

Introduction and Blog

Summary

For my blog posts I had a different collection of topics. In some posts I compared characters of The Great Gatsby to other characters or even species of animals. In some other posts I write about the society surrounding the 1920s and the Great Gatsby.

In my essays I wrote a lot about the societal issues, impacts, and environmental factors that shaped The Great Gatsby and its public interpretation as well as the impact it had for other writers. I also wrote a lot about the American Dream and topics about class.

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Great Gatsby and how they relate to modern day.

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How The Great Gatsby Remains Relevant Through Its Societal Issues

When F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote his classic book *The Great Gatsby* in 1925, he knew it was going to eventually become a success. Unfortunately, it never got to that fame that he predicted before he died. Today, *The Great Gatsby* stands as a classic and continues to influence media and culture one hundred years from its original release. I believe that the reason the book has been impactful for so long, is because of the societal issues that it conveys, and the relatability of its characters. The themes in *The Great Gatsby* still apply today, and the book has opened up many conversations about the American Dream, infidelity, and others. The writing within the book opens a window into life within the time period and shows that our conflicts may not have been very different.

A big part of the book that is very memorable is the constant sexism. A lot of the characters, especially Daisy and Myrtle,

experience this in the story. In the very first chapter in the book, Daisy tells Nick the story of her daughter being born. Daisy says that Tom was not at the birth and instead with another woman. Once her daughter was born, she wept and stated that, “ She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. ‘All right,’ I said, ‘I’m glad it’s a girl. And I hope she’ll be a fool—that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.(Fitzgerald pg.23) ”. She is hoping that her daughter will be ignorant to the surrounding world, but also pretty enough so she will be able to make it in such a male-centered world. Back in these times, women were not allowed to do anything without a man. They were expected to immediately find a man and settle down. Daisy knows that this is how the world works, but she is helpless to the system. She herself has had to endure it her whole life. In the story she marries Tom primarily because he had a lot of money and she needed

someone to support her. Even though she loved Gatsby, she knew that he didn't have enough money to support them in the long run. When Gatsby came back rich, she wanted to be with him.

Despite this story taking place more than a hundred years ago, a lot of women still experience some of the same obstacles women in this time went through. Some people still expect women to settle down with a rich man to have children. Women were not allowed to open their own bank account until 1974. Daisy's story has rung true for many generations past its release. I think this contributed to the Great Gatsby's legacy. Another reason was that Daisy was able to get revenge. Later in the book, Daisy runs over Tom's mistress with Gatsby's car. This is one of the most memorable events of the story. I believe that this part may have reflected some women's feelings of their situation. By having this character's story

end in vengeance, *The Great Gatsby* becomes an escape for many of the people who have experienced the same things. This makes the book so much re-readable in the long term.

Another prolific example of a social issue the book portrays is poverty and trying to escape it. The best example of this is Gatsby himself. Gatsby was poor many times in his life. He had to eventually turn into a bootlegger to get as rich as he did later in the book. When he did get rich, he hosted extravagant parties with large numbers of people. He was known around town and had power over the police.. However, it is clear later in the book that Gatsby was still unhappy. He was in love with Daisy, but she was already married. He hosted those elaborate parties just to get her attention but to no avail. At the end of the book when Gatsby died, none of the friends he had made through these parties bothered to come

to his funeral. Not even his business partner came. Gatsby believed that if he had enough money everything would work out. Instead, many people only wanted to spread rumors about him. Even when he escaped poverty he was still alone.

This theme continued with other characters throughout the book as well. Myrtle tried to follow the American Dream by having an affair with Tom to get to a better life, but instead she was run over by Daisy. Wilson worked at his shop to earn enough money to move to somewhere better, but his wife cheated on him because it took him too long and he ended up also dying. I think that these stories can be very relatable to modern readers today too. There have always been people who attempt and fail to get to a better situation in life. The American Dream can be used as an unattainable dream. It's a source of hope for the unfortunate. It's the real version of the green light for Gatsby. When the book has

all of these dreams fail, it sends a strong message to the readers. The book confirms all of its readers' woes, and that makes a lasting message.

Although readers are not literally being run over by or becoming bootleggers, the struggles of these characters still remain relatable. Everyone dreams of being rich and famous one day, but not many people succeed. We look to the concepts of the American Dream for comfort from our lives that things might get better someday if we work hard enough. The characters are going through what people might be feeling financially. When we read these stories, it can make us feel better about our own lives. I think that is one of the reasons we remember stories like this. This book is a reminder of our shared woes of our lives. It shows the societal problems that never quite go away. We can look at this story and see a reflection of what once was, what is, and what will be. Despite the hundred year

difference, *The Great Gatsby* remains one of the most relevant books of our time.

Cover Letter

I chose the argument I chose for a couple of different reasons. For one, I do think that *The Great Gatsby* has morals and themes that are the same today. I feel like it was written as a sort of vent by F. Scott Fitzgerald about his time. I think that he didn't start the conversation about these things but is just continuing it. The story of an underdog trying to bring themselves up in the world, but ultimately failing due to the flaws of society was not new. This whole book kind of feels like a hero trope, but the antagonist is society. I think that people don't really see *The Great Gatsby* as the type of book I see it as. That's why I really wanted to write this essay to show my point.

