



# Undergraduate Dissertation

Trabajo Fin de Grado

Love and Other Possessions in *The Great Gatsby*

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# Introduction

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*The Great Gatsby* is an extraordinary piece of North American literature. Written by Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald in 1925 and set in Long Island, New York, in 1922, it is a literary classic considered to be one of the Great American Novels, a concept that grants this novel the acknowledgement of its value as a true symbol of American culture, truthfully portraying the American society of the time in its various aspects, ranging from the dress code to the way of talking or the way of thinking that characterised people in a determined period of American history.

The novel is set in a unique era of the history of the United States of America: the Roaring Twenties. Marked by economic prosperity and cultural development, this period marks a new beginning for American history, as the joy of life and wealth experienced all throughout the country is completely opposite to the mentality of previous times, that is, the Victorian era that begun with the Civil War up until the First World War. American society went through a great boost in its financial power, which led the middle class into a higher way of life and enrichment of its culture, changes which are displayed in *The Great Gatsby* accurately. The novel also revolves around a particular feature of this era, which is known as Prohibition; this period begun in 1920 and ended in 1933, and during this time alcohol manufacturing, sale and transportation was forbidden, although its consumption never really was. Prohibition gains relevance due to the fact that Jay Gatsby, the character which the novel is written around, makes a vast amount of money in very little time, which will lead some of the characters of the novel to believe that he is an alcohol smuggler; his obscure and unclear past helps him justify the way he made all his money, although some characters in the novel will not believe his stories.

The wealth and the frivolous lifestyle of the upper middle class are thoroughly described, and Jay Gatsby is perhaps the prime example of this social stratum. He is a man that made his fortune out of nothing, but his actual past is hidden behind the various of stories about his life, some of which are told by Gatsby himself and others are invented by people that attend his parties, which helps him avoid explaining the origin of his wealth. His vast fortune cannot be ignored, it is present from the very beginning of the novel and it is accompanied with Gatsby's positive attitude and happiness. But Jay Gatsby is more than just a vessel for the wealth and spirit of his era; he is a deep character capable of caring for others and even of loving them, as such is the case with Gatsby's true obsession, the one thing that he desires even more than money: Daisy's love. For her love, Jay Gatsby is capable of changing his whole life just to reach Daisy's social status and become the rich, successful man Daisy truly wants.

But how true is the love between Jay Gatsby and Daisy? And perhaps more important, how legitimate are the means by which their relationship is consolidated? Is it love or only the ultimate possession? In this essay these questions will be explained from the point of view of the society in which the characters of the novel are submerged, which always puts money before love or any other emotion that may be threatening to the way life that those who belong in the higher spheres of society have embraced, and focusing on the treatment of love as portrayed in some of the relationships that the main characters of the novel maintain and break.

# The Price of Love

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## 2.1: Meeting Gatsby

The society of the Roaring Twenties is often described as careless or negligent due to the lifestyle that was predominant in that time, determined by several circumstances such as the fact that people had much more money than their ascendants had, and the swift of the mentality that came along after World War I. But F. Scott Fitzgerald had a slightly different opinion in the matter; Fitzgerald stated in an interview in 1921 that he believed that the state of society in the 1920s had nothing to do with World War I but instead was the product of a long process that had begun after the Civil War and developed during the Victorian era.

The novel begins by explaining how the Carraway family made its fortune through hard work, and how the Civil War meant the beginning of this process which culminates in Nick, a young man who studied at Yale and is now introduced in the higher strata of society (Berman, p. 18). With this introduction, Fitzgerald contextualises his interpretation of the society of the Roaring Twenties, giving a deeper meaning to the characters that embody the spirit of prosperity that characterised this era. It is this spirit that Jay Gatsby is best known for; his attitude is always positive and welcoming, and perfectly matches the way people picture him.

