

The great gatsby



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick, or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event, raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles. In these concluding lines of Ralph Waldo Emersons essay, he once again pounds his beliefs in nonconformatism across to the reader. The examples of Jay Gatsby, in *The Great Gatsby*, and George Babbitt, in *Babbitt* support Emersons strong convictions.

Jay Gatsby lived a financially comfortable life but spent all of his time living not for himself, but living for his long love for Dazy, a married woman. And George Babbitt was even more ignorant. Conformatism was this mans middle name! The only thing this poor man ever thought about was impressing his so-called high class friends. This type of attitude brought both of these men sorrow, and even killed one of them. There is no doubt that Emerson had some great thoughts in his essay, but in my opinion his strong belief in nonconformatism is wrong as is confromatism itself.

Instead of taking an extreme right wing or left wing stand, I think a compromise should be made between the two. In analyzing a character such as George Babbitt, it is very simple to support Emersons extreme claims of pro-individualism. Like many people that lived in the early 20th century, Babbitt seemed to define what we call mediocrity. He was a man that lived his life in fear of being an outcast of society, and only had ambitions of raising his social status, no matter what the cost.

He was a man who wanted, craved, and needed a daily routine, and was filled with uneasiness if that routine was ever broken. He would publicly proclaim his beliefs, which coincided those of society, and numerous times would even sacrifice his own beliefs simply to gain favor with his business partners and peers. George F. Babbitt was so weak-minded that the terms babbittry and mediocrity go hand and hand. To be a Babbitt or to be guilty of babbittry is to behave just as he did. It means that in ones private life one should.

For example, Babbitt would read the morning paper just to store up opinions from the editorial pages to regurgitate later with business associates when it is necessary to impress someone or settle arguments. Babbitt had few opinions of his own; his opinions were articulated by other people. Parroting editorials was Babbitts way of learning and acquiring wisdom. Memorizing phrases and attitudes of politically conservative editorials was done every morning over coffee. It was one of Babbitts daily rituals.

Babbitt was so mediocre that he couldnt even enjoy sex with his own wife. His sex life was about as satisfying as Al Bundy, from the show Married With Children. Babbitts wife, Myra, had a noisy presence. As a housekeeper and a cook she had lost Babbitts interest shortly after he married her. Her character serves as Babbitts domestic anchor and also a millstone around his neck. Babbitt and Myra rarely spoke of important matters. They simply spoke about superficial about such things as material possessions and costly goods the only thing they had in common.

Beneath Babbitts exterior, there is a vague nervousness and comfortableness that plagues him his entire life. This plague seems to be caused simply by a lack of integrityno backbone. When the novel ends, Babbitt says that he feels fine and healthy, and to all appearances he is. However, the reader knows that Babbitts last bits of intelligence, imagination, and integrity have been distilled into the concept of what is known today as babbitttry. Another character we can analyze is Joe Gatsby. Some people may compare Gatsby and Babbitt and come to the conclusion that they were virtually the same.

However, I have come to the conclusion that even though Gatsby and Babbitt had some similar characteristics, they were very different at the same time. Like Babbitt, Joe Gatsby did not have much self reliance or integrity, but he seemed to know exactly what he was getting into. In Babbitts case, he had simply fallen into a routine; and even though he was somewhat intelligent, he didnt bother to take a look at himself to see what he had become. However Joe Gatsby, had a self awareness but simply didnt have the will-power to do anything to end his ongoing affair with Dazy.

Unlike Babbitt, Gatsby was a somewhat mysterious man. Even though he was well known to throw a magnificent party nobody, except for his neighbor, really knew or understood his actions. He had already made it to the top financially and seemed to live a comfortable life. And one would think that in the time of the 20s a man who would host extravagant parties would like to socialize with his guests and maybe even boast a little bit of his well-doings. But Joe Gatsby always had one thing on his mindDazy. She was his entire life.

He would do anything for her, and I mean anything. If Gatsby lead a life of mediocrity than I would have hated to see anyone of that time who lived a life of under-achievement. Joe Gatsby started at ground zero socially and financially. He worked his way to the top and new exactly what he wanted in lifeDazy. His love was so rich for this woman that he would eventually die for her. Maybe Dazy didnt return Gatspys love, but he died for something that he loved dearly. In my opinion, this is a man to be respected, not socially condemned.