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THE GREAT GATSBY

“ Money and Love in F. Scott Fitzgerald's”

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2025A.D

1446 A.H

Quranic Verse

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

﴿رَفَعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ﴾

صدق الله العلي العظيم

Dedication

I dedicate this humble work to my parents. To my sister who helped me and my friends. And to everyone who contributed to my learning even with one letter.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have supported and guided me throughout the process of completing this research paper as part of my bachelor's degree program. First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor, **Asst.Prof.Hussein Jassim**, for their invaluable guidance, expertise, and continuous support. Their insightful feedback, patience, and encouragement have been instrumental in shaping the direction and quality of this research. I am also grateful to the faculty members of **[University of Misan College of Basic Education/English department]** for imparting their knowledge and expertise, which laid the foundation for my understanding of research methodologies and subject matter.

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Abstract

This research paper delves into the complex interplay between money and love in F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," a seminal work set in the context of the Roaring Twenties. The narrative focuses on the American Dream's allure and its inherent disillusionment, highlighting how the pursuit of wealth often distorts relationships and undermines genuine emotions. Central to the analysis is the character of Jay Gatsby, whose transformation from James Gatz, a poor young man, to a wealthy socialite exemplifies the dream's seductive power. However, Fitzgerald critiques this ideal by revealing the moral decay accompanying Gatsby's rise, as his wealth is acquired through dubious means. The novel contrasts the social dynamics of East Egg and West Egg, illustrating how class distinctions influence personal relationships and aspirations. Through the lens of Gatsby's idealized love for Daisy Buchanan, the paper examines the commodification of love, where emotional connections become entangled with materialism. Daisy, torn between her love for Gatsby and the security provided by her marriage to Tom Buchanan, embodies the conflict between genuine affection and societal expectations. The tragic outcomes faced by the characters, particularly Gatsby's demise, serve as a poignant reminder of the emptiness that often accompanies the relentless pursuit of wealth. Ultimately, the paper concludes that Fitzgerald's work serves as a timeless critique of the American Dream, emphasizing that true fulfillment lies not in material success but in the depth and authenticity of human connections. Through its exploration of money and love, "The Great Gatsby" remains a relevant commentary on the moral implications of a society driven by materialism, offering insights that resonate with contemporary readers.

Introduction

F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," published in 1925, stands as one of the most significant works in American literature, capturing the essence of the Jazz Age and the complexities of the American Dream. Set against the backdrop of post-World War I America, the novel vividly portrays a society characterized by affluence, excess, and a relentless pursuit of pleasure. However, beneath this glamorous surface lies a deep-seated disillusionment that Fitzgerald masterfully encapsulates through his characters and their interactions. The central themes of money and love are intricately woven into the fabric of the narrative, highlighting how the quest for wealth can profoundly impact human relationships and lead to moral decay.

At the heart of the novel is Jay Gatsby, a self-made millionaire whose life story exemplifies the American Dream's promise of success through hard work and determination. Born as James Gatz in a poor farming family in North Dakota, Gatsby reinvents himself, transforming into a wealthy socialite in pursuit of his idealized love for Daisy Buchanan. Gatsby's lavish parties and opulent lifestyle serve as a facade, masking his deep-seated insecurities and the emptiness of his pursuits. His relentless desire to win back Daisy, a symbol of both love and social status, underscores the commodification of love in a society where wealth is often equated with worth. Fitzgerald critiques this ideal by illustrating how the characters' pursuits of money ultimately lead to their downfall, revealing a stark contrast between the romantic ideals of love and the harsh realities of a materialistic culture.

The novel's setting plays a crucial role in reinforcing its themes. The geographical divide between East Egg and West Egg symbolizes the social stratification of the time, with East Egg representing old money and aristocratic privilege, while West Egg signifies new money and the striving

for acceptance. Characters such as Tom and Daisy Buchanan epitomize the moral decay of the wealthy elite, showcasing how their privilege allows them to escape the consequences of their actions. In contrast, Gatsby, despite his wealth, remains an outsider, illustrating the limitations of the American Dream and the societal barriers that persist even in the face of financial success. Fitzgerald's portrayal of these dynamics invites readers to examine the relationship between wealth, identity, and love, prompting a deeper reflection on the nature of happiness and fulfillment in a consumer-driven society.