The genius of the characterization of Jay Gatsby relies on Fitzgerald's take on the society of his time; his unclear origin is not accidental, it is a well-designed web of stories that may or may not be true, but the stories themselves are not important. What is important is that people who get to know Jay Gatsby get trapped inside that web that surrounds them with amazement and, in a way, blinds them from seeing the actual

Gatsby, who is just hiding behind that appearance; Fitzgerald describes this feeling when Nick attends the first party at Gatsby's house without actually knowing Gatsby in person. It is in the middle of the party that he encounters a friendly fellow who turns out to be Gatsby himself, and then Nick narrates what goes on inside his head:

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was 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 to you with an irresistible prejudice in your favour. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished—and I was looking at an elegant young roughneck, a year or two over thirty, whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. (p. 48)

Fitzgerald also points out that Gatsby is clearly out of place in the higher strata of society, he does not belong there, and he tries almost desperately to conceal this fact with his elegance and charm in order to be treated as equal among those who occupy the higher spheres of society, but at core he is not one of them (Lehan, p. 60). Perhaps that is what makes Gatsby so special; he is a self-made man whose fortune, although earned through shady business, came from nothing; he could even be held as an example of the American Dream, if we excuse the means by which he achieved such an outstanding social status in a time span of just a few years. Nevertheless, Gatsby is still a symbol of the American essence; he put everything forward to achieve his goal, and that deserves to be recognised.

Such a crazy lifestyle also demands a little bit of madness from those who dare to pursue their dreams to the point that they are no longer dreams but obsessions instead. Gatsby has always had a very well-defined goal since he came back from the War; he didn't have a penny, but at least he had love, or that is what he thought until he discovered that Daisy had not waited for him and married a young businessman named Tom Buchanan, to whom she is married still. Gatsby realised that Daisy loved money, but love was not her main interest in life. And so Gatsby became determined to achieve this goal of winning Daisy back; and for that purpose he would change his way of life completely, making a vast fortune in just a few years to elevate himself to a status in which Daisy may take interest in getting back with him, while also perfecting his manners and his way of speaking to not only live among rich people, but also become one of them, at least to the naked eye.

Even though a deeper thinking about Gatsby's life, or rather his past, would lead everyone to think that all those stories are obviously fake, not a single person takes interest in breaking this character's veracity, at least when they first meet him; it is embraced by everyone. That can only mean that all of them have something to hide as well, and although Gatsby makes it more obvious than those with whom he shares the higher strata of society, that doesn't mean that his secret is any darker than theirs.

## 2.2: Daisy and Tom's Marriage

If we take a closer look at Daisy and Tom's relationship, we can clearly see that theirs is not a conventional one; in fact, it's almost as if marriage and family were concepts that just did not fit in their lifestyle (Berman, p.75). Their relationship resembles a business rather than a marriage, as Tom openly has an affair with a lower-class woman named Myrtle Wilson, and we see it from the first instances of the novel in which Tom takes Nick with him to the valley of ashes where they pick up Myrtle, Tom's lover. Daisy seems to not care at all actually; to her, those affairs have little to no relevance when compared to the wealth they have and the life style she has achieved thanks to her marriage to Tom Buchanan. Tom and Daisy live together in the same house, but it is certainly not a home (Harvey, p. 81)

In the first instances of the novel when we get to know this couple, Nick Carraway, the narrator, indicates that Tom and Daisy drifted around "wherever people played polo and were rich together" (p. 8); this description puts into perspective the vision of life that Tom and Daisy have in common, so different from that of a normal couple that is not almost literally swimming in money. The superficiality of the rich is so overwhelming that it goes as far as giving life a completely materialistic meaning, eliminating all feelings for the sake of making money. That is precisely what happens to Gatsby, who establishes his miraculous business only to provide Daisy with what she really wants, that is, an easy life filled with money and a respectable social status. Thus, Gatsby also gets involved in this corrupt lifestyle, which he once entered as an honest man who happened to fall in love with a girl that, in the end, had no interest in love, but was instead focused on having a good life rather than a happy one (Harvey, p. 83).

