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Liamarie Snyder

St. John Fisher University, les09446@sjf.edu

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Buying into Money Equals Happiness Fails for the Characters in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* is a classic about the desire for love and money and how they both affect the characters within the story. It is the story of a man named Jay Gatsby who wants the love of a beautiful young woman Daisy Buchanan and will do anything in his power to get it. The novel is told through the eyes of a young man named Nick Carraway who is not only Gatsby's neighbor, but also an outsider looking in on the situation at hand. It takes place during the 1920s right after the end of World War I during what is known to be the Roaring Twenties or the Jazz Age. This novel focuses on this new idea of the American Dream and how having money will lead to material gain and success. Many of the characters in Fitzgerald's novel fall for the idea of conspicuous consumption. Advertising, material items, and conspicuous consumption have created a new idea of the American dream from being about hard work, virtue, and morals will lead to success to materialistic accumulation leading to success. During the 1920s not only was there a change in the American Dream, but also there was a change in America itself. There are characters in Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* that buy into the idea of the American Dream of money buys happiness, however their unhappiness reveals the novel's critique of the shift in the American Dream.

Disciplines

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Comments

Paper from Dr. Deborah Uman's English Senior Seminar course, Fall 2012.

Liamarie Snyder

ENGL 420

Professor Uman

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Buying into Money Equals Happiness Fails for the Character's in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* is a classic about the desire for love and money and how they both affect the characters within the story. It is the story of a man named Jay Gatsby who wants the love of a beautiful young woman Daisy Buchanan and will do anything in his power to get it. The novel is told through the eyes of a young man named Nick Carraway who is not only Gatsby's neighbor, but also an outsider looking in on the situation at hand. It takes place during the 1920s right after the end of World War I during what is known to be the Roaring Twenties or the Jazz Age. This novel focuses on this new idea of the American Dream and how having money will lead to material gain and success. Many of the characters in Fitzgerald's novel fall for the idea of conspicuous consumption. Advertising, material items, and conspicuous consumption have created a new idea of the American dream from being about hard work, virtue, and morals will lead to success to materialistic accumulation leading to success. During the 1920s not only was there a change in the American Dream, but also there was a change in American itself. There are characters in Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* that buy into the idea of the American Dream of money buys happiness, however their unhappiness reveals the novel's critique of the shift in the American Dream.

The idea of the American Dream wasn't always about what you had, it took a whole new meaning after the end of World War I as author Jim Cullen talks about in his book *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that Shaped a Nation*. When the Puritans came to America in the 1600s they wanted to get away from the religious oppression that they faced in Europe at the time. They came to America in hopes for a better life and created their own society without outside interference. They had this sense of creating themselves through determination, perseverance, and religion. Religion played the biggest role in their everyday lives and they believed that everything that they did, they did for the glory of God, and they strongly pushed for moral purity. By having this moral purity and by putting God first, the Puritans believed that they would receive happiness forever, thus resulting in their idea of the American Dream. Although it may not seem like the Puritans had an American Dream, the ideas of morals and virtue helped our Founding Fathers such as Benjamin Franklin create America and its dream. Benjamin Franklin came from a big family he was very bright, religious, but most of all he was hard working. He was a scientist, an inventor, and above everything else he was a leader. He did coin the idea of the "American Dream" by basing it off of hard work, education, morals, and virtue. "Franklin articulates an ideology with its roots in Puritan notions of hard work and virtue" (Brauer 53). This suggests that Franklin had a very similar mind set to the Puritans and by emphasizing this we see that pre 1920 the American Dream was based on only three things: hard work, morals, and virtue, and in turn this would lead to eternal happiness. This American Dream wouldn't last for very long, at least until the First World War.

When World War I began in 1914 many Americans were sent off to fight. The war began because of assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and the one thing led to the other, and the United States became involved due to the alliances that were made. The war lasted about four years and when it was finally over Germany was in debt to the United States because Germany had loaned money from the U.S. and had to pay it off thus resulting in the economic boom in the 1920s after the war.

