



The Great Gatsby Analysis

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THE GREAT GATSBY ANALYSIS

The idea of the American Dream is a part of a cultural association of American society. According to it, every developed and mature individual has a chance to fulfill his or her dream and achieve freedom, wealth, and happiness. Hereby, the essential components are perseverance, goal, and a belief that despite all difficulties, one will reach success. However, a modern society has transformed the pure ideals of the American dream into a strategy for achieving materialistic power at the expense of the moral and spiritual values. The theme of the American Dream as well as the illusions associated with it are symbolically described in the novel "The Great Gatsby" written by Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald, 1986). The author conveys the message that the old good American Dream is lost forever to people while being destructed by materialism.

The evolution of the American Dream is represented through the life of a title character James Gatsby, who made all-out efforts to fulfill his dream. Such character traits of him as a thirst for adventure, an ambition, and the hard work to accomplish it are closely connected with the qualities that are considered necessary to become an American hero. Gatsby worked hard on developing and improving himself because of his longing and love directed towards Daisy. Daisy has given James a purpose in life. She filled his existence with a constant meaning, from the moment he met her being a poor soldier to his last day when he waited for her in his huge luxuries mansion even though she had already left him for a wealthy and quiet life with his husband (Fitzgerald, 1986). Thus, Daisy was actually a symbol of everlasting hope for Gatsby, an incredible ambition that made him thirst for searching the opportunities to attain the dream.



His longing for Daisy is symbolically depicted through “a single green light” towards which Gatsby “stretched out his arms” every evening (Fitzgerald, 1986, p.21-22). It symbolized also his longing for a wealthy life, acceptance, and happiness. As the light seemed to be so close and similarly, Gatsby seemed to be so close to fulfilling his dream. Actually, this green light shows the essence of the American Dream implying that no matter how much you have, you never feel complete. While believing in the green light, Gatsby believed in “the orgiastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch our arms farther” (Fitzgerald, 1986, p.182).

The hopelessness of the American Dream is reflected through the careless and wasteful life of the members of the upper society during the violent twenties. It is depicted through the eyes of Nick Carraway, a young man of a high moralistic attitude, who was still influenced by a rush of the wealthy life for a while. However, he has noticed that while being involved in hoping and striving for success, materialism overshadows such values as delicacy, honesty, and faithfulness. It is evident in the characters of Daisy and Tom Buchanan, who used things and people without regrets and then “retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together” (Fitzgerald, 1986, p.180-181). Although Tom was responsible for the murder of Gatsby because he lied to George Wilson, the Gatsby’s killer, that Gatsby was fully guilty in his wife’s death, he never felt guilty because of it. As we can see, the established elite are shown as a group of heartless people who have sold their souls to achieve success.

The ideal of a pure love shared with Daisy can set Gatsby apart from the upper class though he was in the epicenter of it when organizing his huge lavish parties. While being completely devoted to his romantic ideals, he knew no limits and no obstacles. Hereby, the corruption is represented through the Gatsby's utilization of unfair practices and illegal connections to earn money, his large mansion, and immense collection of clothes. Besides, his status is strikingly demonstrated in the scene when the police officer ignored his traffic violation. Gatsby has lost the pure traits of the American Dream because of focusing on its modern face.

Thus, Fitzgerald claims that the dehumanized society has no chance to survive. With Gatsby's death, the American Dream with all its hopes and ambitions is shattered. Moreover, after killing Gatsby, Wilson, who was a symbol of an average person, committed suicide. Wilson also strived for his own happiness while working hard though he did not possess traditional heroic traits that could bring him success. The deaths of the representatives of the both rich and poor classes symbolize the total destruction of the hopes associated with the American Dream.

Therefore, while portraying events and personalities, Fitzgerald has used a lot of symbols in his novel. One more symbol is a contrast between the superior East Egg representing the established high class and West Egg representing people with less prosperity or without any means for living. Perhaps because both Gatsby and Nick came from the Midwest and did not truly belong to the East Egg, Nick felt sympathy and showed compassion towards Gatsby though he knew the mystique truth about his background and his dishonest business. Although Gatsby had immersed

in the materialistic and corrupted world, Nick realized that Gatsby was a good man in that wasteful society of East Egg. Nick was the only friend who attended Gatsby's funeral after his death despite the fact that there was a countless number of people around him when he organized parties.

Since in the American Dream, the notion of happiness is closely connected with money, recognition, and fame, Gatsby's corrupted dream was merely an illusion that could not be achieved. At the root of his tragedy, there is his self-destructive desire to obtain his major aim, Daisy, and to become her sole lover even at the expense of his moral principles and life. Thus, money is the core word that may be the epitaph to the death of the American Dream.