

Gatsby Jay's self-discipline and sacrifice to humanity: A pointer to achieving the American Dream

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ABSTRACT

Gatsby Jay is perhaps one of the greatest master-pieces of the 20th century literature. Gatsby Jay, a celebrated American novelist and a 'Jazz Age' agent, was considered a well of gentleman with an immense love for the adoring Buchanan Daisy who unfortunately is not only from a different social class but also in some instances unwilling to extend her love to Gatsby.¹ Thus, this paper endeavors to bring out the greatness of Gatsby Jay in the context of his career and love perpetuated by self discipline and sacrifice to humanity. It will finally end on how he lost his precious life without achieving his American Dream.

Key words:

Humanity, Sacrifice, American Dream, Discipline and Gatsby Jay.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Gatsby Jay's early life was a pitiable life as compared to Buchanan Daisy, his purported true love that he cherished but who unfortunately was doomed to separate with as they belonged to ideally two different social classes. This did not deter Gatsby from working extra hard to achieve what he considered to be the finest things in life. By joining the adored rich club, he realized his life dream but he had to struggle against the spirit of self sacrifice and self discipline in order to accomplish his desired American Dream.

2. GATSBY JAY'S CAREER:

Gatsby Jay, an American writer, was a very honest, self-disciplined and hardworking person having been brought up in an underprivileged family that was least considered in his society. He fought his way out to become one of the rich persons in the society which eventually led him to win back Buchanan Daisy's love. It can be noted that without such a struggle, Gatsby could have undoubtedly remained poor the rest of his life and this could have stifled his plans to win the heart of Buchanan Daisy's true love.

It can be undoubtedly said that Mr. Cody Dan also played a great role in the success of Gatsby Jay. Mr. Cody was the engine behind introducing Gatsby in matters wine business. Through the production, packaging and selling of wine, Gatsby was able to earn a lot which helped him to not only advance his social status but also buy lavish villas and hold extravagant parties where only a few selected close friends were invited. This was meant to attract the attention of his true love Buchanan Daisy and of course other high-flying personalities in his society. Besides, the parties were held to show off his wealth to his society-men which could eventually lead him to be categorized as one of the few selected affluent members of the society. This was the same move undertaken by Americans Abraham Lincoln and Franklin Roosevelt that led to their successful crafting their way to the White House despite the fact that they both were from deplorable family backgrounds.

In the 'Jazz Age,' every young American dreamt of realizing his or her valuable dream. It can be recalled that the then Americans were not only dreamers but persons who were determined to put their dreams into actions. In other words,

young Americans generally had to struggle to shape their future careers. Gatsby Jay was not also an exception. Being a hardworking, brave and unconquerable person, he fought his way out of the poor social background to become one of the wealthy members of the society that he was living in.² This was perhaps the major reason as to why Gatsby was accepted by his society despite the fact that not all his wealth was lawfully obtained.

3. GATSBY JAY'S LOVE, STRUGGLE VIZ –A-VIZ DISCIPLINE:

The present society just like the 20th century, relationships is easily developed based on the size of the pocket that an individual has. It was therefore clear to Gatsby Jay that for him to win the heart of his true love Buchanan Daisy whom he had fallen in love with during the First World War while stationed in South of the Country as an army man, he had to fight his way out of the poverty line. It was thus evident that Buchanan Daisy's love for anyone dependent on wealth that Mr. Right could bring along in their married life.

As Gatsby, a disciplinarian, was still attending to his official army duties, the two could not be able to reach each other. Buchanan Daisy was heart-broken and could not wait for long for Gatsby. One by the name Tom who incidentally was a wealthy person, took the opportunity to present a pearl necklace to Daisy which distorted her mind and which led her to accept the hand of marriage proposed by Tom. After marriage, Daisy completely forgot all about Gatsby but nevertheless Gatsby maintained their promise of getting married.

After serving the army for five years, Gatsby was lucky to see his love Daisy who had, by then, gotten married to Tom. This however did not break his heart as he believed that Daisy only loved him and her purported marriage with Tom was just an inconceivable mistake. In order to join the elite club and get an opportunity to re-unite with Daisy, Gatsby continued to work hard to become rich by bootlegging wine.

