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**Disillusionment with the American Dream in F. Scott  
Fitzgerald's the Great Gatsby: Analysis of Characters**

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## *Dedication*

This humble work is dedicated to my family who were unconditionally supporting me to accomplish it, to my lovely parents Mabrouk and Khadidja, the light of my eyes, and my sisters and brothers. I would not have achieved half of what I have without the constant love of my family who provided me with their satisfaction and prayers.

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## Abstract

The present dissertation tackles the myth of the American Dream through Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. Deploying a psychoanalytical method, the study displays the author's perception of the American dream and its tragic implications on the American character. Indeed analyzing characterization with reference to the notion of the American dream revealed the dark side of it. The tragedies of the protagonist Jay Gatsby and the characters surrounding him embody the sense of disillusionment felt by the Americans and the author himself during the Roaring Twenties. The research demonstrates that Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is a critic novel par excellence, representing the dramatic alteration in the structure of the American society and its effects on the psychology of the Americans as a result of their excessive dreaming of material possession at the expense of moral values.

**Key Terms:** The American Dream, Characterization, Disillusionment, F. Scott Fitzgerald Psychoanalysis.

## ملخص

تتناول هذه المذكرة تحليل شخصيات رواية "غاتسبي العظيم للكاتب الأمريكي سكوت فيتزجيرالد بإتباع منهج التحليل النفسي للحلم الأمريكي. تعرض هذه الدراسة تصورا لماهية "الحلم الأمريكي وآثاره المأساوية على الشخصية الأمريكي من وجهة نظرا المؤلف. كما و قد كشف التحليل مع الإشارة إلى الخيبة عن الجانب المظلم للحلم الأمريكي حيث تجسد الدراسة مآسي البطل جاي غاتسبي والشخصيات المحيطة به, الإحساس بخيبة الأمل التي شعر بها الأمريكيون والمؤلف نفسه خلال عشرينيات القرن العشرين. كما يوضح البحث أن رواية "غاتسبي العظيم" لرائد الحداثة في أمريكا فيتزجيرالد رواية ناقد بامتياز ، ويمثل التغيير الدراماتيكي في هيكل المجتمع الأمريكي وآثاره على سيكولوجية الأمريكيين نتيجة لحلمهم المفرط للحياة المادية على حساب الأخلاق والقيم.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الحلم الأمريكي، التوصيف ، التحليل النفسي ، الخيبة، سكوت فيتزجيرالد.

## Table of Contents

<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>Acknowledgments.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>General Introduction .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Chapter One: Theoretical Background of the American Dream .....</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1. Introduction .....	13
1.2. The the Evolution of the American Dream .....	13
1 .2.1.Definition of the American Dream. ....	13
1.2.2Historical Background of the American Dream .....	14
1.3 The Representation of the American Dream in American Literature.....	16
1.3.1 The American Dream before Fitzgerald.....	16
1.3.2The Representation of the American Dream in <i>The Great Gatsby</i> .....	18
1.3.2.1 The Great Gatsby: the Jazz Age and Modernity .....	21
1.4A Psycho-analytical Meditation on the Characterization of <i>The Great Gatsby</i> .....	22
1.5 Conclusion.....	23
<b>Chapter two:Characterization vs. the American Dream in <i>The Great Gatsby</i>.....</b>	<b>24</b>
2.1. Introduction .....	24
2.2. Representation of Characters .....	24
2.2.1. Jay Gatsby: .....	25
2.2.2.Myrtle Wilson .....	26
2.2.3. George Wilson .....	28
2.3. The Representation of the American Dream through Characterization .....	29
2.3.1.Gatsby’s Dream: his Pursuit of Daisy.....	29

2.3.2 Myrtle Wilson's Dream .....	33
2.3.3 George Wilson's Dream .....	34
2.3.4 The Great Gatsby vs. the other Characters .....	35
2.4. The signification of Social Class in Characterization .....	36
2.5 Conclusion .....	39
<b>Chapter Three : Disillusionment with the American Dream in <i>The Great Gatsby</i> ..</b>	<b>40</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	40
3.2. Gatsby's Dreams and Disillusionment .....	40
3.2.1 From the Pursuit of Wealth to Downfall .....	40
3.2.2 From the Pursuit of Love to Downfall .....	42
3.3. Reasons for the Disillusionment of American Dream.....	43
3.3.1 Social Conditions .....	43
3.3.1.1 The American Culture and Social Invironment .....	43
3.3.1.2 The Jazz Age and the Lost Twenties .....	45
3.3.2 Personal Motives .....	45
3.4 Allusion of Disillusionwiththe American Dream.....	47
3.4.1 Symbols .....	47
3.4.1.1 The Eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg .....	47
3.4.1.2 Gatsby's Mansion .....	47
3.4.1.3 The Valley of Ashes .....	48
3.4.1.4 East and West.....	48
3.4.1.5 TheGreen Light .....	49
3.4.1.6 Other Colors .....	49
3.5 Discussion of the Motives of F. Scott Fitzgerald in <i>The Great Gatsby</i> .....	50
3.6 Conclusion .....	54

<b>General Conclusion .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Work Cited.....</b>	<b>58</b>

## General Introduction

Since its early beginnings, America has been the land of dreams, opportunities, great fulfillments and essentially liberty. It undeniably paved the way for many immigrants from diverse nationalities to realize their ambitions and to settle in the man's land. Immigration process has started during the colonial era where people from different part of the world, especially Europe, began to move incredibly to that newly-founded land. For them, America is the Promised Land which represents all the moral values and material success that stretches the chance to start a new life. Therefore, American people are characterized by their abstract ideals which stimulate the masses to be hard workers for the achievement of happiness and success and thus become efficient citizens in their society regardless of their cultural and racial origins and historical background.

The American dream is an American national spirit in which democratic ideals are presented and perceived as a promise of prosperity for the Americans. America essentially was built up on basic ideologies most notably liberty, freedom, justice and happiness. The American Dream that everyone within the American society could certainly succeed and acquire happiness based only on hard work did not only touch the social and political spheres but also inspired the literary field in which writers from different literary movements tackled it as a central typical theme in American literature. However, each writer has depicted it according to his own perspective. The writers of the Lost generation, amongst them is Frances Scott Fitzgerald in his notable work *The Great Gatsby*, excelled in representing the American dream. The representative figure of modernist fiction, Fitzgerald portrayed the real image of the American dream during the early twentieth century according to which individual's dreams and ideals are carried by illusions surrounded by greedy people who collapse into disillusionment.

The present work analyzes the characters' and the author's psychological, social and cultural experiences of the American dream, as it is embodied in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, taking into account the circumstances of the American society in the 1920's. The study hence attempts to prove the American dream as an illusion or a disillusion. Furthermore, the study is based on the following research question: to what extent *the Great Gatsby* reflects disillusionment of the American dream? This major question is subdivided into subsidiary questions thereby each treats an aspect of the philosophy of the American dream from the perspective of the writer himself in his literary masterpiece. The questions are: In what way the American dream is presented in the novel *The Great Gatsby*? Through which means, the author alludes to the idea of disillusionment the American dream? Characterization? Techniques? What were the motives of such illusion?

The main hypotheses that surround this study accordingly are as follows: The assumption that the American dream in the novel the Great Gatsby presented in critical insights of the main characters as a representation of that dream. If the great Gatsby is a novel that depicts the American dream as an American moral decadence, it is then an extreme portrayal of the individual's disillusionment that appeared at the end of each character.

This research has multiple objectives to achieve by the end. It firstly aims at representing the philosophy of the American dream in the twentieth century American society. It thereby looks for demonstrating how social class has an impact on the individual's behavior. Finally it tries to find out whether the American dream is an illusion or reality in the story. The study will therefore focus mainly on the failure of the American dream throughout the lives of characters in the novel.

The discussion of the theme of disillusionment with reference to the American dream in one of Fitzgerald's artistic profound fictional works requires the adoption of a

psychoanalytical approach. Using the psychoanalytical method displays also Fitzgerald's real perception of the American dream, his reflection and disapproval of this dream. Furthermore, the research is fostered by the intricate analysis of characterization in terms of disillusionment with the myth of the American dream. Indeed the analysis of characters and some related issues involves the investigation of their reaction, response and attitude towards the implications of the so-called myth of the American dream. Consequently, the research attains satisfactory results in the exploration of such a principal theme to the modern American society and literature.

The theme of the American Dream has long been fascinating for many researchers in the field of American cultural studies. In the literary context, F. Scott Fitzgerald mastered writing about this theme, its roots, implications and ultimate disintegration. Significantly, some notable researches are taken into account for the conduct of the present study.

The first notable work is "Social Class and Status" in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* by Sebastian Fàth where she analyzes how the events in the novel reflect the changing society and norms and values in America during the 1920s and the effects of this social class on the relationship between the different characters. Another seminal work done by Dr. Hameed Yousif and Dr. Sirwa Baba-Ali Barizany in their collaborative study "Decline of the American Dream in Scott Fitzgerald's the *Great Gatsby*" where they tackled the author's disbelief and disapproval of the American dream.

A very interesting work done by Tubah Saika Islam in her thesis exploring the manner in which F. Scott Fitzgerald highlights the failure of the American dream through the lives of characters. The Concept of the American Dream in S.Fitzgerald Scott's *the Great Gatsby* and A. Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is also a related comparative study provided by Tina Hocenski to explain the concept of the American dream and present it through two literary

works which both deal with this topic-Arthur Miller's play *Death of Salesman*, published in 1940, and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* published two decades and a half earlier.

