

Death of the American Dream in Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby Essay

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The American Dream is dead. This is the main theme in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*. In the novel Fitzgerald gives us a glimpse into the life of the high class during the roaring twenties through the eyes of a moralistic young man named Nick Carraway. It is through the narrator's dealings with high society that readers are shown how modern values have transformed the American Dream's pure ideals into a scheme for materialistic power and further, how the world of high society lacks any sense of morals or consequence. In order to support this message, Fitzgerald presents the original aspects of the American Dream along with its modern face to show that the once impervious dream is now lost forever to the American people.

The main qualities of the American Dream presented in *The Great Gatsby* are perseverance and hope. Another famous characteristic of the American dream is the idea of success against all odds. This is shown through the life of [Jay Gatsby](#) or Jay Gatz, who focused all his attention to living the dream and becoming an American hero. Ever since he was young, Gatz worked hard on becoming a great man. This is documented in his copy of the adventures of Hopalong Cassidy, who was another romantic American figure.

While showing this journal to Nick, Mr. Gatz professed, "Jimmy was bound to get ahead. He always had some resolves like this or something. Do you notice what he's got about improving his mind? He was always great for that" (Pg. 173). James Gatz connection to the American dream is further illustrated by the fact that his program for self-improvement is right out of Ben Franklin's Autobiography, right down to the smallest details. The content of the schedule and what ...

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... to achieve his own success in the modern dream, commits suicide. The deaths of both the rich and poor man trying to achieve their goals symbolize the death of the old American Dream. The dream is now completely lost and can never be restored. Through the tragic story of Jay Gatsby and his failed attempt to reach his dream, [F. Scott Fitzgerald](#) also describes the tragic death of American values. The characters in The Great Gatsby are mere examples of Fitzgerald's message- the old American dream and all of its pure ideals have been replaced with money, greed, and materialism. Nick Carraway conveys this message as an outsider, an honest man from the mid-west who witnessed the whole affair as an observer. The Great Gatsby is not about the life and death of James Gatz, but about what James Gatz stood for. It is about the life and death of the old American Dream.

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