

Love vs. materialism in the great gatsby



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The Great Gatsby does not offer a definition of love, or a contrast between love and romance. Rather it suggests that what people believe to be love is normally only a dream. America in the 1920s was a country where moral values were slowly crumbling and Americans soon only had one dream and objective to achieve, success. Distorted love is one theme in the novel The Great Gatsby, present among all of the characters relationships; Daisy and Tom, Tom and Myrtle, Daisy and Gatsby, and Wilson and Myrtle, though Myrtle does not return the love.

This distortion illustrates that it is not love that leads several characters to death, but lust and the materialistic possessions that really drive the characters to their lonely and depressing ends. Deceit and the materialistic possessions the characters indulge in are responsible for the death of several main characters in The Great Gatsby. Having been together before Gatsby left for war, a restoration of the relationship between Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan occurs. Daisy appears to be happily married to Tom Buchanan, although she truly has only has love for his possessions.

Gatsby has to go to great lengths to lure Daisy back to him. Gatsby plans huge, extravagant parties for the sole purpose of impressing Daisy through the means of materialistic possessions; Gatsby believes this is a way to 'lure' her back to him. Gatsby goes so far to even move into a house across from Daisy to keep her in sight; the love Gatsby feels for Daisy is in the past, Daisy's love for Gatsby has changed over time. She now only loves him for his possessions. One example of a failed relationship in The Great Gatsby is the disloyal affair between Tom Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson.

Their relationship is based on deceit and exploitation, Tom uses Myrtle for sex and pure pleasure and in return Tom adores her and showers her with gifts and money. Buchanan is from East egg where everyone there has 'old money' therefore; he looks down upon anyone who isn't as rich and wealthy as himself, thus he treats Mrs. Wilson like a child, or like trash. As Myrtle's relationship with George Wilson deteriorates and she is disenchanted with his limited lifestyle, she desires more and thus when she meets Tom he offers her this.

In some distorted way, Myrtle thinks that Tom will leave his beautiful wife Daisy and marry her, Tom doesn't truly see the relationship between Myrtle and himself being a true relationship, he just believes she is someone he can call upon unannounced and use her for a sexual relationship. But Myrtle has other plans for the two of them. This is made clear when he breaks Myrtle's nose we she mentioned his wife's name: "' Daisy! Daisy! Daisy! ' shouted Mrs. Wilson. ' I'll say it whenever I want to!

Daisy Dai-' Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand" (Fitzgerald, 1926) This harsh action implied by Tom, really puts Mrs. Wilson in her place, making her come to her sense of what she can and cannot say. This reaction from Tom signifies that it is not a pure love existing between them. Further, Myrtle's desire for the material goods Tom can provide shapes her conception of their alleged love, which is evidently greatly distorted as shown through Tom's treatment of her. The crude nature of Tom Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson's relationship is reinforced upon her death.

After a fight with her husband, Myrtle runs away towards a golden car that she believes is owned by Tom, her lover. However the car is driven by Daisy her lover's wife and Daisy wants revenge. The golden color of the car symbolizes money and wealth, what Myrtle truly desires which exemplifies that it was the materialistic love of her relationship with Tom that leads ultimately to her death. The Marriage between Tom Buchanan and Daisy Buchanan is also an entire disappointment. With the war separating Daisy and Gatsby, his absence is one of the reasons she decided to wed Tom.

Tom and Daisy's marriage further illustrates this distortion of love as it was based entirely on their shared obsession with material goods; the money, the houses and the lifestyle. Nevertheless, the main reason Daisy married Tom, was because of his materialistic values.. The marriage the two 'lovebirds' have is really based on convenience – not love. This is evident in several occasions throughout *The Great Gatsby*. For example, while Daisy was giving birth to their first daughter, "Tom was God knows where" (Fitzgerald, 1926).

Thus, there was a plain lack of emotion on Tom's part to be entirely unconcerned with his children's birth and as the birth may have been inconvenient, it did not concern him. This reiterates that their marriage was not founded upon love and deep emotions, rather material possessions. Furthermore, Tom's secret affair with Myrtle only happened three months into the marriage, this shows how loyal Tom really was to his wife. After reuniting with Daisy, Gatsby begins an emotional affair that seem possible to him, and he makes it possible as he is 'extremely rich'. Daisy is a materialistic that can be lured by money:" (Faculty, 2009)

When Gatsby and Daisy first reconnect, she shows only a little emotion, but, it seems true. It's not until Gatsby shows Daisy his mansion and expensive possessions that Daisy displays strong emotions for Gatsby. One example of this is when Gatsby shows Daisy his 'expensive' clothes from England when: "She suddenly, with a strained sound, Daisy bent her head into the shirts and began to cry stormily" (Fitzgerald, 1926). This shows she really only cares about the materialistic possessions Gatsby owns.

In the end, Gatsby and Daisy's relationship fails because all she does not care of his emotions. "She does not even send a flower to Gatsby's funeral." (Fitzgerald, 1926) This again shows the lack of emotions Daisy has to Gatsby. Love is essential in a strong relationship; however, materialism is an essential in *The Great Gatsby*. The relationships are failures because they are all founded on the physical rather than the emotional. F. Scott Fitzgerald makes this evident through the material ties between: Gatsby and Daisy, Daisy and Tom and Tom and Myrtle. Ultimately showing that any relationship based around materialism will inevitably fall.