Nevertheless, the American dream in Fitzgerald's novel is studied from a different perspective in Rima SubhiTaher's article "The Elements of popular culture in *TheGreat Gatsby*," published in 2017. This paper presents the bright side of the effect of the Roaring Twenties on the structure of the American society in the sense that liberty in expressing one's own opinions became allowable and particularly women have gained more freedom henceforth from the constraints they were forced to live in. Therefore, from this perspective, the American dream did not only result in the Americans' sense of frustration, but rather it has some benevolence causing a social upheaval.

Depending on the above mentioned literature review, there seems to be a need for a deep analysis of the theme of disillusionment with the American dream through Scott Fitzgerald's landmark novel *TheGreat Gatsby*. The previously stated studies did not have tackled the idea of the American Dream with reference to the psychology of society its mechanisms. The current dissertation which is constructed on the antecedent papers and investigations analyzes the different aspects of disillusionment through characterization and through the author's vision in his work of fiction andthus attempts to attain some contribution to enrich the typical field of American modernist fiction.

This dissertation is composed of three main chapters besides a general introduction and conclusion. The three chapters use different aspects of psychoanalysis for this particular dissertation. The first chapter present the theoretical background based on which we under the subject matter of the analysis of the corpus looked at in details. In the second chapter, characterization approach will be used in order to discuss the character's relationships in the novel. The last chapter will focus mainly on the thematic method because it discusses the

disillusionment of the American dream in deep, taking into consideration the author's attitude towards the American dream. Nevertheless, several aspects will be discussed. Meanwhile, on the light of the psychoanalytical critical theory. The last chapter is notably a practical one in which the findings will be stated in the general.

Data for this dissertation is primarily collected from the selected novel *The Great Gatsby*. It maintains focus on the chapters and passages which depict the variable response of the writer and the characters to the American dream. Data is also gathered from an extensive library research utilizing printed as well as electronic books, articles corresponding to the research topic.

## Chapter One:

### Theoretical Framework

#### 1.1 Introduction

The American dream has significance in the American nation. It has been portrayed in American literature in regards to America as the Promised Land. It basically signifies that every American seeking success is capable of realizing this dream. After the First World War, the United States of America seemed to grant limitless social and financial opportunities for all citizens willing to work hard. The American dream began to feature in American literature. Therefore, set of writings have emerged including the masterpiece of Francis Scott Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby* for instance, which appears to relish the freedom of 1920s. In his novel *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald depicts through the lives of characters a society that has attained wealth only to pursue pleasure. In the present chapter we intend to shed light on some major point compulsory in the study of this novel: the American Dream, as a focal theme of this novel, representing its philosophy and historical background, and it simultaneously, referring to psychoanalysis, displays its reflection on selected characters from the novel.

#### 1.2 The Evolution of the American Dream:

##### 1.2.1 Definition of the American Dream:

The term the American dream has become a universal concept that no specific definition could cover all of its aspects and meanings. Nevertheless, set of scholars tried to define this later according to their own perspectives. Early, Jean de Crevecoeur, a French-American writer, one of the representatives and true fathers of the frontier literature, in his *Letters from American Farmer*, constructed the very concept of American Dream, the model of success, and praised the hard work, determination and devotion as the inner qualities,

viewed by the Puritans as the 'goodness' virtues, through which the dreams of wonderland were realized. (Steinberg 181)

Basically the term "American dream" had not been used until the publication of historian James Truslow Adams's book *The Epic of America* in 1931 in which he stated that: "The American Dream is that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement" (Adam 404). This early identification paved the way for subsequent attempts to develop more about the notion of the American dream. Adams, points out that the term American dream can be seen both in its broad sense as a dream of equality, freedom, and democracy in the United States and its narrow one as a kind of belief that everyone in the American continent regardless of his origin and circumstances will get his dream and achieve better life through only hard work. That is to say, instead of relying on one specific social class, American people should depend on their own efforts and creativity towards prosperity and success.

According to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, "the American dream is an American social ideal that stresses egalitarianism and especially material prosperity, but it can also mean the prosperity of life; that is the realization of this ideal". In 1970, Roger L. Pearson defined intricately this newly coined concept, stating that "it is the belief that every man, whatever his origins, may pursue and attain his chosen goals, be they political, monetary, or social. It is the literary expression of the concept of America: the land of opportunity". (638)

Implicit in both of these definitions is, however, the condition that the American Dream is still just that a dream, not a promise that is necessarily fulfilled. The identification of the American dream is enriched with setting a historical background which traces its evolution.

### **1.2.2 Historical Background:**

From the development of America, American people's way of thinking changed thereby the old values and principles in society were breaking down and changes were taking place among the new generation. That is to say, the concept of the American dream has different perspectives according to different people towards the ways to pursue their dreams. Hence, it took various connotations in American history.

During the period between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the American dream was regarded as "the original gold dream". For many Europeans, the United States was regarded as a magical land because of the unfair wealth distribution, serious religious discrimination and severe social hierarchy. In addition to immigrants that moved to America in the 18<sup>th</sup> century mostly were European vulnerable groups who were longed for political equality. In other words the early "American dream" is an European immigrant's dream ("The Introduction of American Dream English Literature Essay, par. 4).

The civil war was a period of industrial prosperity where American people began to practice a lot of commercial and industrial gains. Therefore, serious group of European immigrants arrived to America in order to improve their status escaping from the harsh condition made by their restrictive governments, but finally they founded their big career through hard work and became a legend; at that time the United States has been in a period of rapid economic expansion. It can be said that American dream in that period means dream of democracy and expansion. ("The Introduction of American Dream, par. 5).

After the World War I in the 1920s, America witnessed great economic growth. Thanks to industrial acceleration and invention of the car and its universal application that strongly changed the American way of life. This era was known as "the Roaring Twenties", an age of material success and spiritual poverty when Money-making and corruption became

at the core of the American Dream at that time. "America had been fresh and green and new, had 'pandered to the last and greatest of all human dreams' and promised something like 'the orgiastic future' for humanity" (qtd. in "The Introduction of American Dream, par. 6). It was indeed the blind dreaming phase.

The American dream is considered as a driving force for human behaviors and actions. However, things started to change as a result of serious circumstances during the Great Depression after the First World War, where the dream has transformed the entire nation into a nightmare and as well as has turned into a myth. The depression brought hardship, homelessness, poverty, destruction of families' farm losses and hunger to millions. Therefore, new literary voices have emerged during this period, according to which many writers started to express their views differently now. Among them are writers of "lost generation" who moved to Europe after World War I such as Ernest Hemingway and Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940). The latter's work *The Great Gatsby* is considered as one of pioneering modernist works same as one of modernist works as James Joyce's *Ulysses*, published in 1922, and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), which depicts the extravagance of the modern world. Fitzgerald's work is best compared to those written by Ernest Hemingway as they depicted the reality of the American dream which were merely critiques. (Florman, Ben and Justin Kestler 1)

### **1.3 The Representation of the American Dream in American Literature:**

#### **1.3.1 The American Dream before Scott Fitzgerald:**

Since the early beginning, the pioneering texts of the national American literature have been preoccupied with questions of the self and identity. Historically speaking, it started during the revolutionary period with the discovery of North American continent and developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, many Americans began to form their own cultural

identity and social values based on the belief of Individualism which is embodied in to their constitution. In the modernist era, however, the influence of the American dream in American fiction has been remarkably great.

Originally, the term American dream traces back to the first settlers who voyaged to America seeking a better life. They believed that the dream was associated to God, and if only they work hard enough, God would eventually reward and protect them. Yet, for them the new world presented a place of hope and desire and thus stimulates their ability to succeed and accomplish material wealth.

In this respect, Captain Edward Johnson, a Puritan who travelled from England to New England in the 1630s, declares:

Oh yes! Oh yes! Oh yes! All you people of Christ that are here oppressed, imprisoned and scurrilously derided, gather yourselves together, your Wi[v]es and little ones, and answer to your several. Names as you shall be shipped for His service, in the Western World, and more especially for planning the united Colonies of new England. Know this is the place where the Lord will create new Heaven and a new Commonwealth together. (2)

If one meditates about Johnson's statement, he will find that the American dream for success owes back to the puritan principle of worldly success is a sign for God's satisfaction. The presence of America is particularly evident in its image that would come to be known as a "new Heaven and new Earth." It is rather one of the early founding ideals of the new world.

The Declaration of Independence is primarily based on the notion of the ideology of the American Dream, claiming "that all men are created equal, that they are "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights," which among these are "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (Cullen 38). This claim would have proved that Benjamin Franklin, an

American leading figure of the eighteenth century, stated that any American citizen should have equal rights since it is a divine right. However, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century things started to change and the dream become a myth as a result of great depression after the First World War. Therefore, a strong naturalist movement emerged to express different views than that of the national romanticists such as Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack London.

### **1.3.2 The Representation of the American Dream in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby***

To understand the American Dream in particular, it is worthy to shed light on one of the greatest works of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* which is considered as a powerful socio-psychoanalytic critique of the American dream (Long 173). It in a way or another exposes the nightmarish side of that dream. In a certain way, the novel is a story about the American dream that was first published in 1925 in the midst of the 'roaring twenties' that depicts the decadence and the rise in consumerism during an economic boom at the end of the First World War, where the US servicemen returned to employment.

Furthermore, the novel like any other modernist fiction works tries to represent a sense of disillusionment that dominated Europe and the United States of America after the First World War. In the United States of America, this frustration was exacerbating. It also portrays the tide turning east of large amounts of groups that moved to New York seeking wealth. This shift symbolizes the American dream's corruption; that is to say the dream has become no longer a form of building a life but rather a source of getting rich. (Florman and Kestler 3). Moreover, the *Great Gatsby* gives clarity about the vision of American dream that centers specifically on how the new dream requires the loss of morality and freedom. As the novel embodies the themes of the roaring twenties through its depiction of decadence and social disorder, in a period Fitzgerald called the 'Jazz Age'. The narrator, Nick Carraway,

returns from the First World War 'restless' and travels to West Egg in Long Island to chase a job as a bond salesman on the booming Wall Street.

