

THE MANIFESTATION OF SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE IN THE GREAT GATSBY (2013): PIERRE BOURDIEU'S PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Symbolic violence is a gentle, imperceptible, and invisible violence that is often maintained by dominant groups through symbols, languages, cultures, and social norms. This study investigates the manifestation of symbolic violence in *The Great Gatsby* (2013) using Bourdieu's theory of symbolic violence, focusing on concepts such as capital, habitus, field, and doxa. With a descriptive qualitative method and a multimodal critical discourse analysis approach, this study focuses on how symbolic violence is conveyed through various semiotic modes in the film, including verbal language, bodily gestures, visuals, and spatial arrangements. This study analyzes selected scenes that represent symbolic violence, focusing on six characters: Gatsby, Tom, Daisy, George, Myrtle, and Nick. The findings reveal that symbolic violence operates subtly through interactions shaped by social position and the unequal distribution of capital. Rather than being exercised by a single dominant character, symbolic violence emerges as a dynamic process where power shifts depending on who possesses dominant capital within specific social fields. These forms of symbolic violence are reinforced through the interplay of verbal, visual, gestural, and spatial elements of the film.

Keywords: *Symbolic violence, multimodal critical discourse analysis, The Great Gatsby, capital, Pierre Bourdieu, habitus*

INTRODUCTION

Violence is not a singular concept limited to acts of physical harm, but rather a multifaceted phenomenon that manifests in various forms, such as physical, psychological, and symbolic. Physical violence is considered an extreme form of aggression intended to cause severe bodily harm or even death, such as stabbing, shooting, or physical assault (Allen & Anderson, 2017). Psychological violence, on the other hand, includes verbal threats, emotional manipulation, and other behaviors that cause lasting psychological trauma (Al-Sabawy et al., 2024). Meanwhile, as Schubert stated, symbolic violence refers to how dominant groups maintain power over subordinate groups through language, cultural practices, norms, and beliefs in subtle and invisible ways (Linda, 2024). Although all of these are forms of violence, their primary difference lies in how they are carried out and perceived.

One of the most influential thinkers in shaping the concept of symbolic violence is Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist known for his insights into how hidden power operates through everyday social practices. He refers to symbolic violence as gentle, imperceptible, and invisible violence even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and recognition, or misrecognition, cognition, or even feeling (Muljadi & Angjaya, 2024). Bourdieu argues that symbolic violence is often maintained by dominant groups

through the internalization and normalization of values and practices that uphold their dominance, particularly in fields such as education, family, religion, and society at large (Fatahillah, 2019). These forms of violence operate through symbols, languages, and cultures, allowing existing hierarchies, values, and structures of authority to appear legitimate and unquestioned.

The Great Gatsby (2013) portrays how symbolic violence operates within social class relations, involving old-money elite, nouveau riche, and the working class. The central conflict arises when Gatsby, a self-made millionaire, attempts to win back Daisy Buchanan, who is now married to Tom, a member of the old-money class, like Daisy. Gatsby presents himself through a lifestyle, speech, and lies about his family background and education. However, society and elite figures such as Tom view his efforts as excessive, lacking refined taste, and merely imitating the lifestyle of the old-money elite. This form of symbolic violence emerges through social norms, habitus, language, visuals, gestures, and settings. Making it relevant to use Bourdieu's theory.

Several scholars have applied Bourdieu's theory. *Mrs. Chatterjee Vs Norway* reveals how gender, ethnicity, and institutional authority produce symbolic violence. *Ocean's 8* highlights how persuasion and manipulation function as subtle tools of domination. *Gadis Kretek* focuses on how Javanese culture, particularly patriarchal traditions. *Imperfect* shows beauty standards as instruments of symbolic violence. The *Sing* movie shows how anthropomorphic characters reproduce real-world power hierarchies, including national, gender, and class-based inequalities. These studies give a critical understanding of Bourdieu's theory in analyzing films. However, they primarily focus on the language dimension and tend to overlook other semiotic elements of films. This research seeks to address this gap by integrating MCDA to analyze not only verbal language but also visual elements, gestures, and spatial arrangements of the film. Furthermore, their analysis generally centers on how one character enacts symbolic violence upon another; this study offers a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding by exploring the more complex dynamic in which perpetrators may also become victims, and vice versa, depending on the field and symbolic capital at play.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Film Analysis

Film analysis is a critical practice that seeks to explore and interpret a film's implicit messages and intentions. According to Odin, Film analysis is the process of unveiling the truth of an artwork that coincides with its filmmaker's purposes and will (Dinanti & Nabilah, 2024). This approach is normative-evaluative, and its goal is to promote a specific way of thinking about films and creating them. Interpretation in film analysis requires identifying and prioritizing elements that stand out as interesting subjects to explore in more depth. According to Carroll, a scholar needs to determine the overall direction or tendency (generally thematic) of a film to detect the countervailing tendencies that the work aspires to mask (Pezotta, 2010).

Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis

The rise of mass media, digital platforms, and visual communication highlights the need to analyze the multiple modes in which meaning is made beyond just words. This has led to the

development of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), which extends the principles of CDA to images, gestures, spatial arrangements, and other semiotic resources. Scholars such as Kress and Leeuwen (2001) argued that meaning is constructed through the interplay of various semiotic modes, not just through language (Noviani, 2018). MCDA is particularly relevant in media analysis, advertising, political campaigns, and digital communication, where power is conveyed not only through speech but also through facial framing, sound design, and spatial positioning.

In media such as films, advertisements, and news, meaning or ideology is revealed beyond the language, but also in images, lighting, camera angles, facial expressions, and spatial arrangements, all of which subtly shape how audiences catch the facts within. In analyzing complex texts, MCDA, a critical discourse analysis method that reveals ideology and power in communication, provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how power and ideology are produced and reproduced in multimodal communication (Mayr, 2017). By analyzing verbal (text and speech), visual (images, color, camera angles), gestural (body language, facial expression), and spatial (layout and positioning) modalities, MCDA reveals how these elements collectively function to construct or reinforce social dominance or particular ideology.

Pierre Bourdieu's Concept of Symbolic Violence

Symbolic violence is a concept that examines forms of power and subtle, often unconscious acts of violence that ultimately form marginalization in social relations and maintain inequality. Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence follows a tradition of critical sociology that focuses on critiquing domination (Colaguori, 2010). It is particularly relevant in understanding how societal norms and cultural practices subtly reinforce power imbalances, making it difficult for marginalized groups to challenge or break away from their subordinate positions. His concept derives from the idea that there is a class structure in social formations, which is a set of networks that are structurally tied to each other and determine the distribution of culture, habits, and economic models.

Bourdieu highlights that symbolic violence can happen in different social arenas and social domains, such as social class, gender, or ethnic identity (Rahayu et al., 2022). For example, schools may value certain ways of speaking, behaving, or dressing that typically reflect middle- or upper-class norms. Similarly, families transmit certain worldviews, tastes, and expectations that are consistent with their class position, thereby shaping their children's habitus. Media conformity also reinforces similar violence by continually protecting idealized images of beauty, success, or intelligence that are consistent with the interests of the dominant class or culture. Those who perpetrate symbolic violence are often individuals or institutions in a position of power, whether economic, cultural, or social, who possess the authority to define what is considered normal, valuable, or proper. The victims tend to internalize these imposed values and norms, often blaming themselves for their perceived shortcomings or failures.

Bourdieu develops other interrelated concepts: *Habitus*, which refers to the resource of knowledge that is gained from a specific culture where an individual lives, leading to the common root of the classifiable practices based on their understanding of the world (Sekartaji, Dinanti & Damanik, 2023). *Capital* is a form of resource and power that individuals or groups possess. It

can be divided into Economic (money, land, factories, jobs, buildings, pictures, and ceramics), Social (contacts, social networking, and relationships), Cultural Capital (knowledge, behavior, skills, social status), and symbolic capital (Asimaki & Koustourakis, 2014). The field/arena is the entire area or process of social interaction in which the space manifests itself as actors with various capabilities that are systematically interconnected (2022). *Doxa* is a pre-verbal assumption about the world that flows from practical meaning, as well as an instant compliance relationship between habitus and field (Putri, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method. According to Creswell & Creswell, qualitative research is an inquiry process to understand how individuals or groups interpret social or human problems (Noviani, 2018). Qualitative research allows researchers to delve deeply into the intricacies of human experiences and interactions, providing a deeper understanding of how culture and social dynamics shape individual and collective behavior. This study includes five steps in collecting data, namely: (1) watching the entire film to gain an overall understanding, (2) rewatching, (3) taking notes, (4) selecting scenes that contain symbolic violence, and (5) taking screenshots of significant scenes. In terms of the technique of analyzing data, this study includes several steps, such as: (1) categorizing them based on multimodal elements (verbal, visual, gestural, and spatial), (2) analyzing the data using Pierre Bourdieu's theory, (3) interpreting to uncover the meaning conveyed, and (4) concluding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are 14 selected scenes in *The Great Gatsby* (2013), which illustrate various manifestations of symbolic violence through verbal, visual, gestural, and spatial elements.