With the increase in fortune and for Gatsby to attract Daisy' attention, he resolved to hold lavish parties in which he invited selected persons and particularly Nick who was Daisy's cousin whom he considered suitable to act as a link between them. It is important to note that for Gatsby, his American dream was only to be fulfilled by none other than Daisy. Her candid love was the only thrust that shaped Gatsby's life and career and as such, Gatsby was not ready to accept the truth that Daisy, who incidentally was fickle in love, deserved his true love.

As days went by, Nick in the pretext of having tea, he decided to invite Daisy to his home in order to create an opportunity for her to meet Gatsby. However, Daisy was at this moment not very serious on matters love with Gatsby. As such, it can be pointed out that Daisy, while trying to conceal her coldness, was revealing her hypocritical and selfish nature. This contrasted her love with that of Gatsby.

For Gatsby to fully realize his American dream, he had to not only be hardworking but also self-disciplined. To that extent, he had prepared his own daily timetable that indicated how and when he carried out certain daily activities. For instance, since the 'early bird catches the worm,' he could rise up from bed at six in the morning, do some dumbbell exercise to keep his body fit and fine, and study electricity³ for sometimes before he went to work at 8.30am. After work, he could proceed to play baseball and other sports, practice elocution⁴ and undertake some study on his favourite book 'Hopalong Cassidy' before sleeping at 9.00pm.⁵ This apart, he had decided not to either waste time at shafter or chew or smoke, habits that were socially unacceptable. Bathing daily, saving eight dollars per week, improving his relationship with his parents, and reading books or magazines that advanced his knowledge were also part of his resolve.⁶ All these daily activities and resolutions clearly demonstrated Gatsby's secrete ambitions that were ideally hard-pressed by his humble economic background and which made Gatsby's father to be proud of his assiduous son.

It is quite clear from his daily schedule that Gatsby did not like late evening parties even though he was fond of holding parties in the name of impressing his true love, Daisy and showing off his well improved social status to the society-men. It may be noted that when Nick saw Gatsby's daily schedule, he had a notion that Gatsby had resurrected as both his dreams and future were fresh and indeed promising.

4. GATSBY JAY'S DISCIPLINED LIFE:

Despite the fact that Gatsby had transformed his life and became one of the affluent persons in the American society, he still adopted a simple life irregardless of his new social status. This can be demonstrated by the kind of bedroom he lived in that did not match his new social status. However, there was one bed bedroom he reserved for his love Daisy that had a gold toilet set. Gatsby considered true love and unsophisticated morality as quite significant compared with wealth a person possesses and the place that one lives.

Moreover, even though Gatsby regularly held parties to appease his society men, he never drank alcohol/wine nor entertained other women. Only his invited guests were noted to be drunk throughout the celebration. He was self-disciplined and sober, a scheme he adopted to make a decent impression on his societal men and more importantly, his true love Daisy.

Being self-disciplined, Gatsby attached significance to relationship ties and as such, he refrained from having affairs with married friend's spouses which was presumably quite contrary with what Tom had engaged himself in. His nature attracted the attention of Nick who actually recognized something outstanding in Gatsby *i.e.*, a man with true eternal hope and romantic feeling which Nick had never seen in his entire lifespan and attested to never find in the future generations.

Gatsby's distinctive nature was envisaged in Nick's own words, "... [*I*]t has often been observed that Gatsby is in the line of heroes of romance."⁷ Nick had also attested that Gatsby's nature was pure and genuine and did not contain any unwarranted hypocrisy which made others to have trust in him. Unlike Tom, Gatsby was not selfish either. He never distorted facts nor blamed others to cover up his mistakes.

Upon Gatsby joining the rich club and becoming renowned in the society, he still maintained his genuine and generous nature like a lotus coming out of silt but not being dyed. He was open to his true friend Nick and his love, Daisy whom he decided to shoulder whole of her responsibility which only Nick knew.⁸ This therefore incredibly disassociated him with those who were living and lost in the 'Jazz Age' like Mrs. Wilson thus maintaining his unsophisticated morality conscious.

