

Obsession

Business



“ Obsession is the single most wasteful human activity, because with an obsession you keep coming back and back and back to the same question and never get an answer.” -Norman Mailer Obsession is a tragic idea possessed by many that gives an implication of existing feelings that are so strong to a point where they endanger their possessor. In F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby, a wealthy and driven man, falls in love with Daisy, a popular and beautiful but internally conflicted girl, at a young age but finds himself unable to be with her due to his call to war.

While Gatsby is serving in the war, Daisy marries another man, Tom Buchanan. Gatsby, who has not seen Daisy for the past five years, finds himself in a position where his love has turned into an unhealthy obsession. In his obsession, Gatsby has given up everything in the hope of being with Daisy again. Gatsby comes to understand that he truly feels obsession towards her. After seeing each other for the first time in five years, Daisy, in her bewilderment, begins to understand that everything Gatsby has built up and everything he has done is an attempt to get her back. Gatsby invites Nick and Daisy over to his house to flaunt his wealth and show them his accomplishments and possessions.

While there, Gatsby shows Nick and Daisy his shirt collection. “ He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one, before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel, which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. While we admired he brought more and the soft rich heap mounted higher—shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and Apple-green and lavender and faint orange, with monograms of Indian blue. Suddenly, with a strained sound, Daisy bent her

head into the shirts and began to cry stormily.’ They’re such beautiful shirts,’ she sobbed, her voice muffled in the thick folds.

‘ It makes me sad because I’ve never seen such-such beautiful shirts before’ (92). Gatsby begins to throw his shirts out of his cabinet “ one by one” for Nick and Daisy to see. He owns shirts of all different fabrics and designs, “ shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel...shirts with stripes and scrolls and plaids in coral and apple-green and lavender and faint orange, with monograms of Indian blue.

“ Gatsby does not care that the shirts are being unfolded as he tosses them, and that he will have to reorganize everything later; it matters more to him that Daisy sees the collection that he has built up. He needs Daisy to see the empire that he has created. The main reason why Daisy refused to marry Gatsby a few years ago was because of his lack of wealth. Gatsby finally feels that he can prove to her that he is worth something of monetary value. Gatsby can compete with Tom for Daisy’s affections at this point because he has money now too, and money was the one possession Tom had that Gatsby did not when he married Daisy.

Nick watches Gatsby with a sense of admiration while Daisy finally begins to understand why Gatsby is doing this. In a moment of realization, “ Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily” because she realizes that the shirts, the house, and the parties have all been for her. Gatsby has made himself into the man that he believes Daisy wants. Daisy tries to cover her emotions by saying she is crying because ““ They’re such beautiful shirts,”” when in reality Daisy does not know how to handle her emotions.

Daisy married another man after she had concluded that Gatsby would never be wealthy.

Gatsby, on the other hand, had spent the past five years working towards getting her back. Daisy is upset because she feels guilty that Gatsby had spent such a large span of time on her while she had seemed to push him to the side for Tom. Gatsby has created this persona because he is obsessed with Daisy; Gatsby has been in love with the idea of Daisy and she is finally within reach of him. Gatsby's facade has been made to lure Daisy back in, but Gatsby has yet to realize that Daisy is not guaranteed to be the same woman he fell in love with years ago. Gatsby, reluctant to accept his observations, begins to understand that Daisy is no longer the same woman she once was. Nick plans to leave Gatsby's house to return home.

“ As I went over to say good-by I saw that the expression of bewilderment had come back into Gatsby's face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness. Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart” (95-96). Gatsby has spent the past five years dreaming of the moment when he would finally see Daisy again.

He has built a perfect scenario in his head about how everything would go; he had hoped that she would immediately divorce Tom and marry him after seeing all that he has done to win her back. However, Daisy does not seem to want to leave Tom. At this point, Gatsby shows an “ expression of bewilderment;” he is beginning to realize that Daisy is not the same woman she once was. Gatsby had never thought that maybe Daisy could be different now or that maybe she could have changed her mind about him. Gatsby had believed that Daisy has always felt the same way that he did towards her, but “ a faint doubt.

..[occurs] to him as to the quality of his present happiness.” Gatsby thinks that he loves her, and that he has loved her all this time, but he is truly obsessed with her. Gatsby seems disappointed in the person Daisy has become because she is not measuring up to his ideals; she is not the loyal, trustworthy, entertaining girl that she once was because the time they spent apart and her marriage to Tom changed her.