The novel takes place in the summer of 1922; following the narrator's experiences with Jordan Baker and the rich Buchanans, as well as his neighbor the protagonist, Jay Gatsby, a rich man who throws enormously lavish parties every weekend for complete strangers from all over the city. Nick knows more about Buchanan's affairs and is introduced to Gatsby. And he eventually discovers that Gatsby's purpose of such unconventional mansion parties were merely an attempt to attract Daisy's attention, a woman whom he madly fell in love with before the war. The story gives insight to the world of the roaring twenties, a time of excessive drinking, corruption and betrayal compared with Gatsby's strong devotion and his desire of life with Daisy.

As the novel is set in the era of the 'leisure class', it presents a time of heightened emphasis on individual's desire, through an exploration of their interaction with one another. Yet, Social mobility appeared with the introduction of the so called 'leisure class' and 'New Money'. While the term 'New Money' refers to those who are originally from lower class, instead of inheriting fortune, they attain substantial money from within their own generation, in order to build strong social connections. Lawrence R. Samuel notes that, due to the effects of war, "perhaps more than ever, Americans were fully expected to strive for their particular Dream, in the interests of both individuals and the nation as a whole"( qtd in Sarah le Fevre par.24). However, with the introduction of a consumerist lifestyle, the traditional ideals of the American Dream shifted to a focus on material possessions and individual pleasure. And the Great Gatsby is regarded as a critique of such shift of society's desires in this era. Michael Spindler suggested that Fitzgerald:

Saw more clearly than some of his literary contemporaries that the leisure class was a social phenomenon of great importance, and he was particularly well placed by means of his own social position to sense acutely and then fully articulate that ambivalent response which the society at large was experiencing.(qtd. in Le Fever par 29.)

Throughout the life of Fitzgerald, he definitely remained aware of the separation between the rich and the poor. In a letter to Anne Ober, in 1938, Fitzgerald asserts:

that was always my experience, - a poor boy in a rich town; a poor boy in a rich boy's school; a poor boy in a rich man's club at Princeton... I have never been able to forgive the rich for being rich, and it had colored my entire life and works. (qtd. in Le Fever par. 28)

The ambivalence position of Fitzgerald in an upper-middle class status embrace parallels with the narrator Nick, who labels himself as being both "within and without," simultaneously enchanted and repelled" by the upper class social circles in the novel.

In addition, Spindler clarifying describes that Fitzgerald, 'as a son of bourgeoisie,' was: "Able to move in elite circles- there was no question of his having to mix with the lower classes- but he was constantly accompanied by the shadow of economic insecurity and an awareness of his relative poverty"(154). Besides, parallels can also be seen between the author himself and the character of Jay Gatsby, as Fitzgerald almost lost his beloved one, Zelda Sayre, because of his deficiency of financial stability. Fitzgerald similarly believed to live in luxury equally the wealthy did. In this vein, Spindler reveals that the poor Fitzgerald in fact:"did not wish for the abolition of the very rich but simply for an extension of their privileges to himself, and when his writing provided the financial basis he assimilated his lifestyle to theirs – a Long Island mansion, parties, sojourns in Paris and on the Mediterranean seaboard".( par. 33). This concept of both admiration and greed of 'the glamorous life on the

one hand, and moral condemnation of that life according to traditional values on the other' is included in *The Great Gatsby* through the eyes of the narrator.

The story is a model of the American Dream, as Spindler suggests: "Gatsby's dream might be described as the American Dream of success. It is the dream of rising from" rags to riches", of amassing a great fortune that will assure a life of luxuriant ease, power, and beauty in an ideal world untroubled by care and devoted to the enjoyment of everlasting pleasure with nothing to intervene between wish and fulfillment (qtd. in Le Fever par. 20)

### **1.3.2.1 The Great Gatsby: the Jazz Age and Modernity**

Fitzgerald's novel mirrors the characteristics of some works written in a period called "the Jazz Age". Jazz, is an American style of music known by its complex mix of tonalities and rhythms. The novel essentially is a portrayal of such similar complex mixes of themes and emotions which clearly reflect the confusion of that time(Florman, Kestler 3). Fitzgerald coined the term to represent the imaginative portrayals of glamorous and young representatives of the wealthy class willing to live their American dream based on material possession; their lives cannot be affected by tragedy.

Such contradiction can be seen by the author's use of internal narrator, whose observations seemed to be separated from other characters' thoughts. So, Nick reflects objectively, and his reflection embodies the author's own thinking, that significantly helps to recognize that he preferred those who really believed in the possibility of success relying on their own efforts.

*The Great Gatsby* is a modernity novel that can be seen deeply in ironical changes of tragic and humorous, romantic and cynical and objective and completely subjective narrative techniques. Unlike realistic novels, "*The Great Gatsby*" is structured on dramatic elements, and

divided into nine chapters without a solid temporal connection and the author uses the retrospection technique as well.(Nakić Lučić 690-70)

Accordingly, Fitzgerald's novel can be deeply analyzed using a psychoanalytical approach in criticism maintaining thereby focus on disillusionment of characters which displays the author's dissatisfaction with the myth of the American dream during the Roaring Twenties.

#### **1.4 Psycho-Analytical Meditation on the Characterization in *The Great Gatsby***

Psychoanalytic criticism is a theory that is first used by Sigmund Freud where he discussed the concept of the unconscious human beings are "motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware" (Tyson, 12). That is to say, human motivations and reactions are unknown and consequently become the basis of their behaviors and actions. The basic theory can be applied to the protagonist Jay Gatsby who is driven by his desires and emotions with the girl whom he blindly loves; his unconscious mind eventually led him toward unexpected results, definitely tragic. That is his motivation to possess his girlfriend Daisy, to achieve his goal he commits "bootlegging" in order to be a rich man and use it as a means to attract Daisy's attention is driven by his desire, uncontrollable love for Daisy he has apparently lost. Although, she was married with Tom Buchanan, Gatsby's dream of her perpetuates alive in his mind until his downfall.

What is depicted in the Great Gatsby mainly centers on the idea of how Fitzgerald was obsessed with the love of extreme wealth. That is to say, the psychology of the author is driven by his desire in both wealth and woman. Therefore, two unconscious behaviors can be observed from what is portrayed in the story and as well as can be related to the author's psychology. Basically, those are being rich used to organize a very often party in order to fulfill their desire and at the same time make affairs with married woman.

Gatsby becomes a rich man in a short time by doing illegal business “bootlegging.” Because of his wealth, he therefore lives in hedonism, doing a party and take pleasure of it. This act occurs unconsciously as motivation to get daisy back to him. And this is also what reflects Fitzgerald’s psychology as hedonist man, who uses money as a source to obtain his desire and get pleasure, and befriends with members of the upper class and acts like them as well. However, this later is not only matter of taking pleasure but it is a kind of showing off to others what he possesses. Hence, family contributes to someone behavior in the future, and this is what can be caused by the previous life of the author’s family as depicted in the story. According to Tyson (13) “the “birth” of the unconscious lies in the way we perceive our place in the family and how we react to this self-definition”.

Based on what is concluded in the novel, Gatsby loves a hedonist and a selfish woman who is absolutely driven by her dream and desire and get pleasure with the party, and it also reflects what kind of woman he likes and how his desire be like. Furthermore, same with Tyson, who claimed that fear of betrayal is one common core issue of someone relationship, claiming that “the nagging feeling that our friends and beloved ones cannot be trusted”. It is mentioned when Daisy left Gatsby when he was solider and married with Tom Buchanan, the rich man. This scene is considered as a motive and an urge for Gatsby’s wealth. That is to say, he must become rich man in order to win the woman who leaves him because of his poverty. As Edwin Fussell marks in Gholipur, A. Mojtaba&Snahmadi, B. Mina, “his pursuit of materialism is based on the belief that "all the magic of the world can be [made] for money” (qtd in, AgusKhairi 8).

## 1.5 Conclusion

*The Great Gatsby* emerged in the lost twenties to become a landmark in modern American literature as a model of the American Dream in a period when the writers of the lost generation were active. Yet, most of the novel's themes are deeply pessimistic as a result of the condition of America at that time. Fitzgerald hence remains unique and one in his realistic socio-economic psychoanalytic depiction of the Americans who went so farther from the existing reality and lost the principles of the founding fathers and thus the American dream became unfortunately shallow and unnecessary. The next chapter approaches characterization from that very perspective of psychoanalysis through Fitzgerald's disillusionment novel.

## Chapter Two:

### A Psychoanalytic Representation of Characters

#### 2.1 Introduction

The ambition to succeed is dominant in the American Dream. Greed is constantly evident in *The Great Gatsby* in numerous characters coming from various socioeconomic classes willing to get more than they already have. Throughout the novel, Fitzgerald depicts a society that has corrupted the real meaning of the American dream. However, it does not present the story of a successfully fulfilled American dream. It could be therefore used as an introduction to the unequal society according to which individuals are a mere representation of an absolute moral degradation of society and unscrupulousness on the one hand and the rise of materialism on the other. Thus, this chapter focuses mainly on the discussion of the lower class characters; the protagonist of the story, Jay Gatsby, and other minor ones, George Wilson and his wife Myrtle. It also tries to account for Gatsby's single dream in the story and his obsession for his beloved one "Daisy" taking into consideration the importance of social class at the time.