The 1920s in America was known for its jazz music, large amounts of money, extravagant clothing, expensive cars, and great parties. It was also known as the roaring twenties where everyone was celebrating the soldiers coming back from war, women were showing more skin, and the politics and the economy of America was back to normal (Cullen). Ronald Berman illustrates in his book *The Great Gatsby and Modern Times* clearly what the American dream was during the time period of *The Great Gatsby*. “By 1922, when *The Great Gatsby* takes place, the American Dream had little to do with Providence divine and a great deal to do with feelings organized around style and personal changed – and above all, with the unexamined self” (50). Previous to this idea many people who were coming to America were coming to create themselves by obtaining success through hard work and perseverance in hopes to become happy because of everything that they have achieved. Even the pioneers who were traveling westward were hoping to create themselves through hard work, but by the time the 1920s came around hard work wasn’t as important as the material items and the amount of money you had. Advertising was also changing and becoming more about materialism just as many of the people were.



money you had and as the new model of the American Dream was starting to form, material items defined who you were and the amount of your success. Advertisements went from being plain and simple to fancy and eye catching no matter which one you looked at. In particular many car advertisements were geared toward men who had money and wanted to spend it.

The border around the ad is almost as fancy as the car that it is advertising. Rolls Royce is an expensive car and it is also the car that Jay Gatsby drives in Fitzgerald's novel. The phrases and the word choices such as "thoroughbred", "perfection", "triumph", and "in a class of its own" would suggest that by purchasing this car you would become all of these things. Also, the black and white color scheme of the ad may suggest that the car is sophisticated and elegant because color ads during this time period were mostly for everyday items such as chewing gum and soda. Car advertisements could be seen almost anywhere especially during this time period.

There are many magazines during this time period that also offer car advertisements. *Vanity Fair* is the magazine that is "the main source for the creation of social identity through high style" (Berman 17). During the 1920s *Vanity Fair* was the magazine that most cars were seen in. "The automobile is by far the most important commodity in the issue"(18). This shows the importance and the emphasis that people

place on having nice cars because many of the cars that are advertised are expensive. Money doesn't seem like much of an issue or a problem for the men in Fitzgerald's novel.

Jay Gatsby, one of the wealthiest men in Fitzgerald's novel was really focused on buying Daisy's love because he could afford the expensive cars. Gatsby comes from a poor, lower class family who didn't receive much education. We can tell that Gatsby lacks more or less a formal education due to the way that he talks and his word choices. As Carraway describes Gatsby at their first face-to-face encounter "I was looking at an elegant young roughneck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time before he introduced himself I'd got the strong impression that he was picking his words with care" (48). The words that Carraway chooses to describe Gatsby are carefully placed within this description. For every good word Carraway used to describe Gatsby he counters it with a bad word to suggest that although Gatsby does have money and throws these extravagant parties he is an imposter because of where he comes from and how he presents himself. Carraway then goes on to say that "without question of the information that Gatsby sprang from the swamps of Louisiana or the lower East Side of New York" suggesting that it is clear that Gatsby doesn't come from old money, that Carraway himself believes that "young men didn't drift coolly out of nowhere and buy a palace on Long Island Sound" (49). The words that are used such as "coolly" and "palace" speak for themselves. Gatsby didn't just nonchalantly buy a mansion to throw huge parties in; there is a reason and motive to why and how he got his material items.

Gatsby's material items however are what make him a self-made man. John Rohrkemper's article "The Allusive Past: Historical Perspectives in *The Great Gatsby*" makes a liable connection between Gatsby and the old model of the American Dream. Rohrkemper looks at how Gatsby himself represents as the country of America and Rohrkemper explores Gatsby's past and compares him to Benjamin Franklin. In Fitzgerald's novel, Gatsby does what he has to do to get money, which means that he doesn't have morals or do virtuous things to succeed. He is a bootlegger and a criminal and "makes no mention of moral improvement; his goal appears never to be more than success – material success" (Rohrkemper 157). Which is proving that Gatsby buys into the ideas of money buys happiness because he yet again he thinks that he can buy Daisy's love. Gatsby unlike Franklin, who is also talked about in Rohrkemper's article, is all about material success and winning Daisy over with the amount material items that he has. The change in the American Dream is very clear and "Gatsby dreams as does Franklin, and he achieves a kind of success, but he ultimately lacks an overreaching vision, lacks a sense of his moral responsibility to the world, lacks a moral base" (157). Which I believe to be completely true because of the people that Gatsby surrounds himself with, and the ways that he makes his money. While Gatsby does achieve material success with his house, the parties, and the amount of cars he has, he is doing it for all the wrong reasons, and he isn't doing it honestly.

