much being a woman, and thus prefers not to **rebel** and attempt to hold them **accountable** for their actions, but rather remain **passive**. When describing Pammy's birth she admits that she prefers her to be **"a fool - that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool"** (Chapter 1). This quote explains most of her actions throughout the novel. She is happy to pursue her affair with Gatsby, but knows not to expect a permanent marital **status change**, nor does she **actively fight** to leave Tom for Gatsby.

This passage provides an excellent insight into Daisy's character, particularly her **relationship** with her husband - Tom. His **absence** during the birth of their daughter made her have a **desperate realisation** as he **neglects** his family whilst chasing an affair. Instead of hoping for a better world for her daughter, one in which she find a loving husband who will not **abandon** her in the same way, she wishes for her daughter to be a fool, too **ignorant** and **simple-minded** to realise the **harshness** of the **reality** she lives in. This is also a pointer towards how Daisy wishes herself to be as well - rather than face up to the fact of Tom's **infidelity**, she prefers to live **comfortably** but in denial, partaking in the **hollow extravagance both** he and American 1920s society can offer a woman like her.

Daisy looks down on West Egg's ***nouveaux riche***. Like Tom, she prefers to maintain the **status quo**, whilst mingling with the lower classes whenever she sees fit, then **"retreating back"** to her **"rich, full life"** which she has had **enough**.

Bored and privileged:

Her life of luxury seems to leave her **bored** and **dissatisfied**. In Chapter 1, Nick portrays her and Jordan as **stationary** and **buoyed** up floating **objects** in the room, which mimics her **empty** and **privileged** life: **"their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in".** This image is repeated in Chapter 7, when we see them **"l[ying] upon an enormous couch, like silver idols, weighing down their own white dresses".** In Chapter 1, Daisy asks **"helplessly", "What'll we plan? What do people plan?"** Likewise, in Chapter 7, she **"crie[s]", 'What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon, [...] and the day after that, and the next thirty years?'** While her exclamations may seem melodramatic, those of a spoiled

child, they betray the meaninglessness of her life. While Jordan is somewhat more proactive, both she and Daisy are **"silver idols",** objects without a function or purpose to be worshipped for their proximity to money and finally revealed as corrupt.

The lack of meaning in Daisy's life explains why she acts **impulsively,** as well as her acceptance of Tom's proposal, rooted as it was in her desire for her **"life [to be] shaped now, immediately— and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality"**. While vastly different from her husband in her mannerisms, Daisy shares Tom's restlessness, which is highlighted often by Fitzgerald, who makes three references to Tom's restless eyes (Chapter 1, 9).

Fickle and shallow:

Throughout the novel, Daisy is placed on a **pedestal** as this beautiful, **delicate** and popular girl who is deserving of men's love and **attention**. However, Daisy neither lives up to Gatsby's **idealised vision** of her nor **reciprocates** his **excessive** love for her. While some readers may **vilify** Daisy for toying with Gatsby's affection, others might argue Gatsby has created an idol of her and an illusion so vast she cannot help but buckle under it; it is Gatsby alone who sets himself up for a fall.

Nonetheless, Daisy is **fickle** and **shallow** in more ways than one. First of all, she promises to wait for Gatsby after their romance at Louisville when he is forced to go off to fight in the First World War, but she marries Tom instead, on the basis that **"She wanted her life shaped now, immediately...by some force - of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality"** (Chapter 8). In Chapter 7, Daisy's fickleness comes to the fore. She chooses money, status and reputation over Gatsby once again, **destroying** their love and enabling his death. She proves that people like Gatsby and Myrtle should not strive to marry above their **social standing**, and blocks their ticket to Old Money East Egg, as she kills her **challenge** and husband's lover - Myrtle - a chain of events which leads to her own lover's death, thereby maintaining the **status quo**. Although Daisy appears capable of love and affection, her **sincerity** can be questioned as she **prioritises** her security and happiness over her romantic attachment.