Symbolic Violence Through Verbal Elements

Tom mocks Gatsby's appearance

Tom begins the confrontation by casually asking Gatsby about his educational background, as seen in **Dialogue 4.1**, clearly looking for an opportunity to expose a weakness. Gatsby replies that he went to Oxford, but Tom seizes this statement as a chance to ridicule him.

Tom : Mr Gatsby, I understand that you're an Oxford man.

Gatsby : No, not exactly.

Tom : Oh yes. I understand that you went to Oxford.

Gatsby : Well, yes, I went there.

Tom : Sure. ***The man in a pink suit went to Oxford***

***Dialogue 4.1: Tom questions Gatsby's educational background
(The Great Gatsby, 2013)***

While saying *The man in a pink suit went to Oxford*, he delivers it with a mocking tone, tightened voice, and a condescending smirk, eyebrows raised, displaying his intent to humiliate Gatsby in front of Daisy and the others, as seen in **Figure 4.2**. This mocking refers to Gatsby's tastelessness and social mismatch in the eyes of the old-money elite.



Figure 4.2 (minute 1:35:11) *Tom mocks Gatsby's appearance*

According to Bourdieu, taste is a key expression of habitus, a system of internalized dispositions shaped by individuals' access to different forms of capital that guide their perceptions, actions, and judgments in ways that often appear natural or self-evident (Taha et al., 2023). Though Gatsby has acquired economic capital, his choice of flashy clothing signals that he has not internalized the refined preferences of the aristocracy. This reflects deep-seated symbolic boundaries between those who are born into privilege and those who merely aspire to it. Tom's comment implies that Gatsby's entire persona is a performance, and he uses this moment to reassert the cultural superiority of his class.

Tom Degrades Gatsby's social origin

As Gatsby later claims that Daisy never loved Tom, the conversation becomes increasingly aggressive, especially when Daisy tells him to stop insulting Gatsby, as seen in **Dialogue 4.2**. Tom's insult, especially the phrase ***Mr. Nobody from nowhere***, functions as both a personal and structural erasure. It reduces Gatsby to someone lacking both geographic identity and a legitimate family background. Tom's narrowed eyes and clenched jaw, as he made this statement in **Figure 4.3**, signal the intensity of his disdain. This is not merely a romantic rivalry but a battle over class boundaries. By labeling Gatsby as a nobody, Tom symbolically excludes him from elite society.

- Tom : What kind of a row are you trying to cause in my house anyhow?
Daisy : He isn't causing a row, you're causing a row. Please have a little self-control.
Tom : Self-control? Oh, I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and ***let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere*** make love to your wife. Well, if that's the idea, you can count me out.

Dialogue 4.2: *Tom degrading Gatsby's social origin*
(The Great Gatsby, 2013)

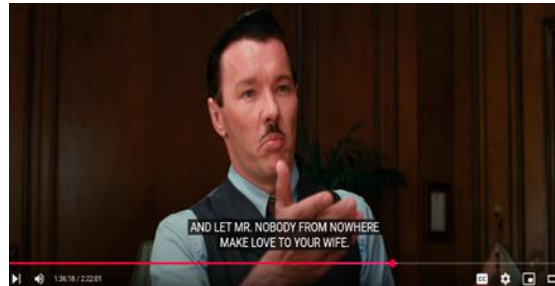


Figure 4.3 (minute: 1:36:38): *Tom degrades Gatsby's social origin*

From Bourdieu's perspective, such labeling is a potent form of symbolic violence, used to preserve existing social hierarchies. It reflects what Bourdieu calls *doxa*, a system of values accepted as natural or normal within society, often without being questioned (Putri, 2020). In this case, Tom reinforces the *doxa* that only those who come from certain backgrounds or geographic origins possess wealth that is considered pure and legitimate. As the heir of a wealthy family living in East Egg, Tom embodies this ideology, representing a class that is socially accepted as inherently deserving of prestige and respect, while newcomers like Gatsby are deemed impostors regardless of their material success. Tom is not just defending his marriage. He is defending the exclusivity of his social world.