Although Gatsby is a self made man, his criminal acts, business of bootlegging, and mysterious persona aren't what he expects to win Daisy over. Gatsby's longing for the love of Daisy is his American Dream. He wants nothing more than to relive his past when he was soldier and she was the careless young loose cannon she used to be before

she met and married Tom Buchanan. He stares at the green light at the end of Daisy's dock across the water hoping that someday she would come back to him and love him just as he still loves and longs for her. "Part of Gatsby's 'greatness' in fact lies precisely in his failure to recognize his dream as always already lost" (Green 53). Gatsby had it set in his mind that repeating the past was something that could happen and the minute that he reentered Daisy's life he would be able to marry her just as they had planned before he left. All the parties that Gatsby throws are just to get Daisy's attention. He wants to be noticed and wants her to attend so she could see that Gatsby, just like Tom had enough money to afford all the things that she wants. "On the week-ends his Rolls-Royce became an omnibus, bearing parties to and from the city between nine in the morning and long past midnight, while his station wagon scampered like a brisk yellow bug to meet all the trains" (Fitzgerald 39). In emphasizing that Gatsby has two cars this passage suggests that he has a lot of money. By Gatsby only bringing out his Rolls Royce on the weekends shows that he wants to put on an act for the people that are going to be attending his parties. He wants them just as much as he wants Daisy to see the amount of money he has through his cars and other material items almost like Tom Buchanan.

Tom Buchanan serves as Gatsby's foil throughout this novel and he ultimately buys Daisy's love. He comes from old money, and spends it however and wherever possible:

His family were enormously wealthy – even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach – but now he'd left Chicago and come East in a fashion that rather took your breath away for instance, he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to

realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that.

(Fitzgerald 6)

This description of Tom highlights the importance of money, which represented who you were. Carraway's reference to "a string of polo ponies" lets us imagine just how rich Tom really is. The fact that they were polo ponies is important because people who attend polo matches are rich, wealthy and upper class people. Fitzgerald places a lot of emphasis on money throughout his novel especially when dealing with Tom Buchanan. On their wedding day, Tom gave Daisy a pearl necklace that's cost three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. He also had four private cars and the whole floor of a hotel just for their wedding (76). Tom is the main character that buys in the money equals happiness equation. The more money that he spends on Daisy the longer she will be with him.

Daisy seems to be nothing but an object to both Tom and Gatsby and that is the way that advertisements made women seem as well.

Many of the ads that are geared toward women during this time are about something that will help them either lose or gain weight. In one particular one the writing is difficult to make out but the title of the ad is "Light a Lucky and you'll never miss sweets that make you fat". It's advertising cigarettes that will make women skinny. This ad proposes the

idea that women need to be skinny and petite and by smoking a "Lucky Strike" they won't gain weight. The words that are visible such as "beautiful", "youthful", and "slenderness" could suggest that those are something all women during this time period



want to be. Even the name of the cigarettes might suggest that whoever smokes them will be lucky which is another selling point. “The ads of *Vanity Fair* promise a change of identity so complete that there will be no former self left to argue with” (19). Which could be completely true because if you smoke “Lucky Strikes” you will lose weight meaning you won’t be the same person you were before you started smoking them. The emphasis placed on the appearance and body image of woman make them “ornaments” for wealthy men such as Fitzgerald’s character of Daisy Buchanan.

