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Book Cover Design Explanation

When *The Great Gatsby* was published in 1925, it was not the big hit Fitzgerald thought that it would be. Today however, it is known to be one of the greatest American novels ever written. Although people feel that way about the novel itself they feel differently about the novel’s cover art. Francis Cugat’s representation of the book through his work is seen as irrelevant to the main themes of the book themselves and I agree. I see the book cover in a different way.

The book is centered around Jay Gatsby so I felt very strongly about him being included on the cover. Gatsby is featured on the cover in a stance that makes him look as though he is debating an important decision. I thought that this was important to include because he is always thinking of new ways to impress people, especially Daisy, and ways to become more successful. I chose to make Gatsby a silhouette for two reasons. The first reason I made this choice is because you cannot make out a silhouette to be one single person so in all reality you do not actually know who the person is until you dig deeper. Gatsby is perfectly represented by a silhouette for the same reasons Nick Carraway never truly knows Gatsby until he digs into his past. The second reason I chose to symbolize Gatsby with a silhouette is through a deeper understanding of the book. Gatsby is the center focus of the book however; he isn’t the only person with a struggle in the book. Nick Carraway for example throughout the entire novel struggles to fit into the life of New York and loses himself in the hustle and bustle of the everyday city life.

Another item depicted in my vision of the cover is the skyline of New York City. I chose to include this not only because the book is set in the city of New York, but also because it symbolizes the scandal that comes with living in the city. City life for all of the former Midwest characters in this book seem to have corrupted the morals set in them before they moved to find the American dream. I feel like that in itself is one of the main ideas of the book and should be included on the cover. Included in the skyline is a moon in a shade of green that I feel represents the green light. The moon itself symbolizes the night life of Gatsby and the parties he brings to West Egg. Also I included the moon because the moon seems so close to us here on Earth, but in reality is thousands of miles away. I feel that in including the moon it fully represents Gatsby striving for the “American Dream” and never quite reaching it. I made the moon a shade of green to signify the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock for the same reason; Daisy is so close to Gatsby’s reach yet he cannot seem to ever fully obtain her.

Lastly, I included Gatsby’s yellow coupe. I included the coupe because I feel it symbolizes two things. Firstly to me it symbolizes the glitz and glamor of the 1920s and Gatsby’s life. Secondly, it symbolizes scandal as well. In the novel Myrtle Wilson is hit by Gatsby’s yellow coupe however, the person responsible is never brought to justice.

I did not include symbols that represented alcohol and parties for one main reason. Many people see this book without reading it as a book about a man who hosts wild parties. This may be true, but the book is much more intellectual and as the creator of the cover art I would not want to miss lead the readers.

The original cover art is one person’s idea of the book and this is mine. I included these symbols because I feel that they better represent the book than the original cover. Everyone has a differing opinion about the way all book covers are made this book just may be one of the most controversial in all of American literature’s history.