In his way to reach Daisy stands Tom, who could be perceived as a selfish man who does not care about others and will do whatever he has to do just to get what he wants, whether it is money or sex or something else, for example boosting his ego by picking up his lover in front of her husband. We cannot ignore the fact that he is also a violent man who can go as far as hitting a woman for mocking his wife. Physical violence shall never be excused, but although all the other bad things that Tom does throughout the novel would also be completely out of place in normal terms, if contextualised inside the vision of reality that these people are submerged in, Tom's actions symbolise the way he thinks life should be lived. From this point of view, there is no actual sin behind his actions, because all of them were agreed upon. After all, he is married to Daisy and they agree to live the way they do (Fraser, p. 144).

Tom can provide Daisy with all she wants, and this will force Gatsby to try his hardest to win Daisy over, because he knows money alone will not be enough, and sadly admitting his love for her will not make any difference; he needs Daisy to feel the same way he does in order to achieve his goal. It is through Nick that the reader learns about Daisy's true feelings. Nick pays close attention to Daisy whenever he has the chance, and by observation he determines that Daisy does in fact love Gatsby, but she is afraid of what her feelings may bring her to, and that same fear drags her to Tom (Fryer, p. 158). She perceives Gatsby as another change, a new attack to that fragile stability that she now has with Tom; although her marriage is far from perfect, at least it is well defined, clear, like a contract that both parts agree on. Gatsby is set to prove to Daisy that she could also have stability with him; he tries to resemble Tom's capability for business with the goal of reliving the love he once had through materialistic means (Lhamon, p. 173), and hoping that one day, Daisy will dare to feel again, and realise that she had the key to her happiness in front of her.

Relationships in *The Great Gatsby* are unconventional to say the least. There is no standard by which all the relationships that are displayed in the novel could be defined; marriage becomes extremely flexible under the moral standards of the social stratum that the main characters in this novel occupy. They accept the idea of marriage as a social construct but there is no underlying meaning to it, other than perhaps the unification of two fortunes under the same household; this grants the signers of this contract absolute freedom to be as promiscuous as they want without fear of retaliation or harsh feelings. It is a true symbol of the inherent freedom of the era, taken to its extreme. Freedom does not only mean economic freedom in this context, but also moral freedom; everything becomes acceptable under this standard, but there is one thing that people have to renounce, and that is true feelings. There is no possible way feelings can find a place in this stratum of society; feelings make a person value other things above money and in a world so free and yet as rough as the world of the rich is, there is no room for the weak.

Daisy's attitude towards Gatsby's feelings could be described as careless, but it is not the way this problem should be looked at. Daisy has been a part of the world of the rich for much longer than Gatsby has, and this means that Gatsby is simply not playing by the rules that the rest of people around him are. He still believes in love, and firmly stands by this idea to the very end of the novel, but sadly that is not how this world works, at least not anymore for Jay Gatsby. Eliminating feelings from a normal life makes it much more shallow, but also perfectly bearable for those who accept it.

Tom could serve as the prime example to this idea; his mind is focused on the empire he has built, and is satisfied with how things go for him. He has money, a wife and a lover, and there is no reason to hide it; freedom is expressed to its full potential in Tom's life. Gatsby could have all of that, but he is a deeper character than Tom, and he

needs love in his life, a kind of love that he thought could not be bought; but life has shown to him that sometimes money can in fact be the answer to his problems. In Gatsby's mind there is one way that he can have Daisy's love, and that is to achieve the same level of success that Tom has or even more. Daisy may have experienced love once, but she has forgotten how to love; she actually had no choice but to become what she now is, otherwise she would be completely broken. In that process, she forgot about how she felt when she had a relationship with Gatsby.