Daisy Buchanan, a young and beautiful woman is, the object of Jay Gatsby’s obsession, Nick Carraway’s cousin, and Tom Buchanan’s wife. She plays a huge role in the novel and another role in the problems with the new model of the American Dream. Carraway introduces us to Daisy in the very beginning of the novel by calling her “lovely with bright eyes”, describing her voice as “the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again” (Fitzgerald 9). Placing these characterization about Daisy as so would suggest that she a very significant character throughout the novel and it is important to understand her. By describing Daisy’s voice the way that he does Carraway puts Daisy in a class of her own just the like Gatsby’s Rolls-Royce’s ad. “Her voice is full of money” (120). Gatsby’s describes Daisy’s voice when he finally gets a chance to meet up with her again. By saying that Daisy’s voice is full of money, Gatsby is describing what she is about. You can tell a lot about a person by the way they speak and the sound of their voice and it is clear that Daisy is about money; after all she did marry Tom Buchanan who is extremely wealthy. Even the way that Daisy describes her self as “Sophisticated – God, I’m sophisticated” (17) illustrates that because she was able to go places due to the amount of

money that she has makes her classy. But Daisy wasn't always about money there is a reason why she changes from being careless into wanting material things.

Jordan Baker, Daisy's good friend talks about Daisy before, leading up to, and after her marriage to Tom Buchanan with Carraway describing how Daisy has changed after Tom bought her love. "She went with a slightly older crowd – when she went with anyone at all. Wild rumors were circulating about her – how her mother had found her packing her bag one winter night to go to New York and say good-bye to a soldier who was going over seas"(75). Daisy hanging out with an older crowd would suggest she was more mature than most young women her age. She was able to go to New York to say goodbye to Gatsby and she didn't care what people thought because she didn't pay attention to the rumors that were being spread. Daisy was a loose cannon that was young and careless and was in love with a soldier. After the soldier leaves, as Jordan describes, Daisy picks herself up, moves on and comes to a realization; she needs to marry someone with money. "In June she married Tom Buchanan of Chicago, with more pomp and circumstance than Louisville ever knew before" (75). The words Jordan uses to describe the reason for Tom and Daisy's marriage shows Daisy's motive for marrying him. "In choosing Tom Buchanan over the absent Gatsby, Daisy has allowed her life to be shaped forever by the crude force of Tom's money" (Person 253). This becomes evident as the Buchanan's relationship is described throughout the novel.

Daisy's material motive for marrying Tom becomes clear when Jordan Baker further describes the Buchanan's marriage. "Next day at five o'clock she married Tom Buchanan without so much as a shiver and started off on a three months' trip to South Seas" (Fitzgerald 76). Daisy was ready for the marriage despite the letter from Gatsby,

she knew that marrying Tom was the right thing to do because she would be better off in the end. Gatsby was poor and wouldn't have been able to give her everything that Tom could and did. Tom was able to travel all around the world to as many different countries and states as he wanted while Gatsby was busy fighting in the war. "They moved with a fast crowd, all of them young and rich and wild, but she came out with an absolutely perfect reputation" (77). Everyone that the Buchanan's hung around with and were friends with were young and rich just like them which shows that Daisy didn't want any other lifestyle but this one because she didn't do anything to get out of it. Daisy herself even claims that he wants her daughter to be a "fool because that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool"(17). In other words, Daisy wants her daughter to grow up and be just like her because in the end Daisy was a fool for marrying Tom, because he had a lover in New York and Gatsby would have done anything for Daisy.

Nick Carraway is the last and final piece to this puzzle of the new model of the American Dream. He is the narrator of the story and everything we know about the other characters we know through Carraway's perspective. "The tone is unmistakable—a combination of moral censure, self-protectiveness, and final saving sympathy that marks Nick as an outsider who is nonetheless drawn to the life he is afraid to enter" (Samuels 785). Nick is indeed the outsider in this story who comes to the village of West Egg to reinvent his self and become "the well-rounded man" (Fitzgerald 4). He knows nothing of the parties that Gatsby throws, he doesn't even know who Gatsby is until someone else mentions him even though Gatsby is his neighbor. When Carraway goes to visit his cousin Daisy and her husband Tom whom he knew from college, he seems amazed by just the outside of their house. "Their house was even more elaborate than I expected"

(6). Carraway didn't know what to expect when he entered East Egg he just figured it would be like West Egg but he was very wrong; everything was different. Money was the main concern of the inhabitants of West Egg. It was all about what you had that made you the person you were and if you had an education that made you even better.