Her abandonment of Gatsby starts in Louisville when she metaphorically **"vanishe[s] into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby nothing"** (Chapter 8). Having the upper hand as the rich girl **pursued** by the **"penniless young man"** (Chapter 8), Daisy makes virtually no **sacrifices**: she allows Gatsby back into her life only when he is wealthy and 'Great' enough to be **worthy** of her time. Effectively, Daisy's **shallow** love for money is what forces Gatsby to take her **"under false pretences"** (Chapter 8) in Louisville, and as the **mysterious** Jay Gatsby once again in Long Island.

Daisy's love for money is made most obvious in the famous shirts scene in Gatsby's mansion in Chapter 5: **"They're such beautiful shirts," she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds. "It makes me sad because I've never seen such—such beautiful shirts before."** (Chapter 5). Her response to Gatsby's shirts invites **several readings**. Firstly, that she is

overwhelmed by this display of wealth and she cries out of self-pity after realising what she has refused. This interpretation reveals the depth of her **attachment to materialism**, inviting a view of her character as shallow. The second interpretation would simply be that Daisy is crying over the fabric. This interpretation would also lend credence to the view that Daisy is shallow - she would have to be extremely **vacuous** to respond in such a way. The third interpretation is that Daisy is simply overwhelmed by the emotion of their reunion, although her subsequent behaviour sheds doubt on this thesis. Finally, her sobs could be her reaction to her realisation of the lengths Gatsby has taken to **impress** her and grant her happiness. Nevertheless, the cynical reader can easily build a case for her shallowness based on this scene; it may well be that she is overwhelmed with regret knowing that Gatsby could have lived up to her **aesthetic expectations**.

DAISY'S VOICE:

"[She had] the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. . . . [T]here was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen," a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour" (Chapter 1)

Connections have been made between Daisy's voice and the **sirens** in Homer's *Odyssey*. Sirens are creatures who **allure** and **entrap sailors** with their attractive voices. When the sailors come close to the shores they sink their ships. Daisy's voice is representative of both her **charm** and of the **captivity of commitment**. Though Daisy comes across as **fragile** and **indifferent**, her voice, though **delicate**, holds **immense power** and **enchants** various characters throughout the novel. Arguably, the focus on the way Daisy's voice says things as opposed to what she says can be attributed to the **patriarchal gaze** of Nick (or Fitzgerald). The idea that her voice is **celebrated** for its **aesthetic value** as opposed to the messages it carries is further **symbolic** of Daisy's own **silencing**. Her voice can be **mistaken** for a powerful **optimism** - her voice has a **"singing compulsion"** and is **"glowing and singing"** (Chapter 1) - and it is through how she says things and not what she says (for she is often cynical and petulant), that she is able to **lure** other characters.

References to Daisy's voice:

Daisy's voice is additionally significant because it represents her interactions with people and the world. She uses her **charming** voice, often interspersed with smirks and giggles to **mask** her true emotions. When she follows up **cynical** comments with a laugh, her own **struggle** becomes **ambiguous**. In some ways, her voice serves as a coping mechanism for the things she has no will to change in her world. It is a charming **acceptance** of her position that enables her to continue **inhabiting** the social class and systems she prefers.

"The exhilarating ripple of her voice was a wild tonic in the rain" (Chapter 5)

"I think that voice held him most, with its fluctuating, feverish warmth, because it couldn't be over-dreamed - that voice was a deathless song." (Chapter 1)

"'She's got an indiscreet voice,' I remarked. 'It's full of—' I hesitated. 'Her voice is full of money,' he said suddenly. It was full of money—that was the inexhaustible charm that rose and fell in it, the jingle of it, the cymbals' song of it" (Chapter 7)

When Gatsby makes this comment, Nick suddenly understands the source of its **dangerous mystique**. **Affluence** echoes in Daisy's voice. Both Gatsby and Nick agree that they are able to **discern** her social standing from the **musical quality** of her voice. The reference to **"jingle"** and **"cymbals' song"** only seeks to further the **wealthy romanticization** of her voice; while it **denotes money,** it is not the cheap **rattle of coins** but a **song**. However, what is more important is the **learned** nature of Daisy's voice - it is a type of **social performance**. We see this clearly in Chapter 1, when Nick admits he has **"heard it said that Daisy's murmur was only to make people lean toward her"**; revealing her calculated control of it. Daisy's **old money status** has been subsumed into her voice. Like Daisy's awareness of Gatsby's wealth in the shirts scene in Chapter 5 after touring his mansion, he too is very much aware of her **old money persona** which is characterised not only by her name and **appearance** but by her voice too. Nick even ventures as far as to say, **"I think that voice held him most"** (Chapter 5). This further leads the reader to doubt the **veracity** of his love for her - is he in love with her, or simply obliquely in love with money?