As the narrative unfolds, the characters grapple with their desires, revealing the complexities of love intertwined with wealth. Gatsby's idealization of Daisy leads him to believe that his riches can buy her affection, a notion that ultimately proves to be an illusion. Daisy, caught between her feelings for Gatsby and the security that Tom provides, embodies the conflict between genuine love and the expectations imposed by society. The tragic outcomes that ensue serve as a poignant reminder of the futility of equating love with material possessions. Through the lens of money and love, Fitzgerald critiques the American Dream, emphasizing that true fulfillment lies not in wealth but in authentic human connections. This research paper aims to explore these themes, analyzing how Fitzgerald's critique of materialism and the pursuit of love resonates with contemporary readers and offers timeless insights into the human condition. In summary, "The Great Gatsby" serves as a powerful exploration of the intersection between money and love, revealing the moral implications of a society obsessed with wealth. By examining the aspirations and failures of its characters, Fitzgerald invites readers to reflect on their own values and the true meaning of success, ultimately presenting a cautionary tale about the dangers of losing sight of what truly matters in life.

Chapter One

The American Dream and Materialism

F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" is often heralded as a critical examination of the American Dream, a concept that promises prosperity and success through hard work and determination. Set during the Jazz Age, the novel reflects the societal shifts and cultural conflicts of the 1920s, a time marked by economic prosperity and an obsession with wealth. However, Fitzgerald's portrayal of the American Dream is far from idealistic; instead, it reveals the disillusionment and moral decay that accompany the relentless pursuit of material success. This chapter will explore the complexities of the American Dream as depicted in "The Great Gatsby," focusing on the character of Jay Gatsby and the contrasting social dynamics of East Egg and West Egg.

1.1 The Idealization of the American Dream

1.1.1 Definition and Historical Context

The American Dream is rooted in the belief that anyone, regardless of their background, can achieve success through hard work and ambition. This ideal has been a foundational element of American identity since the nation's inception, symbolizing the opportunities available to individuals willing to strive for greatness (Heller, 2008). However, the post-World War I era brought about a shift in the interpretation of this dream. The 1920s, often referred to as the Jazz Age, saw a surge in consumerism, where material wealth became synonymous with happiness and success (Callahan, 2002).

1.1.2 Jay Gatsby as an Embodiment of the Dream

In "The Great Gatsby," Jay Gatsby embodies this ideal. Born as James Gatz to impoverished farmers in North Dakota, he reinvents himself through sheer

determination and relentless ambition. His transformation into a millionaire represents the quintessential rags-to-riches narrative, a hallmark of the American Dream (Brucoli, 1981). Gatsby's success is underscored by his extravagant parties, luxurious mansion, and ostentatious lifestyle, all of which signal his newfound status. As Matz (2014) points out, Gatsby's wealth is not merely a means to an end; it is intertwined with his desire for love and acceptance.

1.1.3 Moral Compromise in Pursuit of Wealth

However, Fitzgerald complicates this ideal by revealing the darker undercurrents of Gatsby's ascent. Gatsby's wealth is not acquired through legitimate means; rather, it is the result of bootlegging and other illegal activities (Lehan, 1998). This aspect of his character raises critical questions about the morality of the American Dream. If success is achieved through unethical means, can it still be considered a true reflection of the dream? Fitzgerald suggests that the pursuit of wealth often leads to moral compromise, indicating that the American Dream is fundamentally flawed (Duvall, 2008).

1.2 The Illusion of Social Mobility

1.2.1 Geographical Divisions

Fitzgerald uses the geographical distinctions between East Egg and West Egg to illustrate the complexities of social mobility and class divisions in American society. East Egg, home to the old money elite, represents established wealth and social status. In contrast, West Egg, where Gatsby resides, symbolizes new money and the striving for acceptance (Tredell, 2002). This spatial divide underscores the rigid class structures that define social interactions and aspirations.

