

# The morality and mortality of the american dreamer

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“ And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby’s wonder when he 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 that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

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—to-morrow 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.” -F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* It is so often that the American Dream is referenced; one might believe that it couldn’t possibly be the dream of just one nation, but that of the world. The dream of creating something from nothing; the possibility that rags can be turned to riches and the beggar can become the king; to say the least, the idea in itself is utterly fascinating. Everyone aspires to something, and while it might not be the wish for economic gains or prowess for power, every single human being holds a dream of some kind dear to their heart.

This is beautifully and elegantly portrayed in the *Great Gatsby* as well as in all human lives. In the novel, Gatsby vies for the star-crossed love of his life, Daisy, and he works tirelessly to accumulate the wealth that he thinks will win her over. His dream is a somewhat pure one; he seeks the ethereal, nearly unattainable love that he believes only his reunion with Daisy will

grant him. However, it's obvious that the other characters in Fitzgerald's novel are not as simple as Gatsby is. Daisy dreams of material wealth and for undivided attention, and Tom desires passion, lust, and, of course, power.

The American Dream remains problematic though, and not everyone can or will accomplish their dream or their passion; not everyone can fulfill the role of Cinderella. No, instead, they sit motionless, resigned to their fate, and they let the sands of time flow past them until the hourglass is empty and they've drowned in their regrets and all of the "what-if's" that haunt them. The other sad fates include putting their dream on hold, never to pick it up again; having their dream stripped away by selfish people who think they know best; really the killing of dreams is inevitable for some. Besides, it's impossible for everyone to accomplish their dreams. Thousands of immigrants realized that when they came over to America for a better life, but ultimately were forced into lives of poverty and prejudice.

They formed the backbone of the Industrial Revolution, yet, so few ever escaped the clutches of the working class and its impoverishment. We clearly see in the Valley of Ashes where the Eyes of God or in this case, Dr. T. J. Eckleberg, loom above, that no one escapes their judgment. In the eyes of God we are all equal, but the eyes of man continue to discriminate.

For every Gatsby who rises out of the ashes there are thousands of Myrtles and Wilsons who cannot free themselves from the unforgiving cycle. They can dream; they can aspire all they want, but when the selfish desires and wants of others reign Supreme above yours... Well, there isn't a whole lot that can be done about that. For every diamond in the rough that has been cut

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into a priceless gem, thousands remain buried and untouched. Yet there are the exceptions, there are the Gatsbys who seem to rise above all the folly around them, and they retain this beautiful dream. There are the green lights at the end of the docks and if only, oh if only, one could extend their arm out just a bit further! Then, then it would be possible to take hold of the ever elusive, ever present, and ever desirable dream.

The dream is real. There is no doubt in that. Every dream has a basis in something, but it's so easy to let it skate past your fingers. It's easy to say " I almost made it". It's easy to say that " I was so close", but in reality you weren't.

Because by letting it escape; by letting the dream get away from you when you nearly had it in your grasp; well, you can hardly call yourself better than the person who never tried at all. How can you claim to be so near to the goal when the task remains undone and you remain unhappy?! We fill our lives with bucket lists, with things were going to see and places we're going to go, with recipes and lessons that we've saved for later, but what good is later when time is up?! There is no last chance for anyone. That's why you must go forth and accomplish what you have set out to do. It's why you have to start doing the things you said you would. You can't lie to yourself anymore! Do not let yourself stand at the end of the beach when the green light is practically sitting in your hand! Oh, if only you would grasp it and close your fingers around it—then you wouldn't need to fight the current any longer.