

Gatsby, corruption of wealth

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Cold Cash Turns to Cold Hearts The 1920s' was a hectic time period for many young and wealthy people living in New York City. Many entrepreneurs took advantage of these economic opportunities and profited greatly. Although, some took their wealth in strife, to benefit others, some people misused their new power. In the novel *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald shows how money and power are often abused. Gatsby never understood the genuine value of hard work. While Tom and Gatsby are talking, Gatsby exclaimed, "After that, I lived like a rajah in all the capitols of Europe" (Fitzgerald 65).

Gatsby was constantly living the life of extreme leisure and luxury, having no responsibilities, and no problems. It is almost as if Gatsby is the "king" of West Egg, with his huge palace and nice cars. As an article states, Gatsby had "his white suit, silver shirt, and gold tie-his palatial house, his grand parties, his fancy automobile, his hydroplane, and his library of real books." (Pauly) With endless amounts of materialistic items and fake friendships what is there to live for? Although Gatsby tells people that he had "inherited" his wealth, Nick believes he made the money a different and immoral way.

When Nick and Gatsby travel to the city one afternoon, they meet a shady man who claims to be good friends with Gatsby. At first, Nick mistakes him for a businessman but, Gatsby explains "Meyer Wolfsheim? No, he's a gambler... He's the man who fixed the World Series back in 1919" (Fitzgerald 78). Gatsby appears to be an honest man, but there is a shady and crafty side to him as well. A quote from an article proclaimed, "Jay Gatz, whose ill-

gotten wealth is acquired solely to gain acceptance into the sophisticated, moneyed world of the woman he loves, Daisy Fay Buchanan” (Telgen).

When people picture a sleazy gangster they see someone who is dirty, probably poorly dressed. However, Thomas H. Pauly’s article demonstrates, “ Jay Gatsby effectively overturned the dated assumption that gangsters were lowlifes from the Bowery and replaced it with an upscale figure who was enviably wealthy and fashionably stylish. ” Judging someone based on their appearance can have its repercussions. The squalid acts Gatsby would do just to get rich is mind-boggling, the money can bring out the most deceptive people.

Some people may speculate that money can buy happiness, friends, and security. However, in the end Gatsby ended up with nothing, when he sadly discovered that money cannot buy true love. When people obtain a large amount of money, they either spend it wisely and profit or “ blow” it, spending on superficial possessions they do not need. Unfortunately, with obvious disregard for morals, ethics and even the law, there is a corruption of wealth and power in the novel *The Great Gatsby* and in modern society as we know.