

#flo #ret #incomplete #hw

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## 1 | passing project!

prompts Write a 4 page paper in which you discuss the idea of "passing" in relation to the following texts: The Great Gatsby and Passing. Your essay should have a clear claim in which you define how you are interpreting the concept of "passing" and how it relates to the two works you are comparing. You can define "passing" in terms of race, class, the American Dream, sexuality, the role of the narrator, geography, etc. Be sure that the comparison between the two texts is justified and makes sense. Throughout your discussion, use evidence from the texts and analyze that evidence to support your assertions. If you are looking for ways to stretch your writing, you may use literary criticism (secondary sources) if you wish, but you do not have to.

### 1.1 | rough idea

compare contrast!

- compare:
  - both have unreliable narrator

lose perspective -> unreliable narrator

"living in the divide"

we are unsure, just like the characters - contrast: - told you can, but can't :: gatsby, social class - told you can't, but can :: passing, race

### 1.2 | outlinin

unreliable narrator

even though, nature is opposite

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- p1: unreliable narrator
- p2: gatsby social class
- p3: passing race

~thesis?

### 1.3 | comin back!

thesis: passing is opposite in TGG and passing, yet both have the same result: an unreliable narrator

## 1.4 | qoute bin

- p1:
  - society tells you that you can pass social classes – this is the american dream
    - \* "He had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third. After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence. He had been full of the idea so long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, so to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity. Now, in the reaction, he was running down like an overwound clock." 71
    - \* "It passed, and he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undesperingly, toward that lost voice across the room." 103
    - \* "He had come a long way to this blue lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.  
Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther...And one fine morning — So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." 138
  - **gatsby's schedule**
    - but you can't pass social classes
- p2:
  - society tells you that you can't pass
    - \* "If I knew that, I'd know w<sup>hat</sup> race is."
  - but you can!
- p3:
  - gatsby
  - "one of the few honest people I have ever known" (3.171)
  - "inclined to reserve all judgments" but judges the shit out of peolpe

### 1.4.1 | outlining timeline

- intro: thesis
- p1: in TGG, society tells you that you can pass but you can't
- p2: in passing, society tells you that you can't pass but you can
- p3: these both manifest in the same way: an unreliable narrator
- conclusion

Even gatsby himself is an outsider, never truly joining the ranks of the elite despite his massive wealth. ends up dying?

## 1.5 | writing time

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald and *Passing* by Nella Larsen both explore the concept of passing, though in different realms. INTRO The nature of passing is opposite in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Nella Larsen's *Passing*, yet in both novels, passing manifests itself in the creation of an unreliable narrator.

In the world of *The Great Gatsby*, passing is a false promise: the society tells its members that they can pass, but they cannot. Fitzgerald constructs an intricate world set during the Roaring Twenties, a time where the pursuit of and belief in the American Dream was more widespread than ever. Here, the American Dream – and the concept of passing – center around the construct of social class. To pass in *The Great Gatsby* is to transcend one's social class, something promised by the American Dream if one put in sufficient effort. This pursuit of the American Dream through hard work is perhaps most evident in Gatsby's revered schedule:

Rise from bed	6.00	A.M.
Dumbbell exercise and wall-scaling	6.15–6.30	"
Study electricity, etc	7.15–8.15	"
Work	8.30–4.30	P.M.
Baseball and sports	4.30–5.00	"
Practice elocution, poise and how to attain it	5.00–6.00	"
Study needed inventions	7.00–9.00	"

### GENERAL RESOLVES

No wasting time at Shalters or [a name, indecipherable]  
 No more smokeing or chewing  
 Bath every other day  
 Read one improving book or magazine per week  
 Save \$5.00 [crossed out] \$3.00 per week  
 Be better to parents (Fitzgerald 131)

This schedule is even said to "show you" Gatsby's "big future in front of him," and how he was "bound to get ahead" – or, pass (Fitzgerald 132). However, this societal promise of passing that Fitzgerald's characters hold so dear is ultimately shown to be a lie. Even Gatsby never truly joins the ranks of the elite, instead acting as a mysterious outsider surrounded by rumors. He is such an outcast that skepticism of his facade is taken "for granted" (Fitzgerald 37). In the end, despite all his hard work towards passing, Gatsby is left with nothing but a "dead dream [...] trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily" (Fitzgerald 103). Myrtle Wilson has a similar fate, trying desperately to pass only to be struck dead due to her dream itself. The book concludes with the words "so we beat on," despite passing constantly "elud[ing] us" (Fitzgerald 138). Here, Nick uses the word "we" to refer to the characters in the novel, but Fitzgerald uses the word "we" to refer to the reader and American society at large, claiming that this false promise of passing operates at a societal level – in and out of the world of fiction.

Conversely, in Nella Larsen's *Passing*, the society tells its members that they cannot pass even though they can. The societal view of race – one not held by our protagonists – is that it is constant, discrete, and unchanging. Membership in a race is binary, something that one can "draw the line at" due to "one or two per cent" (Larsen 29). This societal view of passing across race is opposite the societal view of passing across social class in *The Great Gatsby*, where passing is at the core of the cultural zeitgeist.