

# Is the great gatsby a tragedy

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



'The Great Gatsby' may be seen as a tragic love story due to the love affair between Daisy and Gatsby which ultimately leads to his death. It could also be appropriate to describe 'The Great Gatsby' as a tragedy due to Nick's attitude towards Gatsby that is almost tragic as he can't see any fault in him. However, I think that 'The Great Gatsby,' rather than being a tragic novel, is rather a Modernist, romantic fiction novel indulging in adulterous passions thus presenting tragic characters such as Jay Gatsby.

Fitzgerald portrays Gatsby as a tragic hero whose tragic flaw is his blindness, which is caused by his love for Daisy; Fitzgerald emphasises this, "but his eyes dimmed a little..." by constant eyesight metaphors highlighting how his views are blurred by love. Until he returns to West Egg, his vision is evidently clear, he is so driven to become a success just to impress Daisy, once again highlighting that she is the cause of his blindness. What makes this so tragic is the argument that Gatsby's love is not reciprocated and all his efforts of transforming himself into a rich man through crime, have been disregarded and unappreciated.

Gatsby's mind is distorted by the idea that wealth will bring in Daisy, however their relationship remains as it was when he was the poor James Gatz, this is shown when Gatsby argued with Tom: 'She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me...' As Daisy still can't be with Gatsby, it highlights one of the novel's main themes of the importance of social status and wealth. As the importance of your background contributed towards your social status in the 1920's, it isn't a big surprise that Gatsby and Daisy do not end up together.

As Gatsby's background is not trusting and unclear whereas Tom was born into one of the most successful families in New York. Therefore as Daisy and Gatsby not ending up together does not shock the reader it leads us to the only tragedy being Gatsby. He is so blinded by Daisy's love that he has lost contact with reality as he is blinded by his dreams. Another tragic feature of the novel is that Gatsby's ambition ultimately killed him. Gatsby was focused and fixed on becoming successful in attempt to win the 'grand prize,' that being Daisy, that it indirectly lead to his death.

Gatsby is a romantic dreamer which implies that he is the tragic hero of the novel. His 'platonic perception of himself' is that he has achieved the American Dream however his dream is incomplete without Daisy. Raleigh believed that the novel 'is a dramatisation of the basic thesis that America had produced an idealism so impalpable that it had lost touch with reality.' The idea of the American Dream was an unrealistic achievement at the time of the Great Depression, however, love driven Gatsby is one of few to achieve success and is admired by others for his apparent status.

The novel raises the question of whether the American Dream is actually worth aiming for, as Gatsby dies in attempt to achieve the American Dream it may suggest it is unachievable or shortlived. The 'gleaming, dazzling parties' of Gatsby create an alternate world for him to attract Daisy's attention and showcase his wealth to her as her opinion and admiration is all that matters to him. The parties are also an alternate world for the attenuators to escape to in an attempt to avoid the reality of the Great Depression.

The importance of money is highly tragic as it highlights how obsessed the people of both West and East eggs have become in order to achieve the American Dream. The metaphor of the green light at the end of the Buchanan's home symbolises the importance of money and also may suggest that Daisy does not need Gatsby anymore and may act as a reminder to Daisy of what she has, wealth and a high social status, reminding us that it is very unlikely she is going to trade this in for Gatsby.

It may also been a symbol of Gatsby's goal showing his determination and that he will not stop until he has everything he has always wanted, this being Daisy. As Gatsby has to showcase his wealth to Daisy it could be seen as a tragedy as it suggests that he knows he has to bribe her to fall in love with him, rather than just naturally love him. Another tragic character in the novel is Myrtle. Myrtle represents the lower classes and it could be argued that how they are treated is tragic.

At first Tom seems to really like Myrtle and enjoy her company as he lavishes her with gifts, however it is not long before we are reminded that he is only using her for his own selfish wants and desires. ' Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand. ' Throughout the chapter, Myrtle also makes comments about how she has social mobility, ' these people! You have to keep after them all the time. '' She thinks that she is higher then her husband and that she can leave him whenever she wants.

Myrtle would not feel enabled to do and say all these things if it was not for Tom. Myrtle doesn't fully realize that Tom is giving her the ability to feel superior and she begins to take him for granted. In this sentence, Tom is

showing Myrtle that she has a limit. She is not as free as she believes and when Tom hits Myrtle, it shows her that she does not have social mobility and it brings her off of her high pedestal. The amount of control Tom has over Myrtle is tragic as she has no freedom or independence of her own and can only act in the boundaries that Tom allows her too.

This also links with how Wilson's is also a tragedy, this is shown by how he can not go on without Myrtle and therefore kills himself to be with her. Although possessing elements of a tragedy such as, death, lies and deceit, ultimately Fitzgerald portrays a story of romance in which we empathise with characters such as Gatsby and Myrtle. Despite this making the novel seem like a tragedy, I think it just features characters with tragic ambitions and lives. For example Gatsby's love for Daisy was his own fatal flaw which is tragic however the fact that Daisy never left Tom for him is not, as it was almost predictable.

Although his love led to his own death, which may be considered a tragedy, in the end there was no 'hero' giving up his life to save somebody like in a stereotypical tragedy and in fact his death was brought on by his own greed - if he didn't drive a rare 'bright yellow' top of the range car then maybe he would have not been killed. This is ironic as all his life Gatsby has wanted to be noticed for his wealth and success and when he eventually is it backfires and leads to his downfall.