

Success sinclair and the great gatsby by scott

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The two texts, *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair and *The Great Gatsby* by Scott Fitzgerald both explore the pursuit of the American Dream in the American society. In *The Jungle*, Sinclair portrays the challenges that immigrants and lower class societies face in their attempts to improve economically. High levels of corruption in the private sector and most social institutions like the justice system deny the poor equal opportunities to succeed. *The Jungle* portrays success as a result of hard work and embracing a saving culture. The novel's protagonist, Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant, comes to America with the ambition of working his way up the social ladder. The desire to live the American Dream encourages him to take up several menial jobs with the hope of saving enough money to help his extended family and improve their social conditions. However, he fails to achieve this dream because of poor pay, lack of better social services, like housing and health care, and rampant institutional corruption. In this regard, Upton suggests that opportunity and success in the American society is not always pegged down to hard work.

On the contrary, attaining success depends on one's willingness to participate in corruption and immorality. This is shown by Rudkus' and his family's failure to succeed economically despite their efforts. The members of the family are subjected to mistreatment, sexual abuse and exploitation in order to keep their jobs. This is evidenced by the sexual abuse of Rudkus' wife, Ona, by her boss. Rudkus' father-in-law is forced to pay out a third of his salary to the person who helped him to secure a job. As the author states:

Here was a population, low-class and mostly foreign, hanging always on the verge of starvation, and dependent for its opportunities of life upon the whim of men every bit as brutal and unscrupulous as the old-time slave drivers; under such circumstances immorality was exactly as inevitable, and as prevalent, as it was under the system of chattel slavery (Sinclair, 129).

This quote captures the conditions under which Rudkus' wife worked hard. Her supervisor Miss Hernderson ran a prostitute ring in which she forced the women and girls under her command to participate. These forms of exploitation not only keep the family poor and unable to advance socially, but also perpetually support corruption and immorality in the society.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Scott Fitzgerald portrays the American society as one that is obsessed with the individualism and pursuit of wealth as the means of achieving the American Dream. While the Sinclair's *The Jungle* associates success with corruption and immorality, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* accompanies it with having a good education, proper family and social connections. This is evidenced by the protagonist Nick Carraway's move to New York to find a job and engage in bond trading. However, he learns that he cannot succeed without the help of well-connected and economically established "old money" friends and relatives. At the same time, *The Great Gatsby* associates opportunities and success to beauty among women, which allows them to be courted by rich men. This is evidenced by Nick's cousin, Daisy Buchanan, who, though married, is still courted by the rich Jay Gatsby. Daisy's wish about the physical appearance of her infant daughter portrays society's tendency to value beauty in women rather than intelligence. She

tells Nick that “ I hope she’ll be a fool—that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool” (Fitzgerald, 21). Daisy’s words reflect the way in which the old society valued submission and subservience in women, which in turn made them appealing to men. In this case, men are regarded as the ticket to economic success.

Nevertheless, both texts tie opportunity and success to corruption and immorality. The Great Gatsby reveals corruption among New York’s high-class society, represented by the affluent Jay Gatsby, Nick’s neighbor who is secretly involved in illegal drugs. Similarly, The Jungle portrays the immoral activities like prostitution that the characters are forced to engage in to make ends meet.