

Conflicts in the great gatsby

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Individual vs. society

- Gatsby vs. the American society in 1920s

From Nick's perspective, Gatsby might have made vast fortune by illegal means and is capable of behaving like an aristocrat, he is still not respected as the 'old money' from East Egg; Gatsby's mansion, his shimmering parties, fancy clothes and cars, cannot erase his past as a low-born farmer's son after all. He dreams to be recognized as one of the upper-class people, but is frequently looked down by people like Tom Buchanan and the Sloanes who was born noble and is accustomed to live a luxurious life.

Gatsby's struggle to be among a higher social class is conflict with what he really is; therefore he cannot be seen and treated equally. His tragedy is an evidence of himself being a victim of the society he lived in, where social classes were considered more valuable than one's inner spirit and materialism was concerned way more than humanity.

Characters vs. character

- Gatsby vs. Tom

First of all, Gatsby represents the new money and Tom represents the old money. While Gatsby acquired his money by doing illegal businesses, Tom only inherited his money without putting efforts. Nevertheless, Tom still feels privileged over Gatsby due to his favorable family background. This is the first conflict. Second, Gatsby and Tom compete with each other for winning Daisy's love. While Gatsby represents the past of Daisy – the more innocent and perhaps the ideal of Daisy, Tom represents the reality of her – the cynicism and materialism inside of her.

- Nick vs. Jordan

While Nick's character stands for the idea of justice and honesty, Jordan's character is just the opposite. Her cynicism, carelessness and dishonesty is shown clearly through the conversation she had with Nick about driving a car, where Nick describes Jordan as a careless, 'rotten' driver' ('It takes two to make an accident.' Said Jordan. 'Suppose you met somebody just as careless as yourself.' Said Nick. 'I hope I never will.'" Said Jordan) and the fact that she has very likely cheated her first gold tournament.

- Tom vs. George Wilson

While Tom represents the power of the 'old money' and the aristocratic quality of East Egg, George Wilson represents the poor, working class people and the spiritless characteristic of the Valley of Ashes.

- Myrtle vs. Daisy

Although these two characters have never met each other in face, but the qualities and ideas they convey respectively are highly contradictory. Daisy: Dressed in white, affected, insubstantial

Myrtle: Dressed in red, straightforward, fleshy, almost coarse

Individual vs. circumstances (fate)

- Gatsby vs. his upbringing

Gatsby, as the protagonist in the novel, is a living example of 'rags to riches'; he was born poor and his parents were 'shiftless and unsuccessful farm people'. It seemed that Gatsby was doomed to live a poor and pathetic life where he has to work in the farm everyday in order to earn a living.

Nevertheless, Gatsby's fantasy about himself was contrary to his real circumstances.

He believed that he was a Son of God; therefore he must be about his father's business. Gatsby was motivated by his imaginations so much so he saw the light of hope and decided to grab the opportunity in front of him immediately when he saw Dan Cody's yacht drop anchor over the most insidious flat on Lake Superior. He changed his fate with his own hands and overcame the conflicts.

The individual vs. himself/herself

- Gatsby vs. himself

Although Gatsby has made most of his dreams become reality, he is not able to face the part of reality that he cannot change. He cannot admit the fact that Daisy is not as perfect as he imagined to be and he firmly believe that he can repeat the past. He is always blind by his illusions and idealism - so much so he is not able to move on. Everything he has done is in pursuing of his self-made illusions - something he can only imagine but will never achieve or even find out in the reality. This quality of Gatsby is harmful to him and ultimately leads to his death.

- Nick vs. himself

Nick has internal conflicts as he perceives the decadent life in New York. On the one hand, Nick is sick of the cynical, careless attitude that most of the wealthy people around him hold, and their lavish, materialism lifestyle. On the other hand, Nick also feels curious and attracted to the seemingly

sophistication of those aristocratic people, despite their dishonesty - this is shown by Nick's developing romance with Jordan Baker.