#### 2.2 Representation of Characters:

Scott Fitzgerald gives an insight into the personality of characters and their interaction in his masterpiece which is significantly named after the egoist protagonist Gatsby. The eponymous character's attitude toward the American dream manifests clearly through his relation with the other characters who share him the ambition to accumulate wealth, to reach a higher social class or to attain love. Through his intense description, the author creates a sense of feeling, energy, and emotion around each one of them. Jay Gatsby, Myrtle Wilson and

George Wilson are psychoanalytically explored with reference to the notion of the American dream.

### **2.2.1 Jay Gatsby:**

Gatsby is a great example of a self-made man, born “James Gatz” around 1900 into a poor family on a farm in North Dakota located in Midwest; at age seventeen, he changed his name to Jay Gatsby. The young Gatsby dreams of a different kind of life and leaves for the East in order to create his own happiness, which is exclusively interconnected with success in raising money and realizing obsessive love.

The character of Jay Gatsby seems peculiar. The following passage describes his facial appearance with its connotations and the impression it leaves not only in the other characters whom he encounters throughout the story but also the amazed narrator and the reader:

He had one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced, or seemed to face, the whole external world for an instant and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself. (Fitzgerald 53)

The above quotation is the quintessential description of the personality of Jay Gatsby in fiction. Indeed the strange smile gives his psychological profile. Writing about this complex personality, Kochan Sandra added that “Gatsby is such a man who equates quantity with quality, cost with value” (3). This representation differently however shows that Gatsby is a modest and decent mid-western young man who strongly strove to succeed in life and make his own fortune by himself. Accordingly, Gatsby is the intersection of paradoxes which makes him insanely accept fantasies beyond reach or madly pay so high for the perpetuation of this dream if not for its realization.

Throughout Gatsby's life, he spends around two years on the south shore of Lake Superior fishing and clamming. He therefore, joins and drops out of St.Olaf College in southern Minnesota because he could not tolerate the janitorial job with which he was paying his tuition. Gatsby meets Dan Cody, a fifty year old multimillionaire expert in mining and precious metals, he turns into his assistant for five years aboard the Tuolomee, the name of Cody's boat; Cody eventually dies and leaves Gatsby \$25,000, which he never obtains due to a legal technicality. From this time, Gatsby dedicates himself to becoming rich and successful. Thus, his love for Daisy Buchanan becomes his main motivation to obtain his wealth.

Gatsby met with Daisy when he was a young officer in Louisville before leaving to fight in World War I in 1917. To Gatsby Daisy is "the golden girl", who belongs to a world in which money rules people's mind. He immediately fell in love with hers sensation of luxury, charm, and grace, and thus lied to her about his own background in order to convince her that he is suitable for her. When he sent to fight in the war, she promises to wait for him; but she broke up her promise and married Tom Buchanan in 1919. After the war, Gatsby started studying at Oxford in order to gain an educational degree. Though he knows very well that the only way of regaining her love is to offer her the life style she is used to. From that moment, Gatsby devotedhis dreams, and thus himself entirely, to get Daisy back to him in the sense that his acquisition of millions of dollars, his purchase of an extravagant mansion on West Egg and his lavish parties are all merely means to achieve that end.

### **2.2.2 Myrtle Wilson:**

Another character who fell into the trap of the American dream, Myrtleis the George Wilson's wife and the mistress of Tom Buchanan. She disgusts her husband who works as a mechanic and used car salesman. Myrtle thinks she deserves and desperately wants to

improve her life better than the one she has. Because of her husband's lack of wealth she chooses Tom as a means to this end, but he sees her as little more than an object. Physically, Myrtle is not an impressive woman. She was described as: a full-figured woman and rather a plain, and fairly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can and her face contained 'no facet or gleam of beauty. As, Nick notes, "there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smoldering". Myrtle lives in an apartment next to her husband's garage "Repairs. George B. Wilson. Cars Bought and Sold," reads the sign outside their home. She does not respect her husband properly. Once George discovers about his wife's ongoing infidelity, he gets upset and locks her in their apartment. But she remains careless and has no attention about what he thinks and she clearly responds: 'Beat me! Throw me down and beat me you dirty little coward!' This illustration shows how George is really an insulted and offended man.

Nonetheless, Myrtle's fate is predetermined by both her husband and people she never met before and she becomes a victim of her tragic ending. At the beginning, she is constantly a prisoner and trapped in the prison of her social position and her gloomy marriage as well. But, this figurative prison becomes literal once George suspicious that she's cheating on him, she tries to escape and this is what foreshadows her death; while she is in her way to escape, she runs out in front of Gatsby's car, in which Gatsby and Daisy are riding; Myrtle does so because she thought that Tom is coming to her as usual. However, things turned upside down and Daisy, who does not know Myrtle, is now driving the car when it strikes Myrtle down, and immediately she dies. Daisy fears and does not even stop to see what she did, and then escapes without consequences. Gatsby tells Nick the truth and that he is going to protect her by taking the blame for it. He however sacrifices in vain when Tom, feeds him to the wolves by telling George where to find Gatsby. George gets angry and killed Gatsby by the gun and at once killed himself.

### 2.2.3 George Wilson:

A Passive and working class man who owns an auto garage and the husband of Myrtle Wilson, George Wilson shares Gatsby and Myrtle the tragedy of dreaming about unlimited wealth and unending luxury life. The couple live together in a ramshackle garage in the squalid “valley of ashes,” a pocket of working-class desperation situated midway between New York and the suburbs of East and West Egg. Wilson is a downtrodden man, who deeply adores and loves his wife, he is also known to Tom in business affairs. At first sight, George appears to be powerless and dependent. To Nick he is described as: “a blond, spiritless man, anemic, and faintly handsome. When he saw us ... hope sprang into his light blue eyes”(Fitzgerald 25).

Wilson’s physical appearance gives the impression about how misery he is, compared with the image of the American rich class emphasized by both his wife Myrtle and Tom. As the condition of American middle class society is reflected in doctor Eckleburg's eyes, vacant and dim like the hopes of people wishing to change something that is far from their eyes. In contrast with George, Tom is differently described by the narrator as a man with powerful hands, a man with pockets full of money, and with an arrogant attitude, in which Nick stated: “a sturdy, straw-haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining, arrogant eyes had... dominance over his face ... His speaking voice, a gruff husky tenor... (has) a touch of paternal contempt in it.”(Fitzgerald 7)

The fact that George loves his wife to the extent of committing a crime makes him really a blind man; when Myrtle is killed, his emotion changed definitively: he indeed became overcome with grief. And he is now deeply depressed, so that he reacts differently; while he tries to revenge Myrtle’s death. Tom, as an attempt to help Daisy escape her culpability for her crime, introduced the name of Gatsby to George in order to convince him that Jay is the

one who ran over his wife. This portrayal certainly describes how really Tom and Daisy are called “careless people” by the narrator. George Wilson is the product of the lower classes stuck in to their poverty, whereas Tom is the product of amoral and corrupted upper class, mindful only with themselves and their pleasures. (Prah par 12)

### **2.3 The Representation of the American Dream through Characterization:**

From a psychoanalytic perspective, most of the characters are driven by their desires in pursuing the American dream and thus make unconscious decisions. These decisions are personified in the blind fantasizing about achieving unachievable goals. On the one hand, Gatsby for instance is haunted with the pursuit of his only beloved, and hence he decides to bring her to his mansion recurrently and his life again with the zeal of wealth. Myrtle’s life on the other hand is troubled with the fantasy to become an upper class lady and thus cravingly looks for a better partner to fulfill her greed about a higher social rank. Futile, helpless and victim of social hierarchy, George Wilson is another character who is entangled with the dream about the American dream. The following sections are profound analysis of those characters who in a way or another mirror the different aspects of the American fantasy.

#### **2.3.1 Gatsby’s Dream: His Pursuit of Daisy**

Gatsby is the most outstanding figure in the novel who successfully achieved the American dream of rising from the lower class in the American Midwest to the top of society among the Long Island elite. He is both idealist and optimist in his belief that everyone can get rich and then acquire happiness through wealth and power. His dream can be first called the “golden dream.” However it is not only about material possession; to Gatsby, the desire for love proves more powerful than the lust for money. All of his actions seem to be driven by that single-minded, even naïve, love. Just like the American Dream, “Gatsby is a mythic character:” stuck between illusion and reality of life (Kochan 3). Unfortunately, his origin

indicates his flaw that he lived in a world of total deception. As a result he created for himself a new version of life. The following extract demonstrates this metamorphosis in his character, social class and even dreams:

The truth was that Jay Gatsby, of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father’s business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen year old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end. (Fitzgerald 105)

Indeed this stands as good evidence that Gatsby is a man who even changed his way of talking, using phrases such as “old sport,” just to show that he is always among the rich upper class: “Of course, of course! They’re fine!” and he added hollowly, “old sport” (Fitzgerald 90). The fact is worse than that, all his achievements went through false ways; he illegally acquired his wealth and fortune by participating in organized crime, besides he contributes in distributing of alcohol which was illegal at that time. Because of his old life as a poor man, Gatsby ‘dream went beyond the limits he asks for more and more things (“I want things! Lots of things!”) And actually he has everything: his beloved woman, a big mansion, huge money that could support him in his entire life and, he stuck to this end until he loses his life.

Furthermore, this lust for wealth stems from Gatsby’s desire to win back his love of Daisy Buchanan, despite of her marriage, Gatsby did not stop thinking about her for even a second; years and years passed by and he still held on to his mission of being closer to her, always thinking: “Can’t repeat the past?” he cried incredulously. “Why of course you can!” Almost until the end of his life, he tries to convince himself that his dream is still within

reach: “‘I suppose Daisy’ll call too.’ He looked at me anxiously, as if he hoped I’d corroborate this” (Fitzgerald 118-220).