RELATIONSHIP WITH GATSBY ***[see Character Profiles: Jay Gatsby]***

RELATIONSHIP WITH TOM

Tom and Daisy married in in the wake of WWI, in 1919. They both come from wealthy families and are members of the *Old Money* class who live in East Egg. Daisy's marriage to Tom is **symbolic** of her commitment to **material pleasures and comforts** and to the social order - with Tom, her reputation and place among East Egg society is assured, for he is her perfect 'old money' match. Whether there is any affection or love in their marriage is unclear. Tom insists in Chapter 7, **"Daisy loved me when she married me and she loves me now.'"** However, the reader is privy to a scene prior to their marriage, when Daisy - otherwise teetotal - gets drunk in a bathtub and **"crie[s] and crie[s]"**, insisting **"'Daisy's change' her mine!'".** Nevertheless, the next day she marries him **"without so much as a shiver"** (Chapter 4)**:** a stoic attitude to save face, perhaps**.** The apparent lack of love in their marriage is also reflected in their **lack of guilt** when engaged in extramarital affairs. Their relationship is one of convenience. Their roles within the relationship are very **polarised** traditional ones, with Tom dominating. This is despite the context of **gender subversion** in post-War America, best represented by Daisy's single, career-woman cousin. Tom and Daisy's marriage solidly **preserves** social and class harmony.

From the very first introduction to the couple in the novel, their **carelessness** and distance is highlighted. Nicks says of them: **"They had spent a year in France, for no particular reason,**

and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together" (Chapter 1). In this way their relationship is revealed as one that lacks **purpose;** we can gather they are not satisfied with each other alone, but look for external purpose or diversion. When Nick visits Daisy, she pulls him aside and confides in him about her boredom and (lack of) hope for Pammy. This **dissonance** between what Daisy says and what she feels becomes apparent here. Nick states: **"The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said"** (Chapter 1). This comment makes it difficult to **trust** her remarks for the rest of the novel. Nick's observation of her insincerity makes him **"uneasy"** and when she smirks at him in response, Nicks describes it as **"if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged"**. This is indicative of the fact that Daisy is **content** with Tom and the **"secret society"** they occupy despite the fact that she is unhappy with him.

To escape the problems in their marriage, Tom and Daisy engage in extramarital affairs. Tom pursues Myrtle and Daisy leads Gatsby on. The **gulf** between them increases as they publicly and **unashamedly** give their affection to others. In Chapter 7, at the Plaza Hotel, Gatsby **forces** Daisy to admit her feelings for him to leave Tom. Though she begins professing her love for Gatsby she does not **discard** her love for Tom and professes: **"I did love [Tom] once but I loved you too!"** (Chapter 7). Tom persistently attempts to help Daisy remember their **happy memories** and eventually she realises that within their **dysfunctional relationship**, it is through Tom she can find comfort, as they occupy the same **world**.

Their **convenient togetherness** is affirmed after Myrtle's death when she and Tom stick firmly together to **protect** themselves from the **consequences** of Daisy murdering Myrtle.

The Buchanan's attempts to **preserve their union** makes their marriage a symbol of their **exclusive membership** to the world of old money. The idea that their **toxic** relationship defeats Gatby's **relentless affection** and commitment shows the **dominance and longevity** of the old money class. Ultimately, **class trumps love**.

