The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

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The Great Gatsby and the American Dream

The Great Gatsby is a novel written by F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1925. It is based on the pattern of the American Dream according to the perspectives of the author. It is a story of several characters and their life struggles in the early 20th century. Nick, Jay Gatsby, Tom, and Daisy are the main essential characters in the novel. The novel is considered one of the best novels of the 20th century. It is a relevant book for today as it shows the different aspects of the human personality (Fitzgerald; “The Great Gatsby: Summary & Analysis”; “The Great Gatsby Critical Evaluation -”; Achenbach; “The Great Gatsby Summary”; “The Great Gatsby Analysis”).

It combines the factors of murder, jealousy, money, power, and corruption. The novel’s different characters face various life stages and struggle with their life journeys. The sound pattern of writing, sentence selection, symbolic representation, and literary elements are part of the novel, which is why it is used as a compulsory literary novel for high school studies. The Great Gatsby portrays the American culture and system in which everyone thought about their own lives, and most people are self-made, showing the audience the different life structures of males and females in the early twentieth century.

There are several similarities and differences between the era of 1922 and 2017. The technological advancements today were not imagined by the people living in the early 20th century. These advancements are ruling and revolutionizing the world today but were not invented in the past. In the 21st century, technological advancements and business markets rule the world. Moreover, the current communicational pattern is far more developed than ever before in the past centuries. Now, it is easier to talk to anyone across the globe for free and with an internet connection. In the past, it was not possible and unimaginable. Furthermore, the similarity is that people today are similar to the people in the past, except for one thing: now, people are more aware of the world than they were in the past due to the advancements. People are more mature and well-informed due to current trends and the structure of the world. In the past, there were no means of communication or knowledge sources compared to today’s world.

However, if one considers only the characteristics of the novel characters, then there is no difference between the past and the present. There are still people like the people of the novel. But there are still people like Daisy, Tom, Gatsby, and Nick because they are still the characteristics of many people. Murders, corruption, jealousy, self-made nature, selfishness, extreme love, and cheating in

relationships are the factors that persist in most world societies as they did in the past. Poverty, love for wealth, selfish nature, and greed for love are present in the world today. The novel's characters can be easily found in the modern world, and no change has occurred as these characteristics are present in people in the past, present, and future.

Character, Self-Interest, and Moral Failure

Several lessons could be learned today from the experiences of the novel characters. The most important one is that everyone is self-made and never considers other people's feelings. All characters are selfish except Nick, the narrator of the story. The characters were struggling with their lives. For example, Jay Gatsby was young and extremely in love with the girl Daisy, who prefers wealth and is married to a wealthy person, Tom. The portrayal of women in the novel pictured women as preferring wealthy people in the past and never considering the feelings of a person who is rich enough to give them a luxurious lifestyle. Daisy prefers an affluent lifestyle, so she marries a wealthy guy. However, this impacts Gatsby negatively, and he starts earning money through all negative means. He becomes successful and wealthy enough to attract Daisy's attention within a very short time. This factor shows that Daisy is a materialistic person, and she does not have any emotions for the one who loves her deeply; rather, she prefers a man with wealth. The novel's audience also learns that Gatsby changes his name, character, and all nature to find his ultimate love but uses negative means and, in the end, faces failure in the form of death.

The character of Gatsby teaches the audience several lessons, including that he preferred to have his love in his life, but he chose the wrong way. He used all negative means and became wealthy to have his love, but it led him to nothing but death. It shows that negative means and ways are not worthy enough to follow. A person who is materialistic like Daisy will never be able to love someone with real passion and emotions. She loved wealth and a luxurious lifestyle that could lead her to another wealthy man when she did not have one. Gatsby should consider this fact and never use the wrong means to get his love. His love was true, but his method of having her was wrong and unworthy. Moreover, Daisy is materialistic and will go for anyone who offers her more wealth than her husband.

Tom's character teaches the audience many lessons, including that he is selfish and a cheater. He was cheating on his wife and had a mistress. But when he learned that his wife was having an affair, he could not bear it. It represents the nature of most men in this world. Especially in the eastern parts of world societies, men have the nature to have girlfriends and mistresses, but their wives are never allowed to do that. These men are not only cheaters but are characterless in that they cannot bear the relationships of their wives, and they want their wives to bear the relationships of their men. The same situation occurs with Tom, leading him to be the reason for the death of Gatsby. It shows that Tom is a characterless man, having no regrets about his doings and actions. In the novel, Tom states, "And what's more, I love Daisy too. Once in a while I go off on a spree and make a fool of myself, but I always come back, and in my heart, I love her all the time." (7.251-252). It shows that Tom believes that it is not wrong to have little affairs, and he loves Daisy because he always comes back to her.

That does not show his love for Daisy; if it's true, he should also have the guts to accept the relationship with Daisy.

Reinvention, Wealth, and the Corruption of the American Dream

Another important lesson is presented in the story about the American Dream. The story depicts the dreams and the themes of the American system. The character of Gatsby is a typical American, as it was easier for him to change his name and his identity, and he was able to reinvent a new person, or he was able to become someone he was not. From his perspective, he believes in the American dream, which he named "the green light." In the novel, Nick tells Gatsby, "You can't repeat the past." Gatsby maintains, "Why, of course, you can!" (30. 36). The character of Gatsby shows that in his view, one can become anything if he wants to. It was easy for James Gatz at the age of 17 to change himself into Jay Gatsby. He changed himself to become successful and to achieve all his dreams, but in reality, this changing and new personality betrayed him and led him to death. He was not aware that it would lead to his destruction.

The author of the novel wants the audience to experience the American dream and the differences between the east and west sides of the United States. The novel is a reflection of the American Dream by the author. According to the narrator, the death of Gatsby is the disgrace of the American Dream. Moreover, the novel differentiates between the east and west sides of the country. The East is presented as sophisticated and a combination of wealth earned with privilege. On the other hand, the West is presented as having no past and no individual identity. But Nick wants the world of the West, and for him, it is the centre of the world.

The novel is a great combination of several lessons and gives its audience a lot of experiences about the early 20th century. The Great Gatsby portrays the American culture and system in which everyone thought about their own lives, and most people are self-made, showing the audience the different life structures of males and females in the early twentieth century. All the characters teach the audience about several important lessons.

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