But Jay Gatsby has not forgotten yet; he remembers perfectly every minute he spent with Daisy and that is what motivates him through this life full of luxury but empty of meaning. He has put all his hope of a happy life in achieving love through money, and that is precisely what will bring him to an unhappy ending after all. The treatment of love as an object, something that can be bought with money, is morally wrong beyond measure, because putting a price tag on a feeling dehumanises not only those who use their love as an asset to marry a successful person, but also those who, knowing the nature of this fake love, decide to buy it nevertheless, as they are well aware of the reality hiding behind this money-fuelled love, but decide to obtain it anyway.

### 2.3: Gatsby and Daisy's Affair

During his rise to success Gatsby starts to lose his integrity as a human being, trading it for more money; he knows that the faster he earns money, the sooner he will be reunited with Daisy, and he also knows for certain that Daisy will not love him just for who he is, so breaking his identity into a thousand pieces, one for each story there is about his past, only helps him avoid being asked about his true motives, thus making this progress much faster.

His persona is designed to amaze people, but also to make them fear the truth, whether someone actually believes him or not is irrelevant, because what really matters is that no one bothers to ask about it. They simply accept Gatsby as an outstanding person, giving him immediate respect that serves as a perfect backup, for example, when talking about business with an important person. He will often remember his true motives, with the intention not to lose track of his original goal, but as time passes he becomes increasingly anxious about it. He has waited a long time to be reunited with Daisy and it is no longer a sincere desire for love that Gatsby feels, it has turned into obsession. The money, the luxury and the fame are but the price he has to pay to be with Daisy, but Gatsby does not realise that money may lead to love, but not the love he has been looking for.

Eventually, after a long, long wait, Daisy and Gatsby reunite thanks to Nick, who sets up a meeting between both of them. For the first time in the novel, Gatsby is truly happy, he no longer has to pretend to be happy, he can finally experience it after all these years. In the first instances of their renewed yet undefined relationship, we can appreciate the affection they have for one another, which indicates that after all, Daisy is still capable of feeling; but there are still several differences between them.

For Gatsby, Daisy has been the prime motor of his life, he has not thought of anything else but her since she left him during his service in the War; but in Daisy's case, Gatsby did not mean as much. For Daisy, their love never was as important as it was for Gatsby; she could not marry someone who was not at the same level of wealth if not higher than hers, this being the reason which led her to marry Tom instead of Gatsby.

Nevertheless, they are now back together in secret, and Gatsby has achieved his goal; he now owns the thing he has been constantly pursuing for such a long time. Now that his dream has come to an end and has come true, Gatsby wants to set things back to how they were before any of this happened, act as if these past years were only a bad dream that he has just woken up from. But there lies the great problem between the two of them. Gatsby thought that simply by becoming what Daisy fell in love with, an improved version of Tom Buchanan, would be enough to make her stay with him, but what Gatsby could not anticipate was that all his money would not instantly grant him Daisy's heart (Lewis, p. 41).

The problem that opens up before them lies on Gatsby's over-idealised version of Daisy. For several years he has thought of Daisy as his saviour, the one and only love he has ever considered to be true, and his disconnection with Daisy made him keep in his mind all the good times he spent with her and how happy he was back then. Since Daisy left him, he kept these feelings and thoughts inside him, slowly turning the once original love that they shared into an obsession that consumes him day by day, incapable of getting over it. He is so deeply in love that just speaking to Daisy made him feel happier than ever before.

In contrast to this fanaticism that Gatsby has for Daisy, we only find doubt in Daisy's mind. She knows that she has hurt Gatsby beyond measure, and now that she has finally given him a chance, she realises that she has no possible way of fulfilling all his desires. The human factor in Daisy has finally reached the surface, and she knows far too well that her capability of living up to Gatsby's expectations can only go so far. One difference that separates them even more is all the repressed feelings Gatsby has hidden in his life ever since he started making money. Unlike Gatsby, Daisy has lived some of the happiest years of her life beside Tom, and although things are not so bright now as they used to be, she can still recall the times they were happy together; unfortunately, such is not the case with Gatsby, as she can barely recall the actual details of the time she spent with him. The love she felt for Gatsby was real; she recognizes that she loved Gatsby once, and still has feelings for him, but she cannot deny that she also truly loved Tom at the beginning of their marriage: “‘Oh, you want too much!’ she cried to Gatsby. ‘I love you now—isn't that enough? I can't help what's past.’ She began to sob helplessly. ‘I did love him once—but I loved you too’” (p. 132).