1.2.2 The Social Hierarchy

Despite his wealth, Gatsby remains an outsider in East Egg, emphasizing that financial success alone does not guarantee social acceptance. This social stratification is epitomized in the characters of Tom Buchanan and Daisy Buchanan. Tom, a member of the old money elite, embodies the arrogance and entitlement that often accompany inherited wealth (Fetterley, 2001). He views Gatsby with disdain, believing that his lack of pedigree disqualifies him from genuine social acceptance.

1.2.3 Daisy's Choice

Daisy, while initially drawn to Gatsby's wealth, ultimately chooses the security and status offered by Tom, illustrating the limitations of the American Dream. Fitzgerald critiques this social hierarchy, suggesting that the rigid class structures of American society undermine the very ideals of opportunity and equality that the American Dream promises (McCoy, 2009). Daisy's choice reflects the societal pressures that dictate individual aspirations and relationships.

1.3 The Role of Materialism

1.3.1 Cultural Context of Materialism

Materialism is a pervasive theme in "The Great Gatsby," reflecting the values of a society obsessed with wealth and consumption. Characters in the novel equate material possessions with success and happiness, leading to a superficial understanding of fulfillment (Sweeney, 2012). Gatsby's lavish parties, filled with extravagant displays of wealth, serve as a microcosm of this materialistic culture.

1.3.2 Gatsby's Lavish Parties

Gatsby's lavish parties, meant to attract Daisy and forge connections, ultimately serve to highlight his alienation. Guests attend his gatherings not out of genuine affection but for the allure of wealth and the excitement of his extravagant lifestyle (Tredell, 2014). This symbolizes the emptiness of social interactions predicated on economic status, reinforcing Fitzgerald's critique of a society driven by materialism.

1.3.3 The Jazz Age and Hedonism

Fitzgerald's portrayal of materialism extends beyond Gatsby's character to encompass the broader societal values of the 1920s. The Jazz Age is characterized by a hedonistic pursuit of pleasure, where individuals prioritize wealth and status over meaningful relationships (Rother, 2007). This cultural backdrop highlights the emptiness of the characters' pursuits, revealing that their obsession with material success often leads to isolation and disillusionment.

1.4 Gatsby's Idealism and the Pursuit of Love

1.4.1 Gatsby's Obsession with Daisy

At the core of Gatsby's character is his idealized love for Daisy Buchanan. Gatsby's obsession with Daisy represents not only his longing for love but also his desire for acceptance and validation within the upper echelons of society (Fetterley, 2001). He believes that by amassing wealth, he can win her back and recreate the idyllic romance they once shared.

1.4.2 The Conflict with Tom Buchanan

Gatsby's romanticism contrasts sharply with the pragmatic and materialistic views of characters like Tom Buchanan. Tom sees Daisy as a possession, a trophy to be won and displayed, rather than as an individual with her own

desires and agency (Bloom, 2004). This commodification of love underscores the novel's critique of materialism, as characters' relationships are often transactional rather than genuine.

1.4.3 The Symbolism of the Green Light

The green light at the end of Daisy's dock serves as a powerful symbol of Gatsby's unattainable dream. It represents hope, desire, and the American Dream itself, yet it remains perpetually out of reach. Gatsby's fixation on the light illustrates his inability to reconcile his idealistic vision of love with the harsh realities of their situation, ultimately leading to disillusionment (Prigozy, 1991).

1.5 The Tragic Consequences of the American Dream

1.5.1 Gatsby's Downfall

As the narrative unfolds, the dark consequences of the American Dream become evident. Gatsby's relentless pursuit of wealth and love ultimately leads to his downfall. His tragic end, marked by misunderstanding and betrayal, serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of equating success with material possessions (Warren, 2010).

1.5.2 A Reflection of Society

Fitzgerald's critique extends beyond Gatsby to encompass the entire society of the 1920s. The novel's conclusion reveals the hollowness of the characters' pursuits, leaving readers to ponder the moral implications of a culture that prioritizes wealth over genuine human connection (Hays, 2011). The characters remain trapped in a cycle of superficiality, unable to escape the confines of their own making.

1.5.3 Isolation and Disillusionment

In this sense, "The Great Gatsby" serves as a poignant reminder that the American Dream, while alluring, is ultimately fraught with disillusionment and tragedy. The characters' fates highlight the moral implications of their choices, prompting readers to reflect on the true meaning of success and fulfillment.