5. GATSBY JAY'S DEATH:

The life and death of Gatsby can be compared to that of Christ. Despite Gatsby's genuine nature and self-sacrifice, only a few of his uninvited society-men and close friends responded when they heard that Gatsby had been killed, and to make matters worse, only a few of them attended his funeral. This was in total contrast from the number of guests he used to receive at his mansion during his parties. Besides, Christ and Gatsby were murdered by persons they trusted most. Judas, one of the followers of Christ betrayed Christ his master just for the love of money. Similarly, Gatsby's death was a product of Daisy's irresponsible nature. Both Tom and Gatsby knew that the car accident that led to Gatsby's death was as a result of Daisy's devilish actions. This apart, Daisy did not heed to Gatsby's fantasies that led to lose of his life nor did she attend Gatsby's funeral.

It was obvious that the kind of love Gatsby had for Daisy was genuine as he loved her with all his heart and soul. He always thought of her in the morning, evening and night and was ready to sacrifice his life for her whenever things

went wrong for Daisy.⁹ This was in total contrast with the kind of love Tom had for Daisy. Tom was adulterous, selfish in nature, wary and arrogant as Nick noted. He had a side relationship with Mrs. Wilson. After Gatsby's death, Tom was never repentant in his heart as he considered himself more important than the rest of the people. It is significant to note what Nick thought about Daisy and Tom. He considered them to be persons who in their lives do not have answers for what they do and are completely free to ignore the consequences of what they do in life. As such, this can be said to be one of the ways in which their dysfunctional but successful marriage existed.¹⁰

Apart from Tom, there was Miss. Baker who incidentally was a close friend of Daisy and who also cared nothing about the accident that led to Gatsby's death. Likewise, Mr. Wolfsheim who, as well was close to Mr. Gatsby and who Nick tried to call, vanished into thin air immediately after the death of Gatsby just to avoid the trouble associated with the sending off of Gatsby. Mr. Wolfsheim instead sent a perfunctory letter to the funeral organizing team noting his apology. He however agreed to only attend Gatsby's funeral. The same case applied to Klipspringer Ewing, who despite having spent his summer time at the Gatsby, did not respond when he heard of Gatsby's death but, only called Nick indicating that he was to attend the funeral but the call was only meant to get back a pair of shoes he had left at the Gatsby during his last visit. Consequently, the actions of Miss. Baker, Mr. Wolfsheim and Mr. Klipspringer Ewing added salt to an already staid wound surrounding the death of Gatsby.

Though Gatsby was already long gone, Nick who was his close friend did not imagine that the death of Gatsby ended his American dream.¹¹ He believed that Gatsby's nature, self-sacrifice, self-discipline and romantic spirit, would last as long as the universe subsisted. This kind of believes and trust would be thus be perceived as the resurrection of Gatsby's spirit and thus compared to the resurrection of Christ after his death.

It is equally important to note that after Gatsby's death, Nick who was in his house received a call from unknown person who was believed to be Gatsby's accomplice in criminal activities they engaged in. The caller did not identify himself when asked to do so but rather hanged up the phone when he was informed of Gatsby's sudden death. This therefore indicated that Gatsby was not only involved in bootlegging business but also in the trade of dealing with counterfeit and stolen bonds.

Three days after the death of Gatsby, Mr. Henry C. Gatz, his father learnt of his death, unsurprisingly, from a Chicago Newspaper. He immediately sent a telegram to Nick who he perceived to be a very close friend to his bereaved son to confirm the matter. That apart, he decided to travel from his Minnesota home to his loving son's place to attend his funeral. On arrival, Nick and some of his friends who were present were surprised to see Mr. Gatz looking shaggy indicating that he was still very poor despite what his loving son had achieved in his lifespan.