The recurrence of Gatsby obsessively dreaming of the absolute reunion with his beloved is remarkable throughout the novel. Here is one case of many:

There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams -- not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything ... No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart. (Fitzgerald 103)

The passage reveals the extent to which the protagonist is madly driven by his desire for regaining and possessing his beloved. In other words, the love of this woman who stands for the American dream, as it is the case in almost all of Fitzgerald’s works where a beautiful woman is loved and this love leads to nowhere but into disillusionment and an exacerbating psychological state, turns him to a monster devouring everything that threatens his dream that no freshness can challenge his ghostly heart.

The subsequent scenes affirm this blind dream. For instance, “Once Gatsby reunited with her, he hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy,” recounts the narrator, “he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes.” This quote is a mere description of a man in love, a man of complete affection and admiration for a woman that he loves even more than himself. Daisy, whose voice and thoughts are “full of money,” is Gatsby’s “silver idol” of illusion (Fitzgerald 98, 122-128).

The mansion in West Egg proves that Gatsby strongly strove to make his fortune in order to impress Daisy. The image is made clear through this confession: “Gatsby bought that house so that Daisy would be just across the bay” (Fitzgerald 84). So Daisy who apparently is Gatsby’s pursuit of love appears to be the quintessential embodiment of the American dream,

a deceptive ideal dream of happiness. As for Gatsby she is like "a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock" (Fitzgerald 2007). That is, in spite of his internal blindness, Gatsby in moments of epiphany realizes the futility of dreaming of her, yet he is incapable of stopping the act of greedily running after her.

The more Gatsby was obsessed with daisy the more he was obsessed with money. He fears the past and wants to get rid his old life. Therefore, Nick states "Americans, while occasionally willing to be serfs, have always been obstinate about being peasantry" (Fitzgerald 95). Gatsby escaped from that life of "peasantry" through materialistic things such as his "trophies, piles of silk shirts, crazily expensive cars, a 10 tacky mansion and enormous library full of unread books". These things represented as symbols to the American Dream that Gatsby wanted to accomplish:

he opened for us two hulking patent cabinets which held his massed suits and dressing-gowns and ties, and his shirts, piled like bricks in stacks a dozen high... He took out a pile of shirts and began throwing them, one by one before us, shirts of sheer linen and thick silk and fine flannel which lost their folds as they fell and covered the table in many-colored disarray. (Fitzgerald 99)

To Daisy, these shirts represent Gatsby's extreme obsession with the American dream, though he sees it only as material accumulation. In addition to his weekly lavish parties, that are also just a means to show his wealth: he never showed up to them but people knew about him: "I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited — they went there" (Fitzgerald 45). Most of his guests were newly rich people who wanted to reach the higher standard of society as much as they could. Those people are a metaphorical representation for the greediness, material possession and desire for pleasure that described the time of the Roaring Twenties.

Despite all Gatsby's achievements, he is still unable to obtain the thing that would really fulfill his eternal dream: Daisy. As Pearson suggests, Gatsby is "a victim of his own warped idealism and false set of values. The American dream is accordingly not to be a reality, in that it no longer exists, except in the minds of men like Gatsby, whom it destroys in their espousal and relentless pursuit of it" (645). Gatsby's misguided belief in the promise of the American dream, symbolized by his beloved who is beyond his reach whatever he makes because he has emptied himself of morality for the sake of satisfying his ego, is what ultimately fails and leads to his tragic ending.

### **2.3.2 Myrtle's Dream**

Myrtle is a character that desperately held a dream of becoming a member of the upper social class and willing to live two lives in order to fulfill the fantasy. Because of her husband's lack of wealth, she feels imprisoned in her marriage and wants to get rid of her old life and her husband, whom she doesn't love any more. As she mistakenly believed he had a well "breeding". The greedy dreamy lady remarks that she only "married him because [she] thought he was a gentleman, [...] but he wasn't fit to lick [her] shoe" (Fitzgerald 41). Myrtle consequently attempts to escape her social position by becoming a mistress to the rich and married Tom Buchanan.

To Myrtle, Tom is the knight and the savior who could protect and offer her everything she wants. For example, he buys her gifts including the apartment he rents her in Manhattan, where she could pretend like the upper class lifestyle, well dressing, throwing parties, expressing disgust for servants. Myrtle blindly believes in Tom's sincerely love to her, and that he would marry her only if he and Daisy get divorced.

Nick Carraway, the narrator, is the only one who knows that Tom would never marry her and because of the lopsidedness relationship between them. Eventually, Myrtle

becomes more sympathetic and woeful. To Tom, however, Myrtle is just a means to get pleasure, and when she attempts to assert her own will, he violently halts her. The American dream thereby is represented either ways where the shallow lust for luxury and greed for sexual fulfillment is blind and thus drives to unsatisfactory outcomes that produce the feeling of disillusionment.

### **2.3.3 George Wilson's Dream**

George Wilson represents another part of the blind believing in the American dream. He belongs to the American working class whose presence has been marginalized and undesirable, as it is emphasized by the exterior of the valley of ashes that shows the division of the story's scenes even geographically; putting stress on the naturalist theory that even geography cannot be essential for success. Hence, George is a part of the world through which moral balance should be always kept between the two edges and he also keeps on dreaming to leave the unpromising valley of ashes and go to sunny California until his end.

In the case of Wilson, he seems so confused and does not understand the absurdist world of his own ambitions that are undoubtedly predetermined to fail by the capitalistic society. To him, money is the goal and the only possibility of escaping. His dream of mutual happiness becomes a nightmare when he desperately attempts to take a revenge of his wife's death and confronting immoral wealthy people by killing Gatsby. George does not know that he ends one of the representatives of his own part who had the same dreams. He completely deranged and at once commits suicide by the pool, the symbol famous and wealthy people, which makes his death ridiculous.”

It is very coincident that George is like Gatsby in the sense that both of them tried to protect their beloved one, despite all the consequences. He indeed remains deserted at the end

with the destroyed and disillusioned dream of better life. Just like Gatsby, George sorrowfully lost the light that enlightened his entire life.

#### **2.3.4 Jay Gatsby vs. the other Characters:**

Despite the fact that the characters of the novel Gatsby, Tom, Daisy, Jordan, and Nick are all represented as dream seekers in the same phase, they all lived in the Valley of Ashes but they are distinguished from one another by different things. Beginning with the narrator of the story, he serves as a link between Gatsby and Daisy and witnessed all the events. Nick is tolerant and trustworthy person that many people like to share their secret with him and gradually he became friend with Gatsby. Unlike Nick, Gatsby is a blind dream seeker. His extreme and exaggerate belief in the power of money, eminence and material possession convinced him that this magical power would certainly direct him toward his ultimate dream of regaining his lost love.

Nick is more intellectual and more satiated by the traditional moral conducts which are embedded in his mind, following his father's advice on toleration that he says: "in my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I have been turning over in my mind ever since." (Fitzgerald 1). This piece of advice helps Nick to be one of the elite who never get lost in their life. And also it helps him to realize the distortion and hollowness of American dream by recognizing that both Tom and Daisy are corrupted, irresponsible and cowardice people. For this reason he decided to go back to his hometown and live felicitous life under moral values.

The following statement reveals a descriptive relevant analogy between Gatsby and Nick:

The characters of Gatsby and Nick are like the two poles that the author wants to show us, and their images are not only opposite but also unified. Through shaping the two characters and their fates, the author reveals the theme of the whole story clearly, "the

American dream is just an illusion under the concept that money is everything. (qtd in The introduction of American Dream)

The portrayal of the American dream is accomplished with the creation of such opposite but complementary characters. Fitzgerald precisely exposed the contradictions of the dream Americans exaggerated in seeking through the Lost Twenties.

Moreover, Tom, Daisy and Jordan represent the old noble class that corrupted the true meaning of American dream. In contrast to Gatsby, they are already wealthy and born with very good status however they lacking the purpose and know very well how to kill time only through money for them the dream or love was based on money. In fact they are only slaves of money. It is clear that they are careless people without any responsibility and always let others clean up the mess they had made.

Gatsby is a character who keeps on struggling all the time and devoted all his life to accomplish his ultimate dream. Whereas Tom and Daisy are both cowards and careless towards Mrs. Wilson's death; they are materialists at the extent money rules their minds and living a luxurious and comfortable lifecycle was the basis of their life. Nick illustrated, "those fair-weather friends of Gatsby were a group of bastards. Add up all of them can fit a "Gatsby". Consequently, the comparative description of characters where the centre is Gatsby enriches the analysis of the theme of disillusionment in terms of characterization.

#### **2.4 The Signification of Social Class in Characterization:**

Social class plays a pivotal role in analyzing the characters and the way they behave in the novel. Most of Fitzgerald's novels are based on the notion of social classes, meaning he is "the first American writer who seems to have discovered that such a thing as an American class really existed" (Kochan 2). *The Great Gatsby* is essentially the epitome of that class division that is best seen through each character and the places where they live, since there is

“a strong relationship in the novel between the geography of the roads and the characters’ social values” (Bertrand 4). The social hierarchy indeed indicates the structure on which characters are build.

Even the narrator who came from the Midwest to New York is in search of the world that is “in uniform and at a sort of moral attention” (Fitzgerald 4). Nick’s disillusionment is caused by the destruction of World War I and this is why he hopes to start a new life and wants to find his happiness and fulfillment somewhere else:

on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York...twenty miles from city... (where) a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western Hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound. (Fitzgerald 7)

However, all what Nick found was only a moral decadence and emptiness of people that Fitzgerald portrayed through the Valley of ashes; a polluted environment and black depiction of humanity. Nick says:

This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. (Fitzgerald 26)

This quote describes the lowest class of people and their environment where they lived. They were on their way to the West Egg, where Gatsby and Nick lived. Though the Valley of Ashes symbolizes the lowest class of people like the Wilsons, West Egg on the other hand represents the newly rich Americans such as Gatsby.