Chapter Two

Love and Its Commodification

In "The Great Gatsby," F. Scott Fitzgerald delves into the complexities of love and its commodification, illustrating how the pursuit of wealth often distorts genuine emotional connections. Relationships in the novel are frequently transactional, reflecting the materialistic values of the society in which the characters reside. This chapter will explore the key relationships in the narrative, focusing on Gatsby and Daisy, Tom and Myrtle, and the overarching theme of love as a commodity.

2.1 The Nature of Love in the Jazz Age

2.1.1 Historical Context

The Jazz Age, marked by cultural upheaval and economic prosperity, redefined social norms surrounding love and relationships. The era was characterized by a shift towards hedonism and consumerism, leading individuals to seek fulfillment through material possessions and transient pleasures (Baker, 2003). The social landscape of the 1920s fostered a climate where love was increasingly viewed through a lens of commodification, as relationships became intertwined with wealth and status.

2.1.2 Love as a Commodity

In this context, love becomes commodified. Characters in "The Great Gatsby" often equate their romantic relationships with social status and material wealth, leading to superficial connections devoid of genuine emotional depth (Sweeney, 2012). This commodification of love is evident in various relationships throughout the novel, where affection is frequently conditional upon financial or social advantages.

2.2 Gatsby and Daisy: An Idealized Love

2.2.1 Gatsby's Obsession with Daisy

At the heart of the novel is Gatsby's idealized love for Daisy Buchanan. His infatuation stems from a romanticized vision of their past, where Daisy represents both love and the social status he yearns for (Fetterley, 2001). Gatsby believes that by amassing wealth, he can recreate the idealized romance they once shared. This belief underscores the idea that Gatsby's love for Daisy is intricately linked to his pursuit of the American Dream.

2.2.2 Daisy's Duality

Daisy, however, embodies a duality that complicates their relationship. On one hand, she is the object of Gatsby's desire; on the other hand, she is ensnared in her own societal constraints. Daisy's choice to marry Tom Buchanan, driven by the security and status he provides, highlights the conflict between genuine love and societal expectations (McCoy, 2009). This tension exposes the limitations of Gatsby's idealism, as he fails to recognize that true love cannot be purchased or earned through wealth.

2.2.3 The Symbolism of the Green Light

The green light at the end of Daisy's dock serves as a powerful symbol of Gatsby's unattainable dream. It represents hope, desire, and the American Dream itself, yet it remains perpetually out of reach (Prigozy, 1991). Gatsby's fixation on the light illustrates his inability to reconcile his idealistic vision of love with the harsh realities of their situation, ultimately leading to disillusionment and a sense of loss (Hays, 2011).

2.3 Tom and Myrtle: A Transactional Affair

2.3.1 Tom Buchanan's Infidelity

Tom Buchanan's affair with Myrtle Wilson starkly contrasts Gatsby's idealized love for Daisy. Tom views relationships through a lens of power and control, treating Myrtle as a mere object of desire rather than a partner. His infidelity underscores the commodification of love, as he seeks to satisfy his physical desires without regard for emotional connection (Bloom, 2004).

2.3.2 Myrtle's Aspirations

Myrtle, desperate to escape her lower-class status, believes that her relationship with Tom will elevate her social standing. She sees Tom as a means to achieve her aspirations, viewing their affair as a transaction that provides her with luxury and excitement (Duvall, 2008). This dynamic reinforces the novel's critique of a society where love is often reduced to a mere commodity, traded for social mobility and material gain.

2.4 The Consequences of Their Relationship

The relationship between Tom and Myrtle ultimately reveals the emptiness of their pursuits. Tom's violent reaction to Myrtle's attempts to assert herself demonstrates the power imbalance in their relationship, showcasing how love, when commodified, can lead to exploitation and tragedy (Rother, 2007). Myrtle's tragic fate serves as a stark reminder of the dangers inherent in viewing love as a transaction, highlighting the moral implications of a society obsessed with wealth.

