***The Great Gatsby* Review Packet**

**Part A: Motifs of the 1920s**

In literature a *motif* is any recurring element that has symbolic significance. In *The Great Gatsby* many of the important motifs are features characteristic of the 1920s “Jazz Age.” In the following passages, look for these features common to the 1920s. (If you don’t know what a term means, look it up.)

* Conspicuous consumption
* Flouting of the Prohibition laws
* Modernity
* Superficiality

In a few sentences explain which 1920s motif(s) each passage represents. (There may be more than one 1920s characteristic in each passage.)

1. Introduction to Tom and Myrtle’s apartment (p. 33–41)
2. The character of Gatsby’s parties (p. 43–46)
3. Daisy’s introduction to Gatsby’s house (bottom p. 95–top p. 98)
4. Tom & Daisy’s departure (p. 172)

**Part B: Symbolism of Dr. T.J. Eckleberg’s Eyes**

The advertisement outside Wilson’s garage is an image that the author keeps returning to in a way that seems to suggest it is symbolic. Different scholars have interpreted this symbol in different ways. Listed below are three passages where this symbol comes up in *The Great Gatsby*, followed by three corresponding interpretations of the symbol. For each interpretation think of other details from the story that connect to the symbol’s interpretation.

**Passage 1:** Read from page 27 (the second paragraph) to the top of page 28, paying attention to the description of the watchful eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg.

Scholar A: The giant eyes represent a watcher who is sightless and indifferent to the sufferings of this world. His “blue and gigantic” eyes “brood on over the solemn dumping ground” of the valley of ashes and yet he sees nothing. His eyes *parallel the behavior of the characters in the novel, most of whom see only what they want to see*..

List at least three other parts of *The Great Gatsby* where characters see only what they want to see:

**Passage 2:** Read from the bottom of page 130 (at “The relentless beating heat”) and most of page 131, paying attention to the description of the watchful eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg.

Scholar B: The giant eyes represent the importance of how we see things. Characters like Nick and Gatsby are trying to focus their vision and build up a personal image of what life really means for them. But this is made difficult by the fact that they are *living in the land of the morally blind*. So many characters are mixed up and confused—they *design their own reality, they make up gossip, misread others, even misread themselves, and they lie or betray each other*.

List at least three other parts of the story where characters are morally blind:

**Passage 3:** Read from page 167 (from midway down the page at “Wilson’s glazed eyes”) to the top of page 168, paying attention to the description of the watchful eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg.

Scholar C: The fact that George Wilson looks up at the eyes of a billboard and sees God suggests that perhaps *the new God in American society is indeed commerce and spending*.

List at least three other parts of the story where people act like commerce and spending is their God:

**Part C: Reflection Questions**

1. Why is the book titled *The Great Gatsby*? Do you think the title is sincere or ironic?
2. Are any of the characters likeable?
3. Did Daisy's ultimate choice between Gatsby and Tom surprise you? Is it consistent with her character?
4. In what ways do the events of the novel affect Nick? Why did Nick break off his relationship with Jordan? Why did Nick leave the East and move back to the Midwest?
5. Do you agree with Nick's assertion that Gatsby is worth as much as all the other characters put together (p. 162)? Why or why not?
6. Contrast the number of people at Gatsby’s parties to the number of people who attend his funeral. Who went to the funeral? What does this say about the people from his parties?
7. Do you think Gatsby represents the American dream? Is he successful?
8. Think of a time when you dreamed of getting something (an object, an award, a job, even a boyfriend/girlfriend). How can the attainment of the goal be less satisfying than the pursuit of the goal? Is it worth it in the end?
9. What messages can we learn from the characters in this book?
10. Does the novel critique or uphold the values of the Jazz Age ?