Tom Delegitimizes Gatsby's Integrity

In **Dialogue 4.3**, Tom intensifies the attack by calling Gatsby, ***common swindler*** immediately after he mocks Gatsby's background and legitimacy. In this scene, Tom's delivery is accompanied by a slight lean forward and a condescending tone, reinforcing the dismissive and accusatory nature of his words. Tom's facial expression, as seen in **Figure 4.3**, further illustrates the layered nature of symbolic violence that Bourdieu theorizes.

- Tom : I'm gonna take better care of you from now on.
Gatsby : You're not taking care of Daisy anymore. She's leaving you.
Tom : Nonsense!
Daisy : I am, though.
Tom : No, no, no. She is not leaving me. Certainly not for ***a common swindler like you.***

Dialogue 4.3: Tom accuses Gatsby of being a fraud
(The Great Gatsby, 2013)



Figure 4.4 (minute 1:40:05): *Tom delegitimizes Gatsby's integrity*

Tom implies that Gatsby's wealth is not only illegitimate but morally corrupt. In Bourdieu's terms, Tom is engaging in symbolic classification, determining which forms of capital are recognized as valid by the dominant class. Only wealth comes with lineage, and institutional endorsement is acceptable in Tom's world. This moment subtly reaffirms the same deeply rooted assumptions mentioned earlier, namely, that legitimacy and honor are not just about wealth, but about where that wealth originates. Tom's insult works in tandem with Tom's earlier remarks, reinforcing the normative belief system that privileges inherited status and background over achievement. It is another instance where Tom upholds the socially dominant expectations without ever needing to justify them, precisely the kind of unspoken consensus Bourdieu describes through the notion of *doxa*.

Tom Rejects Gatsby's Effort to be Equal to Him

In **Dialogue 4.4**, Tom states *Nothing that you ever dreamed of or stole can change who you are*. His words are laced with derision, his lip curled in superiority. In this final verbal blow, Tom delivers the line with cold emphasis, as seen in **Figure 4.4**, where his eyes narrow and his tone turns final and dismissive. Here, Tom expresses the core of elite ideology: that class mobility is illusory. No matter how much Gatsby dreams, works, or accumulates, he will never be truly accepted. Bourdieu explains that habitus, deeply embedded ways of being, are gained from a specific culture where they live (Xiaowei, 2019). This means that one's habitus cannot be acquired through effort alone or in an instant. Symbolic capital, such as honor and prestige, must be recognized by the dominant class to be effective, and Gatsby has none of that recognition.

- Gatsby : The only respectable thing about you, old sport, is your money. Your money, that's it. Now, I've just as much as you. That means we're equal.
- Tom : Oh, no. No. We're different. I am. They are. She is. We're all different from you. You see, we were born different. It's in our blood and nothing that you say or steal or dream up can ever change that.

Dialogue 4.4: *Tom rejects Gatsby's social mobility*
(The Great Gatsby, 2013)



Figure 4.4: (minute 1:41:42) *Tom reminds Gatsby of his unchangeable identity*

Gatsby's response highlights the violence inherent in this symbolic assault. His face reddens, his eyes widen, and he leans forward as though ready to retaliate, but powerless to Tom's mocking. His rage reaches a boiling point, and he even grabs Tom by the collar and chokes him, pushing him backward until Tom falls into a chair. Gatsby's face turns deep red, and his voice cracks as he momentarily loses control. Yet, despite this outburst, he quickly retreats, mutters an apology, and becomes silent. This physical and emotional reaction exemplifies what Bourdieu calls symbolic domination. Gatsby internalizes the attack, momentarily accepting the inferiority imposed upon him. The force of symbolic violence lies in its subtlety; it shames without visible coercion and controls without overt force.