2.5 The Impact of Wealth on Relationships

2.5.1 Wealth as a Barrier to Genuine Connection

In "The Great Gatsby," wealth acts as both a facilitator and a barrier to genuine human connections. While it allows characters like Gatsby to host lavish parties and attract attention, it also creates superficial relationships based on status and materialism (Tredell, 2002). The characters' interactions are often transactional, lacking the emotional depth necessary for genuine intimacy.

2.5.2 Isolation in Affluence

Despite their wealth, many characters experience profound loneliness and isolation. Gatsby, for all his riches and social gatherings, remains fundamentally alone, illustrating that material success does not equate to emotional fulfillment (Lehan, 1998). This isolation is echoed in the Buchanans' household, where Tom and Daisy's marriage is characterized by emptiness and disconnection, further emphasizing the hollowness of relationships built on wealth.

2.5.3 The Illusion of Love in a Materialistic Society

The commodification of love leads to an illusion where characters mistake wealth for affection and success. This pervasive mindset ultimately results in disillusionment, as the characters come to realize that their pursuits of love through material means are deeply flawed. Fitzgerald critiques this societal tendency, suggesting that true love requires authenticity, vulnerability, and emotional investment (Matz, 2014).

2.6 The Role of Social Status in Love

2.6.1 Class Dynamics in Relationships

The social class dynamics in "The Great Gatsby" significantly influence the characters' relationships. The distinctions between old money and new money create barriers to authentic connections, as seen in the contrasting interactions between Gatsby and the Buchanans. This divide illustrates how social status can dictate the terms of love and acceptance (Fetterley, 2001).

2.6.2 Daisy's Choice Between Gatsby and Tom

Daisy's eventual choice to remain with Tom, despite her feelings for Gatsby, highlights the weight of social expectations and the fear of social repercussions. Her decision underscores the notion that love cannot exist in a vacuum, as societal pressures and class distinctions shape the characters' choices and experiences (McCoy, 2009).

2.6.3 The Tragic Outcomes of Class Conflicts

The conflicts arising from social class ultimately lead to tragic outcomes for the characters. Gatsby's desire to transcend his past and win Daisy leads to his downfall, while Tom's entitlement and arrogance perpetuate a cycle of exploitation. Fitzgerald's portrayal of these dynamics serves as a critique of a society that prioritizes social status over genuine emotional connections (Warren, 2010).

2.7 The Consequences of Commodified Love

2.7.1 Disillusionment and Betrayal

The commodification of love in "The Great Gatsby" leads to disillusionment and betrayal among the characters. Gatsby's idealism clashes with the harsh realities of the world around him, resulting in heartbreak and tragedy. His

pursuit of Daisy, driven by material success, ultimately proves futile, revealing the limitations of his understanding of love (Hays, 2011).

2.7.2 Myrtle's Demise

Myrtle's tragic fate serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of commodified love. Her desire for social elevation through her relationship with Tom culminates in violence and death, highlighting the destructive nature of viewing love as a transaction. Fitzgerald's portrayal of her demise underscores the moral implications of a society that commodifies relationships (Sweeney, 2012).

2.7.3 Gatsby's Tragic End

Gatsby's death, a result of misunderstanding and societal rejection, symbolizes the ultimate failure of the American Dream and the pursuit of love through material means. His tragic end serves as a poignant reminder of the emptiness that accompanies the commodification of love, urging readers to reconsider the true nature of fulfillment and emotional connection (Duvall, 2008).

Chapter Three

The Themes and Symbolism of Materialism: Illusions and Isolation in Gatsby's World

In "The Great Gatsby," F. Scott Fitzgerald poignantly illustrates the tragic consequences of prioritizing materialism over genuine human connections. As characters navigate a world defined by wealth and social status, their relationships become increasingly superficial, ultimately leading to disillusionment and tragedy. This chapter will explore the destructive effects of materialism on the lives of key characters, focusing on Jay Gatsby, Tom Buchanan, Daisy Buchanan, and Myrtle Wilson, while situating their experiences within the broader societal framework of the Roaring Twenties.

3.1 The Illusion of the American Dream

3.1.1 Gatsby's Pursuit of Wealth and Love

Jay Gatsby's life encapsulates the illusion of the American Dream. His meteoric rise from humble beginnings to immense wealth is driven by a desire not only for financial success but also for love and acceptance. Gatsby believes that by accumulating wealth, he can win back Daisy Buchanan and reclaim the happiness they once shared (Brucoli, 1981). However, this pursuit is rooted in illusion, as Gatsby fails to recognize that the love he seeks cannot be bought.

