Close Reading Chapter 8 Skill Focus: Symbolism

There was a faint, barely perceptible movement of the water as the fresh flow from one end urged its way toward the drain at the other with little ripples that were hardly the shadows of waves, the laden mattress moved irregularly down the pool. A small gust of wind that scarcely corrugated the surface was enough to disturb its accidental course with its accidental burden. The touch of a cluster of leaves revolved it slowly, tracing, like the leg of compass, a thin red circle in the water.

1. What does water typically symbolize?
2. What is Fitzgerald’s purpose in having Gatsby die in a pool?
3. What does a circle symbolize? How is the circle of red being used metaphorically here?

Chapter 8 Response: Compare and contrast Gatsby’s death with Myrtle’s in symbolism and tone. ­­­

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Close Reading Chapter 9
Skill Focus: Theme
And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby’s wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock. 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 — to-morrow 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.

1. Look at the dashes in this passage. What is tone is suggested through their use?

2. Explain the significance of the last line of the book: ―So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

Think about it in relation to the theme of time and to the idea of the American Dream.

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