

The american dream in the great gatsby essay

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



In 1925, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby* after many years of academic problems and indifference that prevented him from graduating from college.

The Great Gatsby is told by Nick Carraway, who comes to settle in New York from Minnesota to learn the bond business. These events are happening during the summertime of 1922. Nick rents an apartment in Long Island, in the district of West Egg. Nick's neighbor is Jay Gatsby, a rich and mysterious man who loves giving spendthrift parties to his friends.

After spending some time in this neighborhood, Nick finally attends Gatsby's exuberant parties only to realize that Gatsby organizes these parties to impress Daisy, Nick's cousin, and wife to Tom. Gatsby had met Daisy in Louisville, and they had a relationship, but it broke later. Gatsby pleads with Nick to mediate his reunion with Daisy, although he is not sure of the repercussions.

Nick finally invites Daisy to a coffee where she meets with Gatsby, and they reignite their affair. Unfortunately, Tom finds out about Daisy's affair and confronts Gatsby. He reveals Gatsby's dirty dealings as an alcohol bootlegger, after which Daisy swears she loves Tom.

Ironically, Tom is cheating on Daisy, for he is in another clandestine affair with Myrtle, George Wilson's wife.

In a turn of events, as they drive through the valley of ashes, Nick and Tom realize Myrtle has been run over by Gatsby's car. Nick finds out that Daisy hit Myrtle; however, Tom is ready to take that responsibility. Tom rushes to George, tells him that Gatsby was driving the car when it hit Myrtle.

George hurriedly concludes Gatsby had an affair with Myrtle and vows to kill him. George shoots Gatsby as he relaxes in his mansion by the pool. George then shoots himself dead. Nick buries Gatsby; however, he moves from East Coast. He concludes that Gatsby's dream to have Daisy was perverted by money and knavery. Nick equates Gatsby's vision of the American dream. He, however, notices that both dreams have decayed into the quest for riches. These dreams are dead, marking the end of the power of imagination.

The author is trying to say that the American dream is dead. "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" (Fitzgerald 69). Daisy stands for ordinary Americans going after riches. They are lost in this compelling desire to have more money, and these riches are delusional.

Gatsby stands for those who are already in riches. They have "thrown" themselves into these riches without thinking hence killing the American dream. Americas lack creative passion in pursuing riches. This passion is supposed to bring happiness; unfortunately, as Fitzgerald observes, this passion is no more. Therefore, the characteristics of the American dream, like happiness, are nowhere to be found in the lives of Americans.

The Great Gatsby is about the dead American dream. Fitzgerald is concerned about the newfound wealth that seems to drive people crazy, especially on the East Coast. The American dream was about innovation, laissez-faire, and the quest for felicity; unfortunately, this dream is dead.

The slow death of the American Dream started immediately after World War I, and now it is dead and decomposed. Unfortunately, some people are still dreaming; however, the writer concurs with Fitzgerald that the time for dreaming is gone. The closest American dream can come to reality now is that; dream.

Fitzgerald, Scott. "The Great Gatsby." Prigozy, Ruth. Ed. New York; Oxford University Press, 1998.