3.1.2 The Facade of Success

Gatsby's extravagant parties serve as a facade, masking the emptiness of his life. While he appears to be the embodiment of success, his loneliness and isolation reveal the hollowness of his achievements (Fetterley, 2001). Fitzgerald critiques the notion that wealth equates to fulfillment, suggesting

that the relentless pursuit of material success often leads to profound disillusionment (McCoy, 2009). This emptiness is further illustrated by the transient nature of Gatsby's guests, who flock to his parties not out of genuine interest but for the allure of wealth and spectacle (Tredell, 2002).

3.1.3 The American Dream's Dark Side

The dark side of the American Dream is evident in Gatsby's life. Despite his wealth, he remains an outsider, unable to penetrate the social elite of East Egg. This sense of alienation underscores Fitzgerald's critique of a society that values wealth over character and integrity (Lehan, 1998). Gatsby's tragic fate serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of equating success with material possessions, forcing readers to confront the moral implications of such pursuits (Sweeney, 2012).

3.2 The Moral Decay of the Buchanans

3.2.1 Tom and Daisy's Superficial Relationship

Tom and Daisy Buchanan epitomize the moral decay of the wealthy elite. Their marriage is characterized by infidelity, disconnection, and a lack of genuine affection. Tom's affair with Myrtle Wilson reveals his disregard for emotional commitment, treating relationships as mere transactions to satisfy his desires (Bloom, 2004). This transactional nature of love reflects the broader societal values of the time, where wealth and status take precedence over genuine emotional connections (Hays, 2011).

3.2.2 The Consequences of Privilege

The Buchanans' privilege allows them to escape the consequences of their actions. Tom's violent behavior towards Myrtle and his callous attitude towards Gatsby's death highlight the moral decay that accompanies their wealth (Duvall, 2008). Fitzgerald portrays Tom and Daisy as symbols of a

society that prioritizes wealth and status over integrity and compassion. Their inability to confront the consequences of their actions ultimately reinforces the theme of moral decay that permeates the novel.

3.2.3 Daisy's Complicity

Daisy's complicity in Tom's actions reflects her own moral ambiguity. While she is portrayed as a victim of societal expectations, she also embodies the emptiness of a life driven by materialism. Her decision to remain with Tom, despite her feelings for Gatsby, underscores the limitations of love in a world where social status reigns supreme (Warren, 2010). Daisy's choices exemplify the tragic consequences of a society that commodifies relationships, leaving individuals trapped in superficial connections.

3.3 The Tragic Fate of Myrtle Wilson

3.3.1 Myrtle's Desire for Escape

Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress, represents the desperate pursuit of upward mobility through relationships. She believes that her affair with Tom will elevate her social status, viewing their relationship as a means to escape her lower-class existence (Rother, 2007). However, Myrtle's aspirations are ultimately misguided, as her reliance on Tom leads to her tragic end.

3.3.2 The Violence of Materialism

Myrtle's demise serves as a stark reminder of the violence inherent in a materialistic society. Her death, caused by Daisy driving Gatsby's car, underscores the destructive consequences of the characters' choices. Myrtle's tragic fate highlights the dangers of commodifying love and the moral implications of a society obsessed with wealth (Sweeney, 2012).

3.3.3 The Impact on Gatsby

Myrtle's death has a profound impact on Gatsby, who becomes embroiled in the fallout of the incident. Gatsby's desire to protect Daisy leads to his own tragic end, illustrating how the consequences of materialism ripple through the lives of those involved. Fitzgerald emphasizes that the pursuit of wealth often results in collateral damage, affecting not only the individuals directly involved but also those around them (Hays, 2011).

3.4 The Role of Isolation and Loneliness

3.4.1 Gatsby's Solitude

Despite his wealth and social status, Gatsby experiences profound loneliness and isolation. His extravagant parties, meant to attract Daisy and forge connections, ultimately serve to highlight his alienation. Guests attend his gatherings not out of genuine affection but for the allure of wealth and spectacle, leaving Gatsby without true companionship (Tredell, 2002).