Daisy has “ tumbled short of his dreams–not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion.” Gatsby expects so much of Daisy, and Daisy cannot provide Gatsby with all that he wants because time has passed and their lives are much more complex than they once were. Everything that Gatsby had hoped for from her “ had gone beyond her, beyond everything.” While they had been apart, Gatsby had kept building on what he wanted from her, “ adding to [his expectations] all the time.” His vision for the two of them had been so perfected that it has become unrealistic.

Gatsby has become so obsessed with the idea of Daisy and who she once was that he has lost the love he had for her. Gatsby loved Daisy years ago, but if he still loved her now, he would accept the way she is presently rather than pouting that she is different. However, Gatsby's obsession with his "illusion" cannot be altered; "No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart." Daisy can change as much as she wants for Gatsby, but it will only be enough if Daisy becomes exactly what Gatsby has envisioned for the both of them; Gatsby wants a loyal and trusting relationship, and he has been yearning for it for the past five years. However, it seems as if this is something Daisy cannot provide him.

Gatsby wants to believe that him and Daisy will work out, but he eventually comes to the conclusion that despite his efforts, Daisy has become an obsession of his and he is powerless in his attempts to control Daisy's actions. Gatsby does not truly love her; he loves the girl she was when she was younger and he must understand that he is to move forward as an individual without Daisy. Gatsby requests that his butler stay by the phone to await a phone call from Daisy because he still has a small amount of hope that Daisy will change to be with him. "No telephone message arrived, but the butler went without his sleep and waited for it until four o'clock—until long after there was any one to give it to if it came. I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared.

If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely

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created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about...

like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees” (161) Gatsby is expecting for Daisy to call for the purpose of knowing that she is okay. The night previous, Daisy had accidentally run over Myrtle, Tom’s mistress. Gatsby’s butler stays by the phone all day and night “without his sleep,” but “[n]o telephone message arrived.” With the lack of a telephone message from Daisy, Gatsby finally loses the last bit of hope he had to be with Daisy again; he has accepted that he is powerless. Nick explains how he has “an idea that Gatsby himself didn’t believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared.” By this point, it seems as if Gatsby has given up; it is as if he already knows he has completely lost Daisy to Tom.

His obsession with Daisy is fading; Daisy is no longer the same girl that Gatsby wanted to be with all those years ago and even if she was, Daisy has chosen Tom over Gatsby. Nick believes that Gatsby “lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream.” Everything Gatsby did was for Daisy; his fortune and his possessions were all in attempt to win her back. Daisy was Gatsby’s “single dream,” and at this point she is gone from his life. Gatsby gave up everything to work towards being with Daisy, and in the end his work amounted to nothing.

Gatsby must now face his reality, and, as Nick explains, “[h]e must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon

the scarcely created grass.” Fitzgerald is using seemingly disturbed terminology to describe otherwise beautiful things in nature. Gatsby acts as a symbol of deceit and lack of purity; because in order to get to where he is now, Gatsby used corrupted methods. Gatsby views natural things as “ unfamiliar” and “ grotesque,” when in reality nature is pure. Gatsby thinks nature is “ frightening” because he is not used to it; because people fear the unknown.

Gatsby is entering a “ new world” by leaving Daisy behind. Gatsby must relearn things that he has forgotten in his attempts at being with Daisy. For the time being, Gatsby will drift like a “ poor ghost” as he learns how to feel about nature and life in general. Gatsby will “[breathe] dreams like air” and no longer let his dreams consume him completely. Gatsby has found that his dreams are not to be taken as intensely anymore; that he can ponder an idea but if it falls through, he can manage because dreams are like air in that they come and go.

Gatsby has nothing left to give; essentially Gatsby has become a transparent ghost. He is meant to drift as he finds his way as an individual and not as an obsessed once-lover. Gatsby lacks color and emotion; he is essentially lost without Daisy because he has lost his sense of purpose; he is transparent. Gatsby has surrounded himself in water in this scene. He has immersed himself in transparency as a means of comfort.

Gatsby is no longer the man who has eye-catching parties to flaunt his wealth; Gatsby finally feels comfortable through his contentment with his new self because he is no longer trying to be something that he is not.

Gatsby had believed he loved Daisy, when in reality he was filled with obsession. Gatsby had fallen in love with the idea of Daisy, and in not seeing her for such a long period of time, he lost his love for her and became obsessive. The idea of Daisy consumed Gatsby completely and corrupted him. When Gatsby had tried to help himself, the world did not allow him to.

Overall, Gatsby's love and obsession with Daisy is tragic in that Gatsby worked towards a dream and in trying to get it, he allowed himself to be corrupted by the world.