Symbolic Violence Through Visual Elements

Figure 4.6 shows a moment when Gatsby and Nick are sitting at a lunch table in a fancy restaurant, where the wealthy usually gather to enjoy themselves. Gatsby, who has just proudly told Nick about his background, initially appears confident. However, his mood suddenly changes when Tom arrives. Tom calls Nick from across the room and greets him with a firm handshake, smiling confidently. However, he completely ignores Gatsby, as if Gatsby were invisible. Gatsby is sitting quietly, looking down, with both hands tightly clenched. This scene shows a subtle form of symbolic violence. Tom does not need to insult Gatsby directly; his act of ignoring Gatsby already sends a clear message: that Gatsby does not fit into the social space. What is even clearer is Gatsby's response. He remains silent, his face turns red, and he avoids eye contact with Tom. His body language, stiff posture, and downcast gaze convey discomfort and insecurity. Although Gatsby previously claimed to be an Oxford gentleman and a wealthy family man.

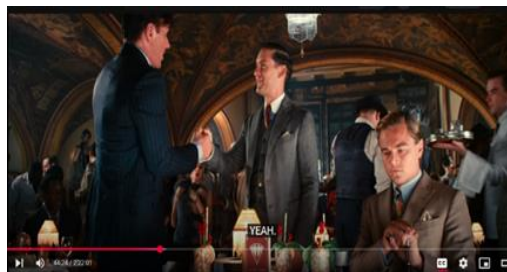


Figure 4.6 (minute 00:44:24): *Gatsby's suppressed anxiety when seeing Tom*

This dynamic relates to Bourdieu's concept of *doxa*, a taken-for-granted belief that structures our perceptions and actions (Putri, 2020). Gatsby has internalized the belief that old money holds symbolic superiority, and these beliefs shape how he moves through elite spaces. Even though he is now wealthy, his habitus was formed through a background of poverty, which still leads to his way of behaving, as Nick stated: *His parents were dirt-poor farmers from North Dakota*. This highlights the sharp contrast in social origin. Our actions or practices, as in Bourdieu's formulation, are not random; they are the result of the interplay between one's capital (what one possesses), habitus (the internalized dispositions), and the field (the structure of social space in which one moves). Gatsby may want to believe that he fits into the upper class with his vast amount of economic capital, but deep down, he has unconsciously internalized the belief he

does not belong in Tom's world. His silence, downward gaze, and hesitant posture reflect a deep sense of social inferiority shaped by his past. This scene, therefore, reveals how symbolic violence operates not only through acts of exclusion but also through the internal acceptance of one's marginal position. Here is Bourdieu's formula of their interconnectedness:

$$[(\text{Habitus}) (\text{Capital})] + \text{Field} = \text{Practice}$$

Gatsby was raised in poverty; his family background was just farmers in North Dakota. The absence of symbolic capital, economic and cultural, shapes his habitus, such as his manner of speaking, acting, and carrying himself. Now, as he enters the field of the upper-class circle, he still embodies his insecurity in front of Tom, who was born into wealth and raised within the codes of the upper class; his confidence in the elite circle has been naturalized through years of immersion. The following diagram visualizes the position of Tom and Gatsby in terms of capital. This visual helps clarify what kinds of capital Gatsby possesses and, more importantly, what he lacks compared to Tom.

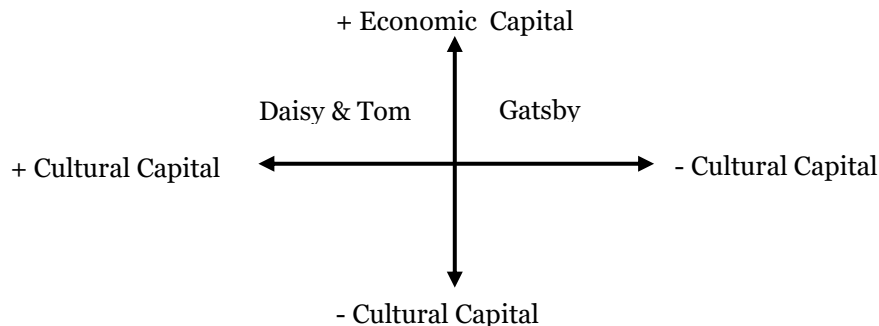


Figure 4.7 *Visualization of Tom and Gatsby's Capital Position*

As seen in **Figure 4.5**, Tom and Gatsby appear equal in terms of economic capital. However, the difference lies in the cultural capital. Tom doesn't just have wealth, but also embodies cultural capital that Gatsby struggles to emulate. Tom's confidence, refined manners, elegant taste, and natural social authority all stem from a habitus shaped by generations of privilege. Gatsby, on the other hand, though wealthy, lacks this internalized fluency.