The newly rich or new money are “crude, garish and flamboyant” as well as tasteless and extravagant (Bloom 69). Gatsby’s mansion exemplifies inherently this category of wealth: “The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard – it was a factual imitation of Hotel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking a new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden” (Fitzgerald 7). Gatsby’s great wealth was just a matter of showing off to others what he possesses. In spite of all the obvious riches, newly rich are just “cheap materialistic imitations of the American dream” (Bloom 69).

Unlike the West Egg, East Egg represents old wealth or old money and Tom and Daisy are part of that world. They belong to the upper class of people, white Anglo Saxon Protestant Americans who care only about themselves because, after all, they were born in abundance and wealth; they inherited all of their money from their ancestors. The newly rich Gatsby constantly tries to get closer to the old money but he will never be able to cross the bridge between the two classes. The reason is that they possess old-wealth taste, tradition, and heritage; something the newly rich will never have. Tom and Daisy Buchanan have elegance and grace since they have always been living lives of rich people. Their elegance is seen from the look of their home: “cheerful red and white Georgian Colonial mansion, overlooking the bay” (Fitzgerald 9).

Even though East Coast aristocracy possesses “sophistication, refinement and breeding”, they are not the embodiment of the real American dream of self-made individuals (Bloom 70). As Nick says, they are “careless people, Tom and Daisy — they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money of their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made.” (Fitzgerald 191). This shows that they are actually a perfect match and poor, innocent Gatsby does not belong to their world. The author uses both areas to show the division of

American society and in this case, the two Eggs could be used as an introduction to separated societies.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The study of characterization in *The Great Gatsby* reveals that the novel is full of tragic characters who do not get what they want. In fact, their dreams for wealth, love, social class cause them troubles and tragedies. It is quintessentially the corruption of the American dream with materialism and thus its ultimate collapse and the personalities' s downfall. The novel therefore paints a very complex and unequal American society that corrupted the true meaning of the American dream. Throughout this profound work of fiction, the lower class characters, Gatsby, Myrtle, and George, are basically sacrificed for the moral flaws of the upper class characters of Tom and Daisy. The next chapter analyzes the theme of disillusionment, its types, reasons and implications, the outcome of exaggerating in dreaming, from the perspective of the author himself as though he were one of the entangled characters within unrealizable hollow dreams in his own novel.

## Chapter Three

### Disillusionment with the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*

#### 3.1 Introduction

Chasing hollow dreams and striving for human fulfilments and accomplishments based only on hard work has become insufficient means to reach one's ultimate goal and dream. Thus, *The Great Gatsby* is one of the representations of this version that significantly embodies the themes of moral decadence and social hypocrisy in the American society which was flooded with a sense of disillusionment during the Roaring Twenties. It depicts the true meaning of the American dream that has become disillusioned and directly leads to nothing but misery. That was the image Fitzgerald projected with his characters who felt the sense of frustration and disappointment with what they perceived in an extravagant lifestyle.

#### 3.2 Gatsby's Dreams and Disillusionment:

The sense of disillusionment is a thematic Modernity characteristic that appeared in American literature after the World War I and with the introduction of post-war in a period called the Roaring Twenties with its complexity. The disillusionment of American Dream in the *Great Gatsby* meant that the Dream became corrupted. The values that were firstly connected to hard work and God gradually began to be connected to material wealth as a sign of power. It is all about disappointment and regret of backward and delayed realization of unpleasant truth. The disillusionment of Gatsby's American dream in the novel can be seen through two main parts "wealth dream" and "love dream".

##### 3.2.1 From the Pursuit of Wealth to Downfall:

One cannot deny the fact that Gatsby unconsciously sets a snare to himself by involving in deceptive and illegal affairs. He is now responsible for his own tragic ending as

he first dared to change his name from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby. "James Gatz –that was really, or at least legally, his former name."(Fitzgerald 20). However, Gatsby's parents were "shiftless and unsuccessful farm people". And "his imagination had never really accepted them as his parent at all" He therefore possesses a "Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God." So he has to be about "His Father's business" that refers to "the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty". Thanks to Dan Cody's material possessions and following him by doing illegal business, Gatsby becomes wealthy and succeed in changing his old life.

Nevertheless,Gatsby fails to be "the great"for he is still unable to belong one of the bourgeoisie classes that he wanted for so many years. In fact, no matter how rich he becomes, he is still trying adapting to the upper circles that he has from, and just because of his humble birth he was not really accepted by those wealthy people. "The truth,"clarifies Zhang Meijun "is that social discrimination still exists and the divisions among the classes cannot be overcome. (4) This shows how the innocent ideals have become devastated by embittered reality. Gatsby consequently, become a super material of suspicion and rumors for the upper class of the so-called celebrities. He was all the time suffering from suspicion of others.

What is more is when Tom disgraced Gatsby's fact of his illegal engagement in order to make his fortune; his dream of wealth eventually was withered and completely disillusioned. Even Gatsby's death has no effect on Daisy, she does not even feel sorry or regret. only his friend Nick and few guests attended his funeral. This is a complete contradiction between the affluence in his former party and the desolation and loneliness in his funeral. Just like "the man with owl-eyed classes" said:" why, oh my god! They used to go there by the hundreds" (Fitzgerald 11). This indicates that Gatsby did not really get the recognition and the greeting of the upper class as he wished for. In a letter to his friend Ludlow Fowler, Fitzgerald himself fittingly stated that The Great Gatsby is about "the loss of

those illusions that give such color to the world that you don't care whether things are true or false as they partake in the imagined glory" (Moore Ray 6).

### **3.2.2 From the Pursuit of Love to Downfall**

As it is mentioned above, Gatsby's over lasting for wealth was just a reason to recuperate his lost love. Unlike his humble life, Daisy was a noble princess who is decorated by money and this is why he was fully attracted by her. So dreaming of getting such kind of women for Gatsby requires strong efforts in order to offer her the life of luxury she used to live. Whatever the costs, he never give-up because he believed that giving up Daisy means to admit the failure of his ideal dream. Due to his illegal engagements he got money indeed. So, it is reasonable that Daisy was the motive and the driving force for Gatsby's wealth.

To Daisy Gatsby is a model of struggle and residence that she indeed fell in love with again. However, she did not really love him as much as he did; she was only attracted by his way of struggling and his infatuated or mad love. This shows that Daisy was not the right object for Gatsby's love and her love is no more than fake one, completely without any sense. Even his sacrifice to protect her, did not bring meaning to her and what is more is that she conspired with her husband, Tom to underestimate Gatsby and put him down. Consequently, Gatsby lost his life and Daisy escaped with her husband.

Daisy, the eternal love dream of Gatsby, now is unworthy lady as she chooses Tom and money over love. However Tom and Daisy are both rich surfing from spiritual poverty. So Daisy is the embodiment of Gatsby's disillusionment of love. Although it seemed that the determinations and motivations that he tried to regain her resulted in his unforgettable love; the fact is that Gatsby was an idealist and stubborn man who believed in the possibility of making the dreams come true and desired to make a better future. Therefore, Yang Huiqun concludes: "the falling of his American dream, that Daisy goes together with her

husband to another city happily while Gatsby is murdered mistakenly, improves that all his great characterize means nothing. In other words, Gatsby's final American dream, which is to win Daisy, is totally a failure" (3)

Nick's disillusionment is part of Gatsby's because of the deep interaction between both characters, as it has been proved earlier that either personalities comparably reflect the sense of dissatisfaction with the American dream. Furthermore, disillusionment is a derogatory psychological state which can transmit to those who constantly watch and listen to the dramatic implications. Even the narrator has his own disillusionment. As witnessing Gatsby's tragedy, he realized what had gone wrong with American dream from the beginning to the end. "He finally knew that it is a story of the West. Gatsby, Tom, Jordan, Daisy and he were all western people, so they cannot get well with the life in the East just because of they all had some common defects" (Liu Naiya 2009). The eventual downfall of the so-called "great Gatsby" therefore reflects the atrocities experienced by the Americans during the time of their excessive dreaming. The pursuit of either love or wealth could not prevent his destruction which in fact symbolizes the destruction of the American dream.

### **3.3 Reasons for Disillusionment with the American Dream Reflected in the Novel**

#### **3.3.1 Social Conditions**

The geographical division between East and West in the novel contributed in Gatsby's disillusionment of American dream. His tragedy becomes inevitable as it is shaped by one specific social environment, where money and material hedonism became the basis of love and human relationships. It is principally a society that is based on social hierarchy in which people cares only about their personal interests; interpersonal relationships reveal the selfishness, greediness, and indifferent nature.

### 3.2.1.1 American Culture and Social Environment

The ideal of the American culture is based on the pursuit of individualism, freedom and democracy that is rooted from its history. It is all about hard work and struggling for success and personal honor. "The core of it is the individualism: self first, self need is superior, always pursuit of the self-happiness and self –content through self-fighting and self-exploration and to achieve the value of oneself" (Chen Jing 13). This indicates that the facet of American culture has both advantages and disadvantages. From the perspective of highly self-fulfillment, people will get motivated to go further. It also could bring prosperity and success to the nation as whole.

