

# Free essay about the death of the old american dream

[Art & Culture](#), [American Dream](#)



Ideally, the American dream has been present since the onset of American literature. The notion behind it is that the dreamer aspires to ascend from rags to riches while at the same time accumulating things such as happiness, love, wealth, high status and power on his way to the top. The American dream is generally based on the idea that any American can rise to both high social and economic levels that they dream of, provided that they put in the required efforts. Though the American dream has had variations all along different time periods, it is generally based on enjoyment of freedom, self-reliance and the great desire for greater things in life. The American dream of the early settler was a desire to travel out, find vast land and have a happy family but over time, this desire has been transformed into an increasingly materialistic life filled with nice cars, big houses and a life of ease as a measure of success. Similarly, in *The Great Gatsby*, Jay Gatsby comes out as a self-made man who struggled without money but eventually made it to become one of the richest Americans of the early 20th century. He is however blinded by all his wealth to the point of forgetting that money cannot buy him happiness or love. In this paper, I will analyze F. Scot Fitzgerald's criticism of the American dream as explained in the *Great Gatsby*.

According to Fitzgerald, Gatsby's dream is " a very naïve dream that is based on the fallacious assumption that material possessions are synonymous with harmony, happiness and beauty" (Fitzgerald 70). He criticizes the American dream basing his arguments on the life lived by Gatsby claiming that his dream has become too corrupted by the culture of opulence and wealth that surrounds him. He further expounds that Gatsby's

romantic view of wealth failed to prepare him for the corrupt and self-centered groups of people whom he was deeply associated with and became his friends. Gatsby forgot the struggles he went through and started the life of entertaining large crowds of people due to his incommunicable desire to become great. In fact, Nick Carraway in one instance notices that Gatsby is involved in underhand business dealings but Carraway clearly understood that Gatsby is a good man, he tells him that "They're a rotten crowd. but you are worth the whole damn bunch put together" (Fitzgerald 162).

It also becomes apparent that you do not have to work hard to achieve the American dream. This is also a point of criticism towards the American dream by Fitzgerald since he claims that Tom was already born in the American dream since he received all his wealth from his parents. He did not work towards it. But his dream shifts from the usual desire for money and a flamboyant life to the fear of losing Daisy since he sees her as his possession. On the other hand, Daisy also has different American dream, Fitzgerald puts across Daisy to be a lady who has no ambitions in life. Her only desire is to live the American dream that her wealthy husband is already living. Nonetheless, Nick Carraway's version of the American dream is to simply become a more tolerant, reliable and objective man. He considers the money that the people desires have to be just a tiny part of his dream in life. Mostly, his dream only consists of mental values and a general pursuit of honesty, "I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known" he says to himself (Fitzgerald, 49).

In the end of the book, a sense of hopelessness becomes well portrayed so as to prove that the American dream is dead. Gatsby died, Wilson commits

suicide and the death of Daisy's baby also acts as major component that can be used to criticize the American dream. Arguably, the death of both the poor and the rich in Fitzgerald's book symbolizes the death of the old American dream perspective which is later replaced by greed, money and materialism. In conclusion, it becomes evident that the book *The Great Gatsby* is not largely a book about the life and death of Gatz, but it's about what he really stood for. It is clever authored critic book about the life and death of the American dream.

## **Works Cited**

Fitzgerald, F S. *The Great Gatsby*. London: Urban Romantics, 2012. Print.