

How materialism and spirituality play a part in the great gatsby, a novel by f. s...

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The Great Gatsby: An Analysis

In the 1920s many Americans began using credit, and buying and becoming very materialistic, and losing their spirit and identity. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* the characters are all engulfed in the world of materialism, and believe that that is what makes them happy. Materialism is defined as the devotion to material wealth and possessions at the cost of spiritual or intellectual principles. Spirituality is sensitivity or attachment to religious values. And identity is the set of characteristics that somebody recognizes as belonging uniquely to himself or herself and constituting his or her individual personality for life. Three characters that exemplify these traits are Daisy, Tom, and Gatsby. In this novel, materialism, spirituality, and identity changes or reinforces these three characters.

Daisy Buchanan is an example of materialism vs. spirituality because of what we know about her from her younger days. She was a young lady that was in love with Gatsby, but didn't marry him because "...I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me..." (137). Materialism affected Daisy and when she married Tom she wanted only the best things, but realized that she wasn't happy because money can't buy you happiness. After seeing Gatsby for the first time in over five years, it seems like Daisy has become that young lady she was before she met and married Tom. For a second she forgot all of her materialistic things and was looking up into the sky and GOD, saying "...I'd like to just get one of those pink clouds and put you in it and push you around." (99). Now we see her spiritual side and see that Gatsby could have possible reinforced her identity.

Tom Buchanan is a character that shows a strong bond with materialism. He is an example of old money, and because he is so wealthy he decides that he can break all the rules and do whatever he pleases, like cheating on his wife.

“‘ Why -‘ she said hesitantly, ‘ Tom’s got some woman in New York.’” (19).

Materialism has gotten to Tom’s head and he believes just because he has so much wealth he can buy happiness with anything that he pleases.

The last character, Gatsby, shows both materialism and spirituality. Gatsby is an example of materialism because of Daisy. All his wealth and status was only for Daisy, because he hoped that one day he would see her and amaze her. His house is an example of this dream because it’s a synthetic place and was only built for Daisy. “‘ My house looks well doesn’t it?’ he demanded. ‘ See how the whole front of it catches the light.’” (95) He realizes that Daisy didn’t wait to marry him because he was poor, and he made it his life goal to become wealthy and maybe someday impress Daisy.

In conclusion, these three characters in the novel show materialism, spirituality, and identity and how they changed or reinforced.