Tom's figure remains the same throughout this affair between Gatsby and Daisy, proving to be a steady figure after all; the affair he has with Myrtle does not have anything to do with his actual relationship with Daisy, with whom he has a daughter. The trust that Daisy has put on Tom throughout their life together makes her jump back and forth between Gatsby and Tom, and although now she is in love with Gatsby, things turn right around when Tom decides to step forward and defend his relationship with Daisy; various confrontations arise between Tom and Gatsby in several meetings throughout the second part of the novel, but the one that truly makes the difference is the one after lunch on Daisy and Tom's house, where Daisy realises that she is better off with Tom: “But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he

gave that up, and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, towards that lost voice across the room. ‘Please, Tom! I can’t stand this anymore’” (p. 134).

## 2.4: The True Nature of Love

All this battling and duelling for Daisy’s love resemble two businessmen fighting for a multimillionaire contract, and can also be perceived as two children fighting over a toy they both have shared and now they want for their own. Love is reified, translated into numbers, and Gatsby has nothing to do against that; behind all the money he has accumulated throughout his life, there is still a bit of original, true love for Daisy, but there is nothing left for Daisy to feel: “Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had had, were definitely gone” (p. 134). But for Daisy and Tom, love is just a term that people use to refer to the affinity between two people and nothing more, it has long stopped being a feeling. Their marriage is just a safe space which they can enter when things are going wrong: “They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made” (p. 178). At this point, Gatsby has lost Daisy, he had her for a brief time but he could not make his dreams come true after all.

The final series of events that lead to Gatsby’s death are cruel, carefully thought through. Daisy accidentally runs over Myrtle, Tom’s lover, and her husband George Wilson demands justice. Tom tells George that Gatsby was driving the car and so, George goes to Gatsby’s house, where he shoots him dead and then commits suicide.

Only three people attend Gatsby's funeral, and Daisy and Tom move from their home in the East Egg without leaving any trace.

In the last chapter of the novel we learn that Tom cares more about losing his apartment in New York than about Gatsby's death, which was obvious due to the fact that neither he nor Daisy attended his funeral. This reassures the way life is treated by society, and leaves no wonder as to how careless people actually are. Gatsby, or rather the idea of Gatsby that people had, embodied this spirit once, but as his true self is revealed to the reader, the point of view from which he is perceived shifts around completely, becoming the only person who is still capable of feeling something, anything other than apathy or total indifference for others. After all his efforts to achieve happiness, he ends up dying, knowing for a fact that the love of his life will never be with him; he has missed his chance and will never come back. Gatsby dies a depressed man, with no hope of finding love again, and killed by the order of a man who had everything Gatsby ever wanted without any effort, a member of the high society who had all he needed from the very beginning. In a sense, Gatsby got killed by the man he tried to become, and this fact gives the novel a very rewarding didactic message; if only Gatsby had remained true to himself, maybe the story would have had another ending. Furthermore, if Gatsby had had the capability to observe that his love was turning into an obsession, he could have stopped trying to obtain it, but he got betrayed by the very thing that defines him and makes him different from those around him: his feelings.