However, the principle of liberty has disadvantages in a way that some individuals may run over and go beyond the limits, at the extent of trying any kind of means, even some illegal behaviors for being successful. Their morals become gradually corrupted and lost like the case of Gatsby. When he gets his great fortune through his hard efforts, he has been into a material indifferent world, and completing one's ideal dream in such cruel world is in fact doomed to fail. So Gatsby lives in a flashy environment where the traditional meaning of the American dream had already lost. he has a romantic view of wealth and is unaware of the realities of the American society where wealth is not the only aspect when it comes to social class (Bewley 28).

Moreover, according to Weber's theory, it is also evidence that no matter how hard Gatsby tries, he cannot change his past and he cannot change other people's past. "Men make their own history but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx in Elster 277). Since status is, more than social class, dependent on things from the past, such as upbringing, it is also more difficult to change.

indeed one of the main reasons for the disillusionment of Gatsby's American dream and his tragedy is the darkness and emptiness of capitalist society in that age.

### **3.3.1.2 The Jazz Age and the Lost Twenties**

The Jazz Age was a special era in the history of the American society and forms an undeniable aspect of its culture during the 1920's which manifests strongly through Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. After the World War I and with the introduction of the post-war era, American society won a precious opportunity to develop its own economy. Thus the spirit of this period was marked by a sense of a modernity and a disconnection and tradition. Everyone was indulged with specific pleasures and desires. Thanks to the development and industrialization of the whole society, everything was possible through its modern technology. As stated by Fitzgerald, "That is a miraculous era and an era full of mockery". Nonetheless, the belief in individualism and the search for happiness have transformed rather into an unscrupulous pursuit of wealth. So the American dream of this time was corrupted and became no more than an illusion, an illusion of the pursuit of wealth rather than a happier stable life and a commitment to hard work.

### **3.3.2 Personal Motives**

Driven by his ideal dream and stimulated by his love for Daisy, Gatsby blindly tries all kinds of means to get power and achieve great material success. Relying on his personal efforts, he indeed succeeded in changing his destiny and achieving that single-minded and even naïve dream. However, his poor background still brings him spiritual pain and shame when his extraordinary accomplishments become meaningless for the girl whom he deeply fell in love.

Due to the gap between him and Daisy, Gatsby does not know that getting rich and achieving powerful possessions alone could not give him the goal he wished for, to Tom and

Daisy's eyes he is still "nobody from nowhere" because he has "no comfortable family standing behind him" (Fitzgerald 8). What is important for Daisy is not a romantic lover but a man who can offer her a comfortable, guaranteed life and a respected social rank. So that Gatsby realizes that the upper class will never accept him equally as much as he thought and again he felt the sense of emptiness and disillusionment.

On the other hand, "Gatsby enters a world where money takes precedence over moral integrity. Money and immediate pleasure become more important than being with Daisy. Gatsby's dream is doomed to failure because he has lost the fundamental necessities to experience love, such as honesty and moral integrity" (Cheng Meijun 15). In other words, the dream of Gatsby is no more than illusion and intensity. Reality has been corrupted "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (Fitzgerald 14).

Messner and Rosenfeld write that the American Dream ideology "encourages an exaggerated emphasis on monetary achievement while devaluing alternative criterion of success, it promotes a preoccupation with the realization of goals while de-emphasizing the importance of the ways which these goals are pursued." Therefore, over-inflated expectations and emphasis on monetary success can easily lead to corruption (Taylor 4). Due to the fact that Gatsby was a bootlegger and got rich illegally, one could claim that he was also a dishonest man, a criminal, and therefore not so innocent.

Yet, Gatsby's actions and behavior reveal that "despite all the corruption there is a quality of innocence about Gatsby, the quality that believes, and lives in the belief" (Handley 35). It is precisely that quality that differentiates him from other characters and connects him to the American Dream. In the end, Nick is one of the rare characters who is aware of Gatsby's innocence and tells Gatsby that he is "worth the whole damn bunch put together" (Fitzgerald 98). Daisy makes him uncivilized.

### **3.4 Allusion of Disillusionment with the American Dream:**

F Scott Fitzgerald uses some narrative techniques to build powerful image and to convey the illusory nature of the American dream. The author in that way supports his realistic but not exactly pessimistic view of the Americans whose greed for materialism have unconsciously emptied the American dream of its essence. Symbols are indeed used by the writer to point out the unfulfilled dreams illustrations of disillusionment and frustration of the characters.

#### **3.4.1 Symbols**

##### **3.4.1.1 The Eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg**

Doctor T. J. Eckleburg's eyes on the billboard overlooking the Valley of Ashes symbolize the waste and corruption of the industrial city of New York. Later in the novel, it represents different things at once: to Nick seemingly they symbolize the haunting waste of the past, which lingers on though it is vanished forever, much like Dr. Eckleburg's medical practice. Similarly, Gatsby's eyes can also be described as "vacant," often stare out, blankly keeping "vigil" over Long Island sound and the green light. The eyes can also be linked to George Wilson, after Myrtle's death, her husband George looks at the eyes of Dr. Eckleburg's as if he is looking for an answer to his wife's absurd death. George later says, "God sees everything". So for him these eyes are the eyes of God which see everything.

##### **3.4.1.2 Gatsby's Mansion**

Gatsby's house represents two major themes of the novel. First, it symbolizes the grandness and emptiness of the 1920s boom in which Gatsby justifies living in it all alone by filling the house weekly with "celebrated people". Second, the house also represents the

physical symbol of Gatsby's love for Daisy. By using his "new money" Gatsby tries to create a place that he thought rivaled the houses of the "old money" that had taken her away.

### **3.4.1.3 The Valley of Ashes**

An area located between New York City and West Egg, the Valley of Ashes is an industrial wasteland covered in ash and soot. If New York City represents all the "mystery and beauty in the world," and West Egg represents the people who have gotten rich off the roaring economy of the Roaring Twenties, the Valley of Ashes symbolizes the dismal devastation of the people caught in between. Moreover, it is also a symbol of death and sterility which are the outcomes of mechanization. It also represents the ugly consequences of America's obsession with wealth. The valley of ashes is described very differently from the other places in the novel. Literally, "on the other side of the tracks" this place is described using dark colors and depressing imagery. This symbolizes the divide between the physically and metaphorically far-apart classes. The poor will never have what the wealthy do, no matter how much effort and change is made. Gatsby is a prime example of this. He will always be James Gatz inside.

### **3.4.1.4 East and West**

The novel is described as a book of Westerners, a "story of the West." Tom, Daisy, Jordan, Gatsby, and Nick all hail from places other than the East. The romanticized American idea of moving West to seek and make one's fortune on the frontier turned on its ear in the 1920's stock boom; now those seeking their fortune headed back East to cash in. But while Gatsby suggests there was a kind of honor in the hard work of making a fortune and building a life on the frontier, in the East the quest for money is nothing more than that: a hollow quest for money. The division between the eastern and western regions of the United States is reflected in Gatsby by the separation between East Egg and West Egg: once again the West is

the frontier of people making their fortunes, but these "Westerners" are as hollow and corrupt inside as the "Easterners". Moreover, West Egg is full of extravagance and symbolizes the emergence of the new rich beside the aristocracy of the 1920s. East Egg is a wealthy area, possessing a high social status, symbolizing the aristocracy that dominated the American social life.(Florman and Kestler 4)

### **3.4.1.5 The Green Light**

Colors also play a major role in the novel. It is noticeable that at the end of Daisy's dock the "green light" which symbolizes the hopes and dreams of Gatsby. "The Green Light is a light that burns all night at the end of Daisy's dock." It represents the inability to reach the Dream. While observing the light Gatsby feels closer to Daisy. "He stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward-and distinguished nothing except a single green light" (Fitzgerald 60 -16).

It could stand for everything that haunts and beckons Gatsby: the physical and emotional distance between him and Daisy, the gap between the past and the present, the promises of the future, and the powerful lure of that other green stuff he craves "money". Actually, the color green appears in the novel everywhere. Long Island sound is "green"; George Wilson's haggard tired face is "green" in the sunlight; Michaelis describes the car that kills Myrtle Wilson as "light green" (though it's yellow); Gatsby's perfect lawn is green; and the New World that Nick imagines Dutch explorers first stumbling upon is a "fresh, green breast." That particular light is also something that defines Gatsby because it is also a part of his dream and it "becomes the dominant symbol of Gatsby's emotional complex" (Quirk 583).

### 3.4.1.5 Other Colors

In addition to the green color, Blue also represents an illusory state. In Chapter Three, Gatsby has huge parties every Friday in his "blue gardens [where] men and women came and went like moths". In fact, that color sounds a lot to Gatsby: his chauffeur's uniform, the dress that he gives to one of his partygoers when hers rips, and his first sports jacket after he begins working for Dan Cody. In Chapter Two, Myrtle Wilson appears to wear blue dress; this indicates her secret engagement with Tom Buchanan. Besides, the eyes of Dr. Eckleberg are also "blue and gigantic". The color blue is also associated to Mr. Wilson, who is described as "a blonde, spiritless man, anaemic and faintly handsome". He has "light blue eyes".

Yellow color often signifies the color of decadence, corruption, and evil, yellow appears frequently in the novel. First, at Gatsby's lawn parties, the two young women wear yellow dresses. Also Daisy and her possessions, such as the couch, her attire, and her automobile are white, suggesting sophistication and purity. But, Jordan says that she and Daisy have "left our white childhood". And, like the flower after which she is named, the core of Daisy is corrupt. Moreover, the car of Gatsby is also yellow, like the sun near which Icarus flies. There is ominousness to yellow, and there is corruption to it as the twin girls at Gatsby's party in Chapter Three wear yellow dresses.