Symbolic Violence Through Gestural Elements

Gatsby's Reckless Driving

Figure 4.7 illustrates a scene when Nick feels frightened because Gatsby's reckless and high-speed driving almost hits something. He nearly crosses into other vehicles and pedestrians (**Figure 4.8**). Even Nick, sitting beside him, appears uncomfortable and anxious about Gatsby's driving behavior. However, Nick just enjoyed it until the end of the journey because he did not dare to tell Gatsby what to do at that moment. On the other hand, Gatsby remains calm, even smiles, and casually chats with Nick as if he perceives the situation as entirely normal.



Figure 4.7 (00:37:30): *Nick is frightened of Gatsby's driving style*



Figure 4.8 (minute 00:38:30):
Gatsby almost hit the pedestrians and the other road users

This reinforces the nature of symbolic violence, which is that domination is accepted as normal because it is associated with status or wealth. At the moment, he is a passenger in Gatsby's luxurious car, and Gatsby holds a superior position in terms of symbolic capital. Bourdieu states that symbolic violence is often exercised by the dominant group over those who are dominated (Muljadi & Angjaya, 2024). Momentarily, Gatsby holds a dominant position; therefore, even though Nick feels uncomfortable with Gatsby's driving style, he must stay quiet, and the pedestrians almost hit, they can't do anything because they are already afraid of Gatsby because of having seen his luxurious car. Gatsby's luxurious car and visible wealth command a level of untouchability, causing others to hesitate or accept it without confrontation.

Gatsby's Nervousness in front of Daisy

Gatsby arranged a reunion with Daisy through Nick at Nick's home under the pretense of afternoon tea. **Figure 4.9** shows Gatsby, who is standing beside an antique wooden clock placed on the table. Gatsby appears anxious from the start. He tries to appear confident, but his overly rigid stance and tense posture suggest discomfort. His face seems red, his eyes shift, and his body movements are hesitant. Daisy is sitting calmly with an elegant posture and a composed facial expression. As he begins to speak, his hand accidentally hits the clock, causing it to fall. He quickly bends down to pick it up and attempts to return it to its place, but his fumbling gesture only makes it worse (**Figure 4.10**). This highlights his nervousness. However, Daisy stares at him calmly without a surprising expression, still in an elegant posture.



Figure 4.9 (minute 00:55:44): *Gatsby and Daisy at Nick's home*

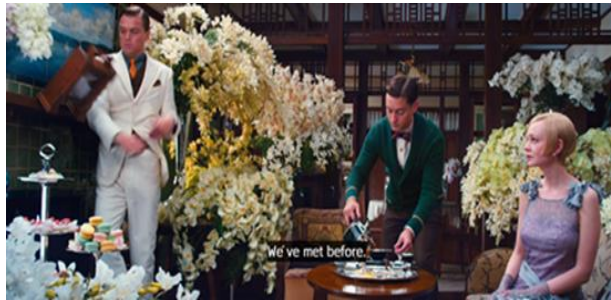


Figure 4.10 (minute 00:56:00): *Gatsby drops the clock*

Gatsby's nervousness stems from the way he perceives Daisy. For Gatsby, Daisy it's not only the woman he loves, but the symbol of a world he once felt excluded from. A world of grace, wealth, and lineage, inherited privilege, despite her beauty or elegance. Years earlier, Gatsby had already internalized the belief that he was not good enough to marry her because he was still poor. Now that Gatsby has accumulated wealth, he believes he has finally earned the right to be with her, but what he does not fully understand is that for the upper class, economic capital alone is not enough.

As Bourdieu explains, cultural capital, the right way of speaking, behaving, dressing, and even moving, is what truly distinguishes class boundaries (Xiaowei, 2019). Gatsby's mannerisms, exaggerated posture, and awkwardness in refined spaces all betray the fact that he still does not fit. This is why Gatsby continues to feel uncertain in front of Daisy. He has the money but not the habitus, the deeply internalized way of being that comes from growing up in a particular social world. His nervousness in front of Daisy becomes symbolic violence because he unconsciously reproduces the inequality between him and Daisy. As Bourdieu explains, symbolic violence occurs when social hierarchies are reproduced and accepted as natural (Thapar-Björkert et al., 2016). Gatsby has so deeply absorbed the belief that Daisy's world is above his own that his body acts it out even when no one tells him so. Gatsby's attempt to appear in control only emphasizes his discomfort, making visible the gap between his self-perception and the social space he wants to enter. Gatsby's behavior results from his capital, habitus, and the field he moves in. While his economic capital may have changed, his habitus remains the same.