I think that my argument changed from my brainstorming. I was originally going to center it a lot more on reputation

making legacies in books. When a lot of people recommend books to others it makes the book popular whether or not the plot/characters are 'good' or not. I still don't believe that the plot and characters of *The Great Gatsby* is anything special, but I think the implications of those characters is what made its legacy. Because of this, most of the evidence I used in my essay was summaries of character plotlines. I needed to use these to show my argument about the character's flawed dreams contributing to their legacy. In my conclusion, I ended with a bit more analysis and an explanation on why these plotlines affect us.

I think that the freewrites helped a lot to figure out what direction I wanted to go in. I also think I got a bit of inspiration from my own blog posts. I had already written a bit about the American Dream and morally gray characters and such, and I was able to take those central ideas to form my argument. I also think that learning about

using inductive versus deductive reasoning helped me understand how I write more. I am a more deductive writer, but I also try to write inductively in my essays. I think this essay has changed a lot while I have been writing it, but I think I have improved over time.

How Gatsby Written In The Modern Day Shows Both Of The Author's Own Beliefs

What if The Great Gatsby was written in the modern day? How different would the characters be? In September of 2022, Anna-Marie Mclemore wrote her own take on the classical story. Self Made Boys is an alternative universe of The Great Gatsby with changes in the identities of the characters as well as a couple of changed plotlines. Some of the changes in the novel

are small, but others entirely change sections and implications of the original book. Self Made Boys is a reflection of our modern day morals integrated into what we consider a classic story.

The plot is very different in Self Made Boys compared to The Great Gatsby. I believe that these new story lines are made to make The Great Gatsby more relatable to the modern day. These plotlines can make the book more interesting. I believe that it also helps drive in the original messages of The Great Gatsby in this way as well. Self Made Boys made more interesting and relatable characters that entice readers a lot more in modern times. The story was able to focus in on some of the character's inner lives and conflicts. One big change in the book is that Nick, the narrator, is Latino in the book as well as a transgender man. This changes the perspective a lot from the original novel. In the original story, Nick was privileged and very biased. The Nick in

Self Made Boys offered a less biased and a more unique telling of events. In the book, he has to struggle through prejudice and his own identity. This makes the book even more impactful when Nick is able to succeed in the story. The characters in this book have an underdog story, but this time they actually succeed compared to the original book.

Another big difference in the story is Tom and Daisy's relationship. In the original book, Tom and Daisy were married and had a child already. However in the new book, Tom is only engaged to Daisy and they do not have a child at all. I believe that the author made this change because it makes the infidelity later in the book not seem as bad. When Tom and Daisy break up, it's not as large of an issue compared to the original where they were married and would have to get a divorce. Divorces in this time were very uncommon and looked down upon. In my opinion, I think that the time period

affected F. Scott Fitzgerald's morals while writing the book and that made him not want to end the story with Tom and Daisy splitting up. However in the modern day, it is very normal to split up a long term relationship with a partner. Later in the book, Daisy ends up being partners with Jordan which would also be considered quite scandalous for F. Scott Fitzgerald's time period. With this different ending, both Daisy and Jordan have a happy ending.. Many of the character plotlines in the book also end very happily despite their tragic endings at the end of the original book.

Gatsby in Self Made Boys is an example of one of these major changes in endings. His character changed a lot in this book. Gatsby is a transgender man like Nick and is also gay in the book. Gatsby and Nick both end up in a relationship at the end as well. Instead of dying at the end like the original Gatsby does, the Gatsby from Self Made Boys has his death faked by Nick.

Then, they are able to move out of New York together to live their lives with one another. I think that this new ending has a lot of implications for McLemore's more modern morals compared to F. Scott Fitzgerald's writing. F. Scott Fitzgerald wanted to show a message about the flaws in society and people's inability to escape them. Therefore, most of the characters in *The Great Gatsby* have tragic endings. In *Self Made Boys*, there is an overarching theme of overcoming obstacles despite your circumstances. I believe that's why the author changed the ending for these characters. The author wanted the characters to succeed in the end, so she wrote solutions to all the problems in the original story. This makes both books have two completely different themes. *Self Made Boys* is a more hopeful version of what *The Great Gatsby* story came to be.

In my opinion, I think that the reason that both books had such different themes is

because of the time period each was written in. I believe that F. Scott Fitzgerald was looking to spread a message, but Anna-Marie McLemore wanted to spread hope. Each book had an entirely different motive than each other. They also had completely different audiences. It would not make sense to conclude the books the same way. The change in endings finished each book in a way that made sense to the purpose of each book.