### 3.5 Discussion of the Motives of F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*:

This particular novel is not based only on the experience of individuals who strove to succeed in their life. It is thus, a story that is also based on the author's own experience. Fitzgerald's sensitive observation of both his own life and life of the Jazz Age subjugated him, identified other peculiarly American characteristics of the 1920s:

We were the most powerful nation. Who could tell us any longer what was fashionable and what was fun? War, brusquely shouldered my contemporaries out of the way and

danced into the limelight. This was the generation whose girls dramatized themselves as flappers, the generation that corrupted its elders and eventually overreached itself less through lack of morals than through lack of taste. May one offer in exhibit the year 1922! That was the peak of the younger generation, for though the Jazz Age continued, it became less and less an affair of youth... A whole race going hedonistic, deciding on pleasure... The word jazz in its progress towards respectability has meant first sex, then dancing then music. In any case, the Jazz Age now raced along under its own power, served by great filling stations full of money... It was borrowed time anyhow – the whole upper tenth of a nation living with the insouciance of grand dukes and casualness of chorus girls...” (Fitzgerald 9-19).

That is to say, Fitzgerald thus proclaimed that jazz is an authentic voice of the period which has a place not only in history but in the modern art form to express it. So he uses it in the setting of this novel because it is convenient and he is exceptionally insightful on it. His *The Great Gatsby* is principally the outcome of his multi-dimensional observation of the 1920s American society and his own disillusionment with the dream he shares as an American.

Beginning with his personal life, Fitzgerald himself was deeply aware, his life and career were paralleled. His life in the 1920s was a mirror to events occurring nationally during that decade. the Jazz Age, as we have seen was a time of challenge to the established order of personal tolerance and even self-destructive excess. Yet, Fitzgerald’s parents came from very different upbringings which gave him an insight in different social groups. According to Scott Donaldson, in “Class Snobbery and Education” (2008), Fitzgerald’s father came from an old American family while his mother, on the other hand, was the daughter of an Irish immigrant who had made some money through his wholesale grocery business. So, on his father’s side there was a family with a respected heritage and on his mother’s side there was a family without any aristocratic pretenses, but with a better financial situation.

Due to his poor family Fitzgerald was denied the opportunity to marry the girl of his choice as her family had a nice background and was very rich. Her father told Fitzgerald that “poor boys shouldn’t think of marrying rich girls” (Donaldson 18). Fitzgerald’s personal life is thus projected throughout his novel; the same in Gatsby’s case with Daisy, due to their different socioeconomic backgrounds, Fitzgerald was unable to continue his relationship with Zelda. Fitzgerald’s background can be also parallel with his character Nick Carraway’s. His family has a tradition that they are descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch (Fitzgerald 10). They were both from Minnesota. Both Nick and Fitzgerald’s family’s sent them to Ivy League schools. Fitzgerald attended Princeton University and Nick Carraway attended Yale University.

However, the fact that Fitzgerald left school to join the military mirrors Jay Gatsby, who joined the United States Army at the beginning of World War I. At that time, both Fitzgerald and his protagonist Jay Gatsby fell in love with a woman with the same features. Gatsby fell in love with Daisy and he tried to impress her. Similarly, Fitzgerald fell in love with a woman named Zelda and did the same with her. She wanted a rich, successful man. Because of this, Fitzgerald began to write books so that he could be that man for her.

Furthermore, Fitzgerald’s family was distant relatives to Francis Scott Key. His mother was very proud of this and it had some impact on him as well, since he was christened Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald. By focusing on and taking so much pride in a distant relationship to a prominent person, as Francis Scott Key was, Fitzgerald’s family confirmed and reinforced the importance of status. It also reveals their attempts of trying to gain different status than what was really the case (Donaldson 17. 18).

On the other hand, critic Richard Callahan points out that in creating the character of Gatsby, Fitzgerald may have created his own fictional alter ego. It becomes clear from his

personal notes that Fitzgerald near the end of his life was convinced that “life is essentially a cheat and its conditions are those of defeat, and that redeeming things are not ‘happiness and pleasure’ but the deeper satisfactions that come out of the struggle” a belief that is in stark contrast with his motto in his early 20s, that “life was something you dominated if you were any good” (Callahan 375). Fitzgerald’s acceptance of the inaccessibility of his dream parallels Gatsby’s coming to terms with the infeasibility of his; near the end of the novel, Nick says “I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn’t believe [Daisy’s call] would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream” (Fitzgerald 232).

Even the end of Fitzgerald is similar Gatsby’s one; both of them have their downfalls. Fitzgerald is an alcoholic whose wife suffers from nervous breakdowns, and he eventually dies of a heart attack. While in the circumstance of *The Great Gatsby* it leads to “extravagant parties, expensive cars, and sprawling homes providing the backdrop for adulterous affairs, car crashes, and, eventually three deaths” (Johnson 30). Fitzgerald had identically undergone the sense of disillusionment with his dreams to uplift his social class and become extremely wealthy leading a happy life with a beautiful wife.

In other words, both the author’s own time and the setting of that period are essential elements for many aspects of this novel. Without it, many important features would be lost. Along with other elements of this time period, it is especially crucial that this story be set after The Great War and during the Prohibition Era. The Roaring Twenties sets the stage for a great story line, and without it, *The Great Gatsby* would not be able to show the many aspects that it does. So, those were the main motives that subjugated Fitzgerald to write about the Great Gatsby. He wants to make a work out of his own life. Since his own life is particularly similar to this novel, by telling *The Great Gatsby* is somewhat like giving the readers an insight about his own life.

### 3.6 Conclusion

The analysis of the theme of modernist disillusionment with the American dream in *The Great Gatsby* displayed the personal experience of the author himself. Fitzgerald who gives a significant portrait about a society that has corrupted the true values of the American Dream in the Lost Twenties appears to be part of unbalanced environment. The dream resulted in the disequilibrium of the American who were facing upheavals beyond their capability because of their obsession with it. That was the point Fitzgerald stresses throughout his novel's major theme of disillusionment that no one in the American twenties was safe from vacant dreams and their negative consequences.

## General Conclusion

The master writer of the American dream, Scott Fitzgerald portrayed the disillusionment of Americans about the dream they have spent years obsessed with. Indeed, his masterpiece *The Great Gatsby* projects the dark side of the American dream in the context of the 1920's. In reality, it was a dark decade where the dream became corrupted by greed, materialism and vicious competition inside the middle class in order to join the upper class due to people's misunderstanding of it. This mad ambition leads to a state of unbalance in the social hierarchy and the psychology of the greedy personalities. The American dream became thus connected with material possessions rather than with moral values.

Using psychoanalysis for the exploration of characterization and the author's own vision with reference to the theme of disillusionment with the American dream in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, we achieved some results. After having introduced the topic of research in the general introduction, the first chapter set the historical background of the American dream and its reflection in literature throughout different phases and including a reference to psychoanalysis theory of literary criticism and its relation to the study of characters who experience a sense of disillusionment in Fitzgerald's masterpiece. In the second chapter, the candidate initiated the discussion of characterization in terms of the theme of the American dream while the third chapter treated intricately the manifestation of disillusionment about the American dream that turns to be a nightmare, showing its reasons, types and symbols throughout the novel.

Fitzgerald explores such a theme in his novel to show the contradiction between material prosperity and moral decadence of the American society. This vision manifests itself mainly in the complex personality of the protagonist Jay Gatsby, an overambitious character, derived by hedonism and pleasure and extremely blinded by luxurious possessions and the

other characters around him. The socio-psychoanalytic characterization through the first chapter indeed displayed the different aspects of the myth of the American dream based on the response of all characters to it in the novel. The eponymous character Gatsby appeared to be unconscious of the fact that money cannot buy love or happiness, but rather it can bring frustration by the end. Consequently, at the end his dream deceptively has transformed into a nightmare, a black reality. His pursuit of wealth and beloved Daisy culminates in an inevitable tragedy, his own death. Almost all the characters of *The Great Gatsby* are doomed because of the illusion about the American dream.

The study of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* from the angle of the author's own disillusionment demonstrated that the Americans, epitomized by Gatsby and the characters around him, have ended with frustration because of their excessive exaggeration in dreaming. The outcome is an unbearable sense of dissatisfaction where the illusion turns to be a disillusion especially in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is worth noting that the novel shed light on two types of disillusionment, of wealth and love, and both had a terrible effect at the social and psychological levels. After having explored the social, cultural and personal reasons for the disillusionment about the American dream, a series of techniques which signify this disillusionment portrayal of the images such as the mansion of Gatsby, the valley of ashes, and the green light. The candidate engaged in investigating the motives of the writer himself behind writing about the lost twenties. The motives are personal, derived from his own experience as a member of a poor family, and thus the author has created his alter ego with the creation of the character of Gatsby that both men, the real and the fictional, share the overwhelming disillusionment and the eventual downfall.

Fitzgerald's perception of the drawbacks of the American dream is clearly manifest throughout the novel especially its conclusion. The writer alerts and warns the reader and thus the then American public about the danger of abusing powers over the non-

aristocratic people who does not belong to the same upper class society. Accordingly, the dissertation concludes that the American dream cannot be realized because people like Buchanans used power and wealth as means to subjugate others and to live a pleased life at the expense of the others. Long sides to Gatsby's case, the Wilsons are also an example of moral decadence. Class conflicts alters the American Dreamers fate towards destruction rather than prosperity.

To conclude, this humble work is far from being perfect. Therefore, a further research about the representation of the American dream by other writers from modernist America in comparison with Scott Fitzgerald would be useful and rich in terms of exploring class-based clashes' impact on the precept of the ideal American Dream up till present times. This dissertation which focused on the perilous psychological and social implications of the American dream, as reflected in the characters' and the author's disillusionment. Hence forms a preliminary research work for some further studies in the field of American fiction.

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