Daisy's Gestural Domination

Figure 4.11 shows Gatsby trying to reach for Daisy's hand slowly after saying: *You see, Mr. Buchanan, I wanted to be close*. Daisy pulls it away and stands up, saying: *So hot, everything's so confused*. At first, it seems like a response to the tension in the room, but her words and movements are something deeper. Daisy knows that she and Gatsby aren't equal, not just in terms of wealth but in family background and status. Gatsby is hoping for more than a private romance. He wants her to leave Tom and choose him openly. But Daisy's reaction shows that she's not ready to commit to Gatsby. Her line *Everything's so confused* reflects her emotional conflict, the pressure of class boundaries, her marriage, and social expectations if she follows Gatsby.



Figure 4.11 (minute 1:29:13): *Gatsby tries to grab Daisy's hand*



Figure 4.12 (1:29:54): *Daisy holds Gatsby's hand in front of Tom*

In **Figure 4.12**, the moment Daisy reaches out and holds Gatsby's hand, but only when Tom is watching them. This doesn't mean she changed her mind; instead, it is a way to provoke them. By making Tom jealous, she also meant that Tom could fight for her. At this moment, Daisy holds control of the field of desire. According to Bourdieu, the field is a structured social space where individuals compete using their available capital, and their position within it shapes their strategies (Taha et al., 2023). In this case, Daisy uses her symbolic capital, desirability, to provoke both men. Her two ambiguous gestures mean that she is not truly accepting Gatsby, yet she is not rejecting him directly. Instead of refusing Gatsby directly, she subtly shifts the responsibility to Tom by provoking his jealousy. Daisy creates an illusion that Tom is the one standing in the way of their relationship.

Gatsby never blames Daisy; he blames Tom, believing that Daisy chose him only because of his wealth, not because of love. Meanwhile, Tom sees Gatsby as a threat, an intruder disrupting the stability of his family. And yet Daisy remains untouchable by blame; she stays calm, composed, and emotionally distant. Even though she is the cause of the confrontation between Tom and

Gatsby. This is the essence of symbolic violence, as Bourdieu stated, a subtle, invisible form of power that imposes meaning.

Symbolic Violence Manifested Through Spatial Elements

Figure 4.12 presents Tom and Daisy Buchanan's house in East Egg, a place that quietly signals stability, privilege, and inherited authority. East Egg symbolizes old money. Society regarded it as the place for those wealth are considered legitimate, refined, and inherited. Living there means you don't just have economic wealth, your wealth is not achieved overnight but is inherited from generations. Tom and Daisy's house is built in classic Georgian style, featuring red brick walls, tall white columns, and a perfectly symmetrical layout. The curved driveway and manicured lawn reflect deliberate design, while the muted tones of the house convey restraint and traditional taste. The architecture itself mirrors the aesthetic preferences of the upper class, reflecting a refinement of generations' status.



Figure 4.12 (minute 00:05:38) *Tom and Daisy's house*

Tom's house represents more than material wealth. It embodies a lifestyle shaped by old money, a term that refers not only to inherited economic capital but also to a deeply internalized social code. This kind of refinement reflects Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, the embodied sense of what is appropriate, tasteful, and distinguished, developed through long-standing exposure to an elite environment (Xiaowei, 2019). Tom's cultural capital is shown by the ability to express class position through the subtle signs of his mansion. Tom's wealth allowed him to shape his environment effortlessly, but his elegant, restrained, and calculated taste signals his habitus formed by long-term exposure to privilege.

In contrast, **Figure 4.13** depicts Gatsby's enormous mansion in West Egg, which stands out for its theatrical scale and decorative excess. The building is brightly lit, adorned with spires and a fountain, and surrounded by a vast lawn that feels more performative than private. The architectural style is eclectic and exaggerated. Everything seems designed to impress rather than to comfort. These differences show that Gatsby has economic capital, but he lacks the cultural capital that legitimizes him in elite circles.