DAISY AND OTHER FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL

	PARALLELS	CONTRASTS
Myrtle	Both Daisy and Myrtle are **trapped** in unhappy relationships. They escape this through engaging in extramarital **affairs**. Daisy is held captive by her traditions and status and Myrtle is held **captive** by her poverty.	Daisy **passively** accepts her conditions and is **cynical** about changing her immediate situations. Myrtle is more **optimistic** and **actively** pursues Tom to taste economic **freedom**. Note the **vitality** of Myrtle vs. the complete stationary and unmoving nature of Daisy in most scenes. Daisy is in some

		ways Myrtle's foil - Myrtle is overtly sexual whereas Daisy appears pure and almost childlike, dressed in ethereal white and seemingly devoid of any sexuality. Myrtle threatens social norms, sexual mores and patriarchal values, while Daisy conforms to them. On the outside, therefore, Daisy is the typical 'good girl' and Myrtle the 'bad girl' (see Linn Karlsson's thesis for a more developed discussion of this).
Jordan	Daisy and Jordan both come from **old wealth**. Daisy considers divorce and Jordan mentions an engagement to Nick. Daisy is **dependent** on Tom and Jordan is dependent on her wealthy aunt. They do not **control** their own finances. They **perform** a lifestyle of freedom and Jordan performs resistance, but both are ultimately decorative personas without any real social role. This is highlighted by their twin-like appearance in Chapters 1 and 7: **"They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering" "Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols, weighing down their own white dresses [...] 'We can't move,' they said together"**	Daisy is more **conservative** (married and with a child) while Jordan is an **independent** woman (playing golf and unmarried). Jordan is outwardly boyish - she is described using words such as **"erect"** and **"cadet"** - whereas Daisy is seemingly a lot more gender conforming.

KEY QUOTES

1	**"The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women [Jordan and Daisy] were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house."** (Chapter 1)

7	**“The room, shadowed well with awnings, was dark and cool. Daisy and Jordan lay upon an enormous couch, like silver idols, weighing down their own white dresses against the singing breeze of the fans. ‘We can’t move,’ they said together.”** (Chapter 7) Our introduction to Daisy and Jordan reveals a **life of leisure.** Unlike Wilson, who has become one with his grey Valley of Ashes environment, Jordan and Daisy are buoyant here - not anchored to the ground. This buoyancy or weightlessness reflects their lack of responsibilities. The repetition of this image in Chapter 7 shows that Nick / Fitzgerald really wants the reader to establish the association between Jordan and Daisy and weightlessness. The phrase **silver idols** in the second quote summarises Nick’s position on Daisy: she is rich, is worshipped by Gatsby and has been worshipped by many men in her time, but is ultimately worthless - not a (fallible) god like Gatsby but a **false idol.**
1	**"She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool."** (Chapter 1) This quote follows Daisy's recollection of the time when she gave birth to her daughter and Tom was **"God knows where"**. She cries when she finds out it's a girl and stating that she hopes **"she'll be a fool"** shows that Daisy is aware of the **unequal power** relations between men and women but has little desire to change them. Daisy is not an advocate for **change** but an advocate of **tradition**. In the same scene she also complains to Nick about her relationship with Tom but follows her comments with a **"smirk"** which confuses Nick as she appears **ingenuine** and her comments consequently become **ambiguous**. Is she really that cynical or just affecting cynicism as a pretence? She is **unhappily** married but accepts the union as **security** for her social class.
5	**"There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams -- not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart."** (Chapter 5)