His love for Daisy was so pure when he first met her, that the spirit of their passion lived inside Gatsby until the day of his death; and for this spirit to remain alive, Gatsby had to endure several years of torture, knowing his true love was with another man just because he already had inherited a great amount of money. The spirit never

lost its power, but its meaning got twisted due to Gatsby's soul being torn by the cruelty of the world he introduced himself in. For the bigger part of this novel, Gatsby lived a miserable life surrounded by an astonishing amount of money and luxury, and although he managed to find a piece of his true love, he could not get away with it. This society was too strange for Gatsby, and the nature of the world he had to live in was the ulterior motor that marked each of the events that guided Gatsby from the beginning of his journey toward Daisy. He was, in a way, predestined to end up just like this.

# Conclusions

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The novel can only be understood if taking into account the society it is located in; otherwise, the novel falls to pieces if the reader tries to make sense out of Gatsby's life. The narrator, Nick Carraway, can be used as a guiding thread through this chaotic world we get introduced to; a world in which the moral values of society have been bested by freedom itself, reaching a point in which freedom becomes a prison for those who live in it. Jay Gatsby would be extremely happy in this society if only he really liked it; but we know for a fact that Gatsby is but a humble man who did everything he could to be happy in life, but he happened to fall for the wrong person, and instead of pursuing true love, he was chasing the ghost of an old passion.

In the context of the novel, the reader can see Daisy from two different perspectives. The first one sets Daisy as a fragile woman, who just wants to find happiness in a world that is too complicated for her; she is moved around by the society she has been introduced to, and the way she acts is forced into her by those who occupy the same social stratum as her; she has to stoically withstand the events that take place before her eyes, as such is the case for Tom's infidelity, for example; in a state of insecurity, created by her fear of Gatsby not making it back home alive, she finds Tom and decides to stand by him because she sees him as a way to ensure her life will have a stable future.

But this balance she has found alongside Tom is challenged by the reappearance of Gatsby in her life, and finds herself feeling again, loving again. Since the beginning of her marriage with Tom, whom she chose over Gatsby not only because she was scared of losing Gatsby, but also due to their compatibility and similar social status and also the approval of her parents, her capability of genuinely feeling had faded away;

Gatsby represents a spark of hope that unfortunately fades away due to her fear of change. Dragged by the consequences of Tom's actions, she leaves her house and moves to another place even before Gatsby's funeral, to try and continue her life with Tom, in hope of being happy in her marriage.

The second one is much more critical about the way Daisy acts, visualising the portion of her life we get to know as a well elaborated scheme that puts money over people since her first relationship with Gatsby. Her family is very rich, and as she has been brought up in an environment full of luxury, she refuses to live life in a lower social status than the one she has experienced her whole life. For that purpose, she had many lovers throughout her life until she met Tom, in whom she found everything she was looking for: a young man with a bright future in front of him filled with opportunities to increase her wealth and social status even more.

The one thing she did not expect was to find Gatsby as a suitable partner in her scheme, and when she gives him a chance, she experiences sorrow and pity for the way she has treated Gatsby, in whom she left such a deep mark that transformed him into a completely different man, with his mind set on money just like hers, with the difference that Gatsby's greed for money had a deeper meaning behind it that was trying to love her in the way he thought she wanted to be loved. Their affair ends suddenly when Daisy abandons Gatsby, rejecting Gatsby's sincere feelings for the comfort of a life that she has already begun with Tom, with whom she already has a daughter. After the events that lead to Gatsby's death, she disappears without a trace, leaving behind the corpse of the only man who truly loved her; the person who was so desperately in love with her that took the blame for the murder of Myrtle and died because of it. Daisy did not even show up to his funeral to give respect for his sacrifice, she just left and continued her easy life as if nothing had ever happened.

Although this essay has been built focusing on the second interpretation, which seems more logical for the reader, in the end, either interpretation is valid, as in both of those perspectives love plays a very important role; nevertheless, it is in the latter interpretation that love is never displayed as a true feeling that two individuals share for one another. Sadly, love is always attached to money and success in the society portrayed in *The Great Gatsby*.