Figure 4.13 (Minute 1:00:05) *Gatsby's house*

His mansion is often seen as extravagant and lacking refined taste, an implicit judgment rooted in *doxa*. The distinction is not only in the architecture but also in the location of their homes reflects and reproduces class hierarchy. East Egg, where Tom and Daisy reside, symbolizes old money families with inherited wealth and long-standing social prestige. Meanwhile, West Egg, where Gatsby lives, is associated with the new money, individuals who may possess economic capital but are viewed as lacking cultural legitimacy. Their success is often perceived as illegal. This spatial and aesthetic division becomes a medium of symbolic violence, where Gatsby's social exclusion is not enforced by law or explicit rejection but through *doxa*, shared assumptions about what is considered tasteful, appropriate, and legitimate.



Figure 4.14 (minute 1:32:34): *George and Myrtle's house*

The last figure, **Figure 4.14**, captures the home and garage of George in the Valley of Ashes. His living space is not separated from his working place. His house's appearance seems oil-stained, dusty, and bleak, even to George himself. The building lacks an aesthetic form or comfort. There's no lawn, no clear entrance, no architectural character, just a structure for survival. George's environment reflects an almost total absence of capital. He has no economic capital, let alone cultural capital. The Valley of Ashes itself is a marginalized and dirty place, this is where the very poor and powerless people are struggling for daily survival.

George's lack of both economic and cultural capital makes it easier for those in higher positions, such as Tom, to manipulate him without consequences. Tom cheats with George's wife without hesitation, because men like George are not expected to protest and hesitate to misunderstand people like Tom. After all, the consequence can befall them. That's why George is unconsciously afraid of Tom. His body knows Tom's superior position without direct force. This is where symbolic violence operates subtly and is unconsciously accepted as natural by the victim.

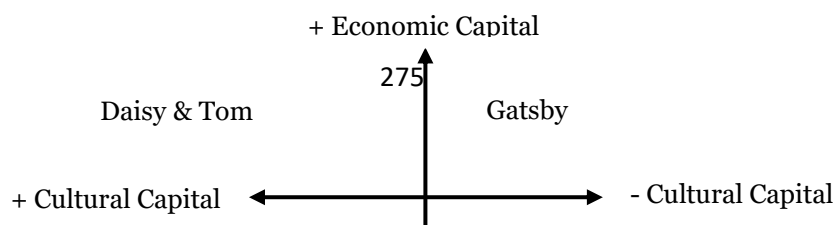


Figure 4.15: *The Visualization of Tom, Gatsby, and George's Capital Position*

Tom Buchanan occupies a position of cultural and economic capital strategic position, indicating that he holds both high economic capital and high cultural capital (**Figure 4.15**). His inherited wealth, elite education, and deeply rooted family background allow him to navigate and dominate the social space with ease, reinforcing his position as the unquestioned embodiment of legitimacy. Gatsby, while wealthy, is placed in the lower right possession of cultural capital. His extravagant mansion, taste of color, and excessive displays of wealth signal a lack of the refined taste expected from the old money elite that they consider as cultural capital.

George Wilson, by contrast, stands at the lowest point of the capital; he has neither economic nor cultural capital. Unlike Gatsby, who is dominated through aesthetic disqualification and social exclusion, George is dominated more overtly, through neglect, invisibility, and the complete absence of symbolic power. He is not only poor but also stripped of the social tools needed to resist or even recognize his domination.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that symbolic violence in the film is manifested through the interplay of multimodal elements, including verbal, visual, gestural, and spatial arrangements, which collectively reinforce the manifestation of symbolic violence in the film. Verbal elements reflect symbolic violence through indirect insults and dismissive language that make others feel unworthy. Visual mode depicts which characters hold authority and which are marginalized. Gestural elements reveal internalized dispositions. Ultimately, spatial arrangements, especially the contrast between the East Egg, West Egg, and the Valley of Ashes, reinforce class separation and symbolic exclusion. Thus, symbolic violence is strongly influenced by the types and distribution of capital within specific social fields. This violence is not limited to a single character as victim or perpetrator, rather it shifts depending on the context, the dominant capital, and who controls the field in a given moment. A character can be both a victim and a perpetrator depending on which field they are situated in and which forms of capital dominate that space.

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