

The phenomenon of american dream in the great gatsby

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Did Gatsby ever achieve the American Dream? F. Scott Fitzgerald's fictional novel, "The Great Gatsby," shows how a dream can become corrupted by one's focus on acquiring wealth, power, and expensive things. Jay Gatsby, the main character in the novel, is a self-made man who started out poor, and makes most of his money by illegally selling alcohol. Some people say that Gatsby did achieve the American Dream, but despite his wealth, he was unable to live a happy, successful lifestyle as Fitzgerald shows how this dream is full of materialism.

The American Dream is a lot of things. One of them is knowing who you are. When Nick was young, his father said to him, "Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone, just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had." (pg. 5) By criticizing others for no apparent reason, the results, being judgmental. Toward the end of the novel, Nick says, "They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made..." (pg. 187-188) Another example of the American Dream is to not be selfish. Being selfish, or greed, can only lead to failure, and to the downfall of society. Some consider Gatsby as a selfish man because he prefers

to do what's best for him rather than what's best for those around him. For example, Gatsby doesn't care about the consequences of having an affair with Daisy. The fact that she has already started a life with Tom and even

has a daughter, it doesn't bother Gatsby; he just wants to be with Daisy just like the good old days.

The American Dream is something that can always be pursued, or accomplished. Nick says, " I thought of Gatsby's wonder when his first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in the vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night." (pg. 189) But sadly, Gatsby didn't achieve it even when he setted high goals for his dream. Gatsby says to Tom, " Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. " Why of course you can!" He looked around him widely, as if the past were lurking here in the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand. " I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before," he said, nodding determinedly. " She'll see." (pg. 116-117) Gatsby's dream is to be with Daisy, but lost it because he always goes back to his past when he should forward to the future.

And last, but not least, the America Dream is all about letting go. Nick says, " Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther.... And one fine morning—So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past." By dwelling in the past can result in obsession and misfortune. But by letting go of the past, achieving the American Dream could've been easier.

Gatsby is considered throughout the story an anti-hero, being selfish and dishonest man, and having low moral standards. These are some of the main reasons why Gatsby didn't achieve the American Dream. He's considered as an anti-hero because he doesn't risk his life saving people nor does he show any signs of courage. He is considered as a dishonest man, for the obvious reason, lying about his past and present. He tries convincing people that he attended Oxford University and received medals by multiple European countries during WWI. He also claims to own multiple drugstores. In reality, Gatsby attended college at St. Olaf's in Minnesota, but dropped out after two weeks and is obtaining his wealth by bootlegging. The only reason how he has knowledge about being rich is because of Dan Cody, who he became friends with.

As you can see, Gatsby isn't Mr. Perfect; he has flaws. He obtains his money illegally and behaves immorally. Gatsby lies and sins, but does it all for love and happiness. Being selfish, corruptive, having low moral standards, and most importantly, being dishonest are the main signs why Gatsby never achieved the American Dream. Although he isn't the typical hero that enthralled everyone with his courage and charisma, he is still a great man who is crucial to the story because he simply represents the average human being.

F. Scott Fitzgerald effectively offers a powerful critique of a materialistic society and the effects it can have on one's hopes and dreams. Gatsby is so blinded by his dream that he doesn't realize that money cannot buy love or

happiness. He's surrounded by this materialism and discontent, which serves to tarnish his dream of success.