	Gatsby places Daisy on a **pedestal** through his dreams and **fantasising**, so that she transformed into a **concept** rather than a **real** being. This makes it almost **impossible** for Daisy to live up to the **dream-like** person Gatsby dreams her to be. Although he **glorifies** her, he also **reduces** her to something **fairytalesque** and **unrealistic**, which is another kind of **dehumanisation**. Daisy cannot compete with the **perfect** polished version created in Gatsby's mind. In his obsession with the **past**, Gatsby loses the real Daisy and himself as he lives in an **unproductive stalemate**.
6	**"'I wonder where in the devil he met Daisy. By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me. They meet all kinds of crazy fish'…Tom was evidently perturbed at Daisy's running around alone, for on the following Saturday night he came with her to Gatsby's party. Perhaps his presence gave the evening its peculiar quality of oppressiveness—it stands out in my memory from Gatsby's other parties that summer. There were the same people, or at least the same sort of people, the same profusion of champagne, the same many-colored, many-keyed commotion, but I felt an unpleasantness in the air, a pervading harshness that hadn't been there before."** (Chapter 6) Although initially Tom appears **nonchalant** when Gatsby tells him he knows Daisy, here he admits his true feelings about Daisy knowing other men. The gay atmosphere of the party indicates a possible **threat** to someone of Tom's social standing. He manages to weigh down the mood with his presence and keep Daisy on a leash, hence the references to the **"oppressiveness", "unpleasantness"** and **"harshness"** throughout the evening. Tom's **controlling** nature reflects the general **patriarchal oppression** women felt despite their supposed **freedom** during the Jazz Age. This period was assumed to be a time of **fun**, **hedonism** and **freedom**, but this appears to be a **facade** which masks the endurance of patriarchal oppression.
7	**"Oh, you want too much!' she cried to Gasby. 'I love you now - isn't that enough? I can't help what's past.' She began to sob helplessly. 'I did love him once - but I loved you too.'"** (Chapter 7) Daisy simply pays no attention to the past. Her actions are **unpredictable** and Gatsby himself admits that she was **"all excited"** when she chooses Tom (a term that seems rather **infantilising**). Daisy's ability to face her present **reality** is what allows her to pursue the **opportunistic** affair with Gatsby, providing her with **temporary satisfaction** as she knows she is not bound by her actions. This

	contrasts with Myrtle's **impulsive pursuit** of an affair with Tom, as time for Myrtle acts as an **object of fear**, as she is afraid of living a **wasted** life like her husband, trapped in the Valley of Ashes and its **decaying effect** on her **dreams** and **aspirations**.
7	**"They weren't happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture, and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together."** (Chapter 7) The contrast and negation of the words 'happy' and 'unhappy' shows how **social security** is a **selfish middle-way** that provides **sustainability** and endurance to Buchanan's marriage and successfully destroys Daisy and Gatsby's relationship. Money and social status do not guarantee the Buchanans happiness, as they both search for love or pleasure in their extra-marital affairs, but provides an **anchor** which they **"retreat"** to after acquiring or temporarily **indulging** in their desires.
8	**"Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes"** (Chapter 8) The use of music as a metaphor for Daisy's **affluent** life serves as a direct parallel to the lifestyle of many in American society during the Jazz Age: superficial, snobbish, sad but equally pleasant and cheerful. Nick's frequent association of Daisy with **nature** (signified by her floral name) and **musicality** (her voice), indicates her natural beauty. She is attractive in more ways than one and manages to capture the heart of Gatsby. Nevertheless, despite her natural associations, both she and her world are judged as **artificial** by Nick, toning down this otherwise romantic description. **"She wanted her life shaped now, immediately— and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand."** (Chapter 8) This quote **showcases Daisy's passivity.** Rather than deciding to shape her life herself, she waits for it to be shaped, and she is not fussy about the nature of the force. That love, money and practicality are all equally acceptable (or discardable) to her reveals her **lack of moral principles** and foreshadows her actions at the end of the novel, when she abandons Gatsby in favour of comfort.

10	**"They were careless people, Tom and Daisy - they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made"** (Chapter 9) Nick's final description of the Buchanans is similar to his initial description of them, as a unit who moved together with **indifference**. Nick's harsh assessment points to the Buchanan's social position which allows them such a **careless lifestyle**, wreaking havoc without facing any serious consequences. Nick appears to **condemn** their treatment of other people, treating them as merely **"things and creatures"** which **reduces** the lower classes to subhumans or objects (note the **dehumanising word "creatures"** as a substitute for "humans", which reflects the couple's lack of humanity towards people outside their social circle). The Buchanans' behaviour causes Nick to question the **justice system** and **morality** of American 1920s society. The **selfishness** of acquiring or maintaining **wealth** is what makes this generation 'lost'. This final **damning assessment** of the Buchanans violently destroys any illusions we may have had about Daisy. Far from a delicate, ethereal creature, her actions and their repercussions are brutal.