3.4.2 The Buchanans' Emotional Disconnect

Tom and Daisy's emotional disconnect further illustrates the isolating effects of materialism. Their relationship, built on superficial foundations, lacks the depth and intimacy necessary for genuine connection. Fitzgerald portrays their lives as a cycle of emptiness, where wealth does not translate to emotional fulfillment (Lehan, 1998).

3.4.3 The Consequences of Isolation

The characters' isolation culminates in tragic outcomes. Gatsby's longing for connection leads to his downfall, while the Buchanans' inability to form meaningful relationships ultimately leaves them adrift in their privilege. Fitzgerald critiques a society where materialism fosters isolation, suggesting

that true fulfillment lies not in wealth but in the depth of our relationships and the authenticity of our experiences (Matz, 2014).

3.5 The Symbolism of Gatsby's Death

3.5.1 The Tragedy of Unfulfilled Dreams

Gatsby's death serves as a poignant symbol of the tragedy of unfulfilled dreams. Despite his relentless pursuit of wealth and love, he is ultimately betrayed by the very society he sought to impress. His tragic end underscores the emptiness of the American Dream, revealing the futility of seeking fulfillment through material means (McCoy, 2009).

3.5.2 The Illusion of the American Dream's Promise

Fitzgerald highlights the illusion of the American Dream's promise through Gatsby's demise. The dream, once seen as a pathway to success and happiness, becomes a source of disillusionment and despair (Hays, 2011). Gatsby's failure to achieve his dreams serves as a critique of a society that equates success with wealth, emphasizing the deeper moral implications of such pursuits.

3.5.3 Legacy of Tragedy

In the wake of Gatsby's death, the characters are left to grapple with the consequences of their actions. The novel concludes with a sense of loss and disillusionment, as the characters are forced to confront the emptiness of their lives. Fitzgerald's portrayal of Gatsby's tragic fate serves as a lasting reminder of the dangers of materialism and the pursuit of hollow dreams (Warren, 2010).

3.6 The Broader Societal Implications

3.6.1 Critique of the Roaring Twenties

Fitzgerald's depiction of the characters' tragic fates serves as a critique of the Roaring Twenties, a period characterized by economic prosperity and cultural upheaval. The obsession with wealth and status, prevalent during this time, leads to moral decay and disillusionment, reflecting the societal consequences of prioritizing materialism over genuine human connections (Baker, 2003).

3.6.2 The Enduring Relevance of Fitzgerald's Message

The themes explored in "The Great Gatsby" remain relevant in contemporary society, as materialism continues to shape social interactions and relationships. Fitzgerald's critique serves as a cautionary tale, urging readers to reflect on the true nature of fulfillment and the importance of authentic connections in a world increasingly driven by consumerism (Sweeney, 2012).

3.6.3 The Quest for Meaning

Ultimately, Fitzgerald's work invites readers to consider the quest for meaning in their own lives. By highlighting the tragic consequences of materialism, he encourages a reevaluation of values and priorities, emphasizing that true happiness lies not in wealth but in the depth of our relationships and the authenticity of our experiences (Lehan, 1998).

Conclusions

In summary, F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" offers a compelling exploration of the American Dream and its inherent complexities. Through the lens of the Jazz Age, Fitzgerald critiques the notion that wealth and social status equate to happiness and fulfillment. The novel's characters, particularly Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan, navigate a world filled with ambition, love, and ultimately, disillusionment.

Fitzgerald employs rich symbolism and vivid imagery to illustrate the moral decay underlying the pursuit of the American Dream, emphasizing the emptiness that can accompany material success. The green light, a central symbol in the novel, represents both hope and the unattainable nature of dreams, reflecting the struggles of individuals striving for a better life.

By intertwining themes of love, betrayal, and the superficiality of social status, "The Great Gatsby" remains a poignant commentary on the nature of aspiration and the realities of human experience. The novel invites readers to reflect on their own values and the true meaning of success, making it a timeless piece of literature that continues to resonate with audiences today. Through its exploration of ambition and the human condition, "The Great Gatsby" serves as a powerful reminder of the complexities of dreams and the societal forces that shape them.

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