One of the most famous quotes of the original book happened when Daisy was talking about her daughter's birth with Nick. In that scene she said, "She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.'" (Fitzgerald pg.23)". This passage showed the sense of desperation women of the time had and Daisy's helplessness to do anything about her

situation. However in the new book, the feeling of the scene changes greatly. Daisy does not have a child in this book so she says this statement to Nick while talking about Gatsby. Nick had gotten mad at Daisy because she let Gatsby take the blame when accused of having an affair with Myrtle. She gets in an argument with Nick and says, “Men love beautiful, useless, expensive things. So I’m meant to be one. I’m not supposed to be anything but a beautiful little fool.(McLemore pg.244)”. In this quote, Daisy shows that she understands what she’s meant to be in the society of the time, but she also says it in a less helpless tone. I think that this is different in both novels because of the way women were interpreted in each time period. When the original book was written, the quote would have been a well known end-all statement. However in the modern day, women are much more free to be themselves. I think that’s why Daisy tends to be more rebellious in Self Made

Boys. Daisy is more of a reflection of some of the modern day women compared to the original Daisy.

Both *The Great Gatsby* and *Self Made Boys* had similar stories and characters, but they each have their own unique motives as well. These books are products of their respective times and their author’s own beliefs. *Self Made Boys* would have never existed without *The Great Gatsby*, but the book adds more to the original story. It provides a fresh look at a classic that may not have resonated with everyone. *Self Made Boys* became a story about hope and perseverance. In my opinion, *Self Made Boys* continues *The Great Gatsby*’s legacy for future generations to see.

Cover Letter

While writing this essay, I struggled a small amount at finding my argument and thesis. I knew I wanted to write about the differences in both book’s motives and

audiences, but I had some trouble formatting that at first. I got mostly positive feedback on my first argument by my peers. My first thesis revolved on the progression of society's morals. However, I changed it to focus on each author's morals and belief system after my conference. I think that made more sense. Some people in society still have the same beliefs, but there is a difference in specifically each author's views of the world. I think that it's really interesting to look into the hidden lessons and motives built into stories so I wanted to write about that. A lot of people don't really think about the background beliefs of the author that can show through in their writing. I think that people should learn about the worldviews of the authors in the literature they read. I believe that it is very important.

I think my strongest paragraph is the third paragraph about Tom and Daisy's marriage. I think that it shows my point very

well. I think my worst paragraph is the fourth paragraph. I think it is just less strong than the other paragraphs. I could probably rework it to make it stronger. I think the hardest part of writing this essay was revising my argument. I also realized that some of my writing sounded very redundant so I also struggled to fix that. I do think my writing has evolved and I'm able to make stronger arguments on things. I'm also able to use a lot more key terms than before.

I tried to use key terms and evidence to support my claims. I used quotes from both novels to prove how the motives and such are different. I think I integrated the quotes and such well. All in all, I think I have improved in my writing and strategies.

An Accidental Autobiography by F Scott Fitzgerald

The Great Gatsby was an indirect documentary of the sorrows of an author living in the 1920s. F Scott Fitzgerald, whether purposely or accidentally, encoded his worries and insecurities into the book. By learning about his life compared to the book, we can learn how morals and past experiences can accidentally shine through a writer's work. The Great Gatsby is a window into Fitzgerald's worldview during his life. F Scott Fitzgerald wrote The Great Gatsby in order to indirectly portray his life and system of morals.

A big theme in both F. Scott Fitzgerald's life and The Great Gatsby is alcoholism. The Great Gatsby was written and takes place in the middle of prohibition, when alcohol was completely illegal in the United States, but the book still showed almost all the characters in the novel drinking at some point. During prohibition, many people decided to drink more instead

of less so this makes sense. However, almost all of the scenes with drinking in the book are written as alcohol being a very negative thing. For example, the book shows many instances of drunk people getting into car accidents, cheating on their spouse, and getting into arguments. On the contrary, characters who do not drink in the novel are seen as more noble. The main character, Nick, drinks very little and is able to stay out of trouble in the novel. Daisy does not drink much in the novel either, and she is portrayed to be a smarter woman than others in the story. Fitzgerald's hatred of alcohol and its impacts may have come from his own struggle with it.

FSF greatly struggled with alcoholism in his life. Many writers in this time drank alcohol while writing and Fitzgerald thought that it would help him be more creative (Brucoli 45) Many of his friends like Ernest Hemingway stated that he tended to act very erratic and unstable while

drinking near his friends. John Dos Passos, one of Fitzgerald's friends at the time, wrote in a letter, "Like many drunks Scott took a malicious pleasure in making his friends uncomfortable (Greene)". Even his friend Ernest Hemmingway wrote to Fitzgerald's editor to not give Fitzgerald his address because his drunk action caused Hemmingway to get kicked out of his house (Greene). Fitzgerald also knew that he had a problem, and many of his works also included themes of alcoholics ruining relationships and then meeting tragic endings (Irwin). These themes could be a portrayal of Fitzgerald's own thoughts on his alcoholism. His negative views on its impact on his life could have bled through in his writing. His characterization of drunk characters in the novel as foolish and unstable show how he saw himself when he drank. You could see his influence in his writing from his relationship with other

people and society in his life with other topics too.

In *The Great Gatsby*, women are portrayed to be very materialistic and money centered. Daisy supposedly married Tom because of his money instead of Gatsby. When Gatsby turned rich, Daisy then started dating him. Myrtle, Tom's mistress, constantly