The Automobile in the 1920s

One important symbol in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby is the automobile. It represents the reckless convictions of the flapper society. At the beginning of the novel, the reader hears Nick's account of a party where a car wrecks and chaos abounds. Further into the work, Daisy manipulates the automobile to serve her purpose--to escape from Tom and Gatsby. As a result of her careless behavior, Myrtle Wilson dies. Myrtle, too, is reckless. Running in front of a moving vehicle that takes many feet of road to stop because it lacks our anti-lock, power brakes, Myrtle suffers the consequences of her irresponsibility. Daisy, as the driver of the automobile, does not suffer the consequences of her behavior. She hides behind Gatsby, knowing that she does not love him enough to make such a sacrifice for him. The automobile was a dangerous weapon in the hands of carefree, irresponsible people. It still is; Fitzgerald's lesson lives on.

For more information on the automobile of the 1920s, visit these sites:

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| Chevron Gasoline | [**http://www.chevron.com/explore/history/hst\_road/index.html#1920s**](http://www.chevron.com/explore/history/hst_road/index.html) |
| 1920s Automobiles | [**http://www.detnews.com/AUTOS/9603/20/mirror/mirror.htm**](http://www.detnews.com/AUTOS/9603/20/mirror/mirror.htm) |
| The History of Ford Motor Company | [**http://www2.ford.com/**](http://www2.ford.com/) |
| Autobiographical Information--Henry Ford | [**http://www.hfmgv.org/histories/hf/henry.html**](http://www.hfmgv.org/histories/hf/henry.html) |
| Autobiographical Information--Henry Ford | [**http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve/phissite/riverrou.html**](http://www.sos.state.mi.us/history/preserve/phissite/riverrou.html) |