Carraway explains in a conversation between him and Daisy that she makes him feel "uncivilized"(12) and this suggests that because of the money that Tom and Daisy have she is able to learn things that others may not be able to. "Their interest rather touched me and made them less remotely rich – nevertheless, I was confused and a little disgusted as I drove away" (20). Tom and Daisy's interest in gossip, rumors, and other things of that matter changed the way that Carraway looked at the Buchanans and it changed how he felt about them. As much as Carraway does not like Tom, Carraway puts up with him because Tom is married to Carraway's cousin, and although he cares for his cousin, Carraway can see the shallowness and emptiness in Daisy and her marriage. "They weren't happy, and their of them had touched the chicken or the ale—and yet they weren't unhappy either. There was an unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture, and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together" (145). This passage emphasizes the distance in Tom and Daisy's relationship. Carraway sees them sitting at the table across from each other neither of them seem to be engaged with the other, and they didn't seem happy, but they didn't seem unhappy, they were at a standstill. Carraway uses the words "unmistakable" and "nature intimacy" with a sort of hollow sense and he describes what he sees as a "picture" instead of a real life interaction. The choice of the word "picture" to describe Tom and Daisy leaves it up to Carraway's and whoever else sees them in this moment's imagination to figure out what

is going on, it is open for interpretation, whereas other moments in the novel like in the beginning we actually see Tom and Daisy's marriage.

As the novel closes and Tom and Daisy leave East Egg, we get a very clear understanding of the kind of people they are. "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" (179). Carraway describes the Buchanans perfectly in this particular passage, and again by emphasizing their money and carelessness we get a better and truer understanding of them. When Daisy runs Myrtle Wilson over with Gatsby in the car, he takes the blame for what happens and in turn he is killed because of it. Carraway isn't sure what held Tom and Daisy together but whatever it was it turned Daisy into a monster. Ultimately Daisy didn't care about Gatsby the way that she made it out to be because if she did, she would have fessed up to killing Myrtle Wilson and she would have left Tom, but because of his money, the superficial-ness, and the materialistic-ness of their relationship, Daisy picks up her life and moves away with Tom to escape whatever it was that was haunting them in East Egg.

Carraway and Jay Gatsby established a great friendship after the first time they met. Part of their friendship had to do with the fact that Carraway was Daisy's cousin and he believed that if he got Daisy and Gatsby alone together they could rekindle whatever feelings they had before Tom Buchanan came along, and before Gatsby went away to war. Daisy was clearly affected by Gatsby leaving a little while, but when she moved on, she moved on quickly and only saw money coming from Tom Buchanan. Gatsby lived in the past hoping that Daisy would come back to him, and with Carraway's help

Gatsby was reunited with the love of his life. “Gatsby is a mystery but more than that he signals the ‘vanishing’ of whiteness into determinacy, and thus threatens the whole economic, discursive, and institutional structure of power supporting social distinctions and hierarchies at work in *The Great Gatsby*” (Will 135). In short, Gatsby’s mysterious persona threatens the upper class and challenges the ideas of power that are present in the novel. Tom Buchanan is one of those people that feels threatened by Gatsby. Maybe it is because Gatsby is bootlegger, a criminal, and without a doubt a gangster/businessman (Brauer), or maybe it is because Tom knows that Daisy did love Gatsby at a point in time. Tom has no reason to feel threatened though because Daisy’s shallowness and attraction to money is what keeps their relationship going, even if Tom is cheating. Constantly throughout the novel Gatsby calls Carraway “old sport” and this shows the friendship that is blossoming between the two men.

As the novel proceeds, Carraway really critiques Gatsby’s love for Daisy. He talks about the way Gatsby looks at her, talks about her, and sometimes even thinks about her. Carraway tells Gatsby “You’re acting like a little boy.... Not only that, but you’re rude, Daisy’s sitting in there all alone” (Fitzgerald 88). This suggests that Gatsby doesn’t know how to act around Daisy, they he is simply a little boy with a crush, and he is greatly affected by her presence. Having Carraway explain this passage helps to the understanding of Gatsby’s feelings for Daisy. Gatsby is nervous to approach Daisy because he is not the man that she wants him to be. Gatsby is not the wealthy and brute Tom Buchanan that Daisy married, he’s different, and although he wants to impress Daisy sometimes he fails to do so because there are many times that she doesn’t not attend his extravagant parties.