Love is treated as a feature that does not have to be necessarily present in a relationship, as money is the main reason for people to take any interest in life. If money were to be taken away from these people, they would be deeply unhappy, because they have become desensitised from the actual world. Their greed for money in pursuit of absolute freedom has led them to live a life that for most people would be impossible to live; this life is full of luxury, big houses, expensive cars and love affairs, but there is no trace of true happiness behind the mask of money, happiness is but an illusion created by vice and a relentless style of life only achievable by the higher strata of society. The basic teaching in *The Great Gatsby* is that money cannot buy happiness, but there is a deeper meaning in the means by which Gatsby tries to attract the love of his life.

Under normal circumstances, a person may choose to sacrifice certain aspects of their life in order to achieve a specific goal, as such could be the case in *The Great Gatsby* if the novel ended happily with Gatsby regaining his only and true love, and of course if Gatsby managed to obtain his vast fortune in a lawful way, instead of presumably doing it through alcohol smuggling during Prohibition. Even so, their story could have ended in a different way if their relationship had turned out to be more wholesome; and here precisely is where the reader may extract a new lesson from the novel.

Since the reader first learns about Gatsby's desire to be reunited with the love of his life, the reader feels encouraged to stand by Gatsby, and this feeling gets emphasised when the true story of Gatsby is revealed; Gatsby went as far as to drastically change his way of life for someone who rejected him in such an unlawful way as Daisy did, that is, by forsaking Gatsby while he was fighting in the War and marrying another man who happened to already have money, a higher social status than Gatsby which Daisy's parents truly approved, and a promising future full of wealth.

Up until this point Gatsby's intentions have a legitimate purpose, powered by love and the desire of love, but as he gets involved in the new life style that he has been forced to embrace, he begins to over-idealise Daisy, elevating her above all other human beings; nothing can top Daisy in Gatsby's thoughts, not even his fortune or his friends, if he ever truly had any. It is the transformation of a passionate love into a life-draining obsession that the reader should pay attention to. In his quest for Daisy, Gatsby renounced many things, among which he eventually also renounced himself; he forgot to his true motives, blinded by the luxury that came along his fortune perhaps, or maybe by his own desire growing too much until he was dependant on it, wanting to fulfil his dreams to the point of needing it more than he needed breathing.

The true vital lesson that the reader may extract from this novel is that excess can only lead to misery, whether it is excess of money, excess of greed, excess of love or even excess of freedom. In the end, Daisy did not leave with Gatsby when he asked her to elope with him because she was not free to do so; she obviously had plenty of reasons to stay, as for example her daughter or her husband, but there is still a more important reason that disabled her from leaving her previous life: she felt trapped inside the freedom her life with Tom granted her, believing that a new degree of freedom in which she could live a morally correct life was not as desirable as a life in which she

was free from morality itself. This fundamental difference between Gatsby and Daisy is what led Gatsby through a path at the end of which he could only find doom. His fame and fortune could not help him overcome his fixation on a happy life, far from what he had become; his success took him too deep into a way of life determined by the lack of love for life, which had transformed into love for money.

All the characters that interact with Gatsby in the novel, except Nick Carraway and Jordan Baker, only have money on their minds, and in a way, Gatsby turned into one of them; without even knowing it, he fell into his own trap. When he first decided to make an obscene amount of money, his intention was focused on impressing Daisy so she would realise she could be just as happy with Gatsby as she was with Tom, but as years went by, money transformed from just being a way of being loved, into the only way to be loved; he did not want to be happy with anyone but Daisy, and he felt miserable until the day of his death. His true happiness lasted for as long as Daisy wondered if Gatsby could be a suitable partner in her life, which sadly was not much; after that, Daisy turned her back on Gatsby in favour of Tom, leaving Gatsby feeling devastated until his premature and unjust death. Gatsby's mistake was to assume that his will could not be broken, that his values would remain unaltered through his quest, but money rots everything, not only love, but also the minds of those who desire money more than they desire others.

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