On the day of the funeral, Nick decided to personally visit Mr. Wolfsheim at his office. The visit was meant to give Mr. Wolfsheim an opportunity to write a note eulogizing Gatsby. On arrival Mr. Wolfsheim lied to Nick by saying that Mr. Wolfsheim had left for Chicago but when Nick pointed out Gatsby's name, he was shown into Mr. Wolfsheim's office. Mr. Wolfsheim was able to give detailed notes on how he met Gatsby at a Pool Hall after he left his army job. Gatsby was by then searching for a job which Mr. Wolfsheim helped him to find. At the end of the note, Mr. Wolfsheim explained why he was not willing to attend Gatsby's funeral as he never wanted to be associated with and be anywhere close to the crime scene. This shows that Mr. Wolfsheim's relationship with Gatsby did not matter after his death. He had to be shoved away and let go of what he considered to be the 'past.'

As Nick and Mr. Gatz were sitting at Gatsby's mansion, Mr. Gatz pulled a picture of Gatsby's mansion that Gatsby had sent to him including a Western that Gatsby loved to read in his own free time and which at its back had a

schedule of events that Gatsby had written and which he stalwartly followed to enable him improve his social status and health. The showing of the picture and a Western was meant to keep them busy as they waited for society-men to come for the funeral. Having realized that no one was to turn up for the event and having started to rain, Mr. Gatz, Nick and Minister drove to the cemetery. At the cemetery, an unknown person who had been marveling at Gatsby's home library of unread books, and who was wearing owl-eyed glasses, suddenly showed up to mourn with Mr. Gatz, Nick and the Minister.

6. CONCLUSIONS:

Taking into account the above analysis, it can be concluded that Gatsby Jay's nature, self-sacrifice, self-discipline and romantic spirit for his love Buchanan Daisy was indeed genuine. Being aware of his poor background, he works very hard to achieve his American Dream *i.e.*, to improve his financial status and join the upper class and more importantly, to just win the heart and soul of Daisy who unfortunately does not reciprocate but rather act devilish leading to his death.

Being self-disciplined, Gatsby is able to come up with a schedule of daily events *i.e.*, he could rise up from bed at six in the morning, do some dumbbell exercise to keep his body fit and fine, and study electricity for sometimes before he went to work at 8.30am. After work, he could proceed to play baseball and other sports, practice elocution and undertake some study on his favourite books. This was purely meant to help him in maintaining good health that could facilitate his aim of achieving the American Dream.

For Gatsby to be recognized in the society, he spent most of his time holding lavish parties where invited guests ate and danced their way out. Despite doing all such, Gatsby never earned respect from his society-men except Nick.

Lastly, it can be pointed out that Gatsby died in accident while his immense love for Buchanan Daisy was still intact. He sacrificed everything just to have her which unfortunately did not happen.

¹ Ousby I., *An Introduction to 50 American Novels*. London: Pan Books Ltd., 1979.

² It may be noted that not all Gatsby's wealth was legally obtained. This however, did not paint his picture to be one of the persons to be considered as an evil-doer in the society based on the fact of his social upbringing.

³ Studying electricity was an ambitious of joining the league of the famous scientists Isaac Newton and Einstein.

⁴ Practising elocution was one way of not only improving his communicative ability but also in advancing the way he appeared in the public ceremonies. This thus enabled him to prepare for the greater tasks that were ahead of him.

⁵ Guo, H. (2004). *Seeking Lost Paradise: An Archetypal Interpretation of The Great Gatsby*. MA Thesis, Zhengzhou: Zhengzhou University.

⁶ Fitzgerald, F. S. (2003). *The Great Gatsby*. Qingdao: Qingdao Publishing House, pp. 231-232.

⁷ Bloom, H. (1986). *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. New York\Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publisher, p.30.

⁸ Gross, D., & Gross, M. (2008). *Understanding The Great Gatsby*. Beijing: China Renmin University Press.

⁹ Ousby, I. (1979). *An Introduction to 50 American Novels*. London: Pan Books Ltd.

¹⁰ After Gatsby's death Tom and Daisy left town for good, with no forwarding address. This was a total disrespect to Gatsby's American dream.

¹¹ Gatsby's American Dream seems to be over but the American Dream still persists unabated despite his sudden death.