Carraway argues “No – Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men” (2). This passage becomes the one thing that is constantly referred back to throughout the novel. Carraway tells Gatsby’s story as an outsider and although Carraway thinks Gatsby “turns out all right”, in the scheme of things he doesn’t. Gatsby fails to achieve his American Dream. It doesn’t matter how much money he has or all of the material items he gains, in the end he never got Daisy back, and he takes the fall for the death of Myrtle Wilson. The “foul dust” that Carraway talks about in Gatsby dream is referring to Daisy because she is ultimately the cause of Gatsby death. Carraway offers a feeling of sadness and grief after Gatsby’s death. He took care of all the arrangement and he was one of the only people at Gatsby’s funeral. This is important because it shows that the people of West Egg, and even the people who attended his parties didn’t even know who he was. They only knew who Gatsby was based on his mansion, parties, and cars, and this clearly shows the problems with the new model of the dream. Something else that people knew Gatsby by was his criminal past and bootlegging, so either they were too scared to attend his funeral or they just didn’t care. One thing is for certain, Daisy didn’t care at all about Gatsby even though that is what he was hoping to achieve and obtain throughout the novel, but he did it in all the wrong ways. Maybe if Gatsby didn’t lie to her in the beginning of their relationship about having money she would have actually waited because materialistic things and money would have matter as much.

Mr. Gatz, Gatsby’s father, and Carraway had a long conversation discussing Gatsby and his life. Carraway allows us to learn more about Gatsby through this

conversation and then it all comes together. The reason for Gatsby joining the army, why he ran away, and even why he got involved in the business he was in. Briefly before this conversation, Wolfsheim, Gatsby's closest friend claims "I raised him from nothing, right out of the gutter. I saw him right away he was fine-appearing, gentlemanly young man, and when he told me he was an Oggsford I knew I could use him good" (171). The word "Oggsford" as Wolfsheim says is similar in pronunciation to "Oxford". This suggests that Gatsby put on a front when he first met Wolfsheim, the man who fixed the 1919 World Series, because he wanted to appear as a different person than who he really was; James Gatz, a poor boy with a dream. Mr. Gatz shows Carraway a picture of the mansion Gatsby sent his father and also some resolves that Gatsby wrote down. Just from the resolves Mr. Gatz knew his son was going far and "ever since he made a success he was very generous with me" (172). Gatsby had a huge heart and did many things to make others happy. Gatsby was generous with his father and in return his father appreciated it and that's what really matters and should have been Gatsby's dream instead of being generous, caring for, and trying to impress a woman who wants nothing to do with him.

At the closing of the novel, Carraway reminisces about Gatsby and his life:

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 the vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled under the night" (180).

This is one of the most important passages where Carraway talks about Gatsby and his dream for Daisy. The reason this is the most important is because he is proving that Gatsby failed in reaching his American dream. Carraway has mentioned earlier in the novel that Gatsby has failed but the difference this time is the fact that Gatsby was destined to fail from the beginning. After the conversation with Gatsby's father, Carraway takes into account that Gatsby came such a long way, and he tried so hard, but he had no chance in winning Daisy over. This passage emphasizes the struggle that Gatsby faced and his failure in obtaining his American Dream. Gatsby's wealth, material items, and criminal past just weren't enough, proving that the new model of the American dream has many flaws. We can also see the contrast between the different ideas of the American Dream not only in the characters but also in the towns.

Fitzgerald creates the two towns East and West Egg to represent the differences in the American Dream. West Egg as Carraway describes was "the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them" (5). By describing West Egg, as "less fashionable" Carraway is able to separate himself from those that are sucked into the materialistic accumulation that overcomes the town of East Egg. There are clearly distinct differences between the two and it all came down to how you got your money, and the amount of material items you had. East and West Egg "represent the collision of dream and dreamer which is dramatized when Gatsby tries to establish his 'universe of ineffable gaudiness' through the crass materials of the real world" (Samuels 786). This illustrates the exact difference between the two towns. West Egg was for the dreamers like Gatsby who often dreamt of being with Daisy, and for Nick Carraway who wanted to be a successful businessman

because that's all he could be even though he came from wealth. East Egg was for the superficial materialistic lovers such as Tom and Daisy Buchanan who flaunted the money they had and what they were able to do with it, and for Jordan Baker who also played into the new model of the American Dream just as much as Tom, Daisy, and even Gatsby did. Fitzgerald is another person to look at even though he is only the author of the novel.

