

Greed Obliterates Morality: An Analysis of the Motifs in The Great Gatsby Essay

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Maurice Sendak, a juvenile illustrator, once stated, "There must be more to life than having everything!" The world is filled with consumers. Once a person has what he or she need, he or she wants more. Often, the actions of man reveal that his main priority in life is obtaining everything because he believes that it will make him happy. While attempting to achieve happiness, man often disregards the well being of his fellow man. The characters in [F. Scott Fitzgerald](#)'s modernist novel, *The Great Gatsby*, clearly exemplify this notion of the pursuit of happiness. The setting takes place during the Jazz in the 1920's. The action takes place in New York City and Long Island, New York. [Jay Gatsby](#) and Nick Caraway reside on the rich yet mysterious West Egg while the Buchanans live in the inherently wealthy and high class East Egg. Tom and Daisy Buchanan are the type of people who unceasingly yearn for more without caring who they offend along the way. Their actions as well as the action of the other major characters elucidate the destruction of morality in mankind. In F. Scott Fitzgerald's, *The Great Gatsby*, the author's use of the motifs of weddings and the careless abuse of wealth illustrate that greed ultimately destroys man's morality.

The motif of weddings develops the theme idea that materialism obliterates integrity. For example, early in the novel, when Nick visits the Buchanan home, he narrates that “A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out to the other like pales flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding-cake of the ceiling” (8). The style of the Buchanan home is grand like that of a wedding cake. It is gigantic and has a great deal of white. This is ironic because both Tom and Daisy commit ...

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...Gatsby are content with that they have; instead they perpetually seek more. Gatsby's inability to believe that his money cannot change time ultimately leads to his destruction. Tom and Daisy disregard for all other people for the sake of living their high-class lifestyle, where they leave their messes for others to clean. These characters have priority issues for they do not see anything more to live than wanting more, than having everything. People often do not recognize their greed and justify it by calling it the “pursuit of happiness.” Sometimes there seems to be no end to their pursuit. Man often assumes that the end justifies the means, and even when the means harm others, man still finds a way to justify his actions. In a consumer world, man must analyze his priorities so that he may pursue happiness without losing his morality or destroying his fellow man.

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