It is important to understand how Fitzgerald sees the American Dream himself while creating the new model of the American Dream for the characters in the novel. Kimberly Hearne points out in her article "Fitzgerald's Rendering of a Dream" that "Fitzgerald sees the American Dream – its ideology and its very character as a contradiction to and a distortion of reality" (190). We clearly see this in both Daisy and Gatsby's characters. Daisy loses her sense of reality when marrying Tom Buchanan for material gain, and Gatsby loses his sense of reality when he loses Daisy to Tom. Gatsby gets so wrapped up in trying to impress Daisy with his money and parties that he loses sight of his own happiness and success. "For Fitzgerald the American Dream is beautiful yet grotesquely flawed and distorted" (191). The way that Hearne talks about the dream and the way Fitzgerald presents it bad. Hearne like myself and probably many others believes that being successful and happy is a great thing, but the way in which Gatsby and Daisy achieve it is completely wrong. Personally, I don't think that Gatsby, Tom, nor Daisy achieve the American Dream at all. They all are after money and have material things to show for it. We can even see the difference in success through the different ads discussed earlier.

The car and cigarette advertisements among many others demonstration how the material items described show conspicuous consumption. Many of the people that see

these ads may think that because they can afford a Rolls Royce they will be “in a class of their own” or they can smoke the “Lucky Strikes” they will be “beautiful, youthful, and slender”. It is clear that the advertisements during this time period have a hidden agenda and are about material items to make whoever is buying and can afford the product that much better than the person that can’t afford to buy that product. This also shows a change in the dream from being hard working and moral to materialistic and money-oriented. Having money, being rich, and being able to afford expensive things all play a role in Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*.

In a sense *The Great Gatsby* is Nick Carraway’s story as much as it is the Buchanan’s and Gatsby’s. We learn a lot about Carraway by reading the story through his eyes and seeing the events that take place. One thing that really proves the problems in the new model of the American Dream is the fact that both the Buchanans and Nick Carraway move away from the Egg villages. Carraway goes to tell Daisy about Gatsby’s funeral and finds their house empty, he later finds out that they moved away and would not be returning back to East Egg for some reason or another. As for Carraway, comes to a realization that proves another flaw. “I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all – Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life” (176). Each one of them came to the East looking for the answer to their American Dream of material success but each one failed in attempt to do so. They all must have had something in common for Carraway to realize that they all failed in what they had set out to do, and this proves true when the book ends with Carraway moving back home to go

back to his life there. Although he will never forget that summer, Carraway's narration really allows seeing the flaw with the new model of the American Dream.

The Great Gatsby is one of many novels from the 1920s that offer a reflection of the American Dream. There is a shift in the American Dream from what the Puritans and Benjamin Franklin believed to be by working hard with moral and virtue to materialistic accumulation, wealth, and conspicuous consumption. Reading this novel a third time as an educated college student there is a complete difference in my point of view. The Buchanans, Jay Gatsby, and Nick Carraway all show the problems with the new model of the American Dream, which is something that I didn't even think of the first time I read it when I was in high school. I didn't even think about *The Great Gatsby* as a sad novel that talks about the American Dream until I read it with Dr. Rossi. Then after reading it a third time my thoughts about the novel changed. This has become one of my favorite books and it really shows the difference between money equals happiness and love equals happiness. The money equals happiness equation is shown through Daisy because she is so unhappy with the fact that Tom is cheating on her with Myrtle that it causes Daisy to run her over but because Tom has money they are able to move away and start over. Then the love equals happiness equation is shown through Gatsby because he loves Daisy so much that he takes the blame for killing Myrtle and ends up dead. So in reality neither Daisy's nor Gatsby's American Dream is really successful or happy.

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*Rolls Royce Ad. < <http://www.aviationancestry.com/Engines/RollsRoyce/RollsRoyce-Company-1920-1.jpg>>

*Lucy Strike Ad. < <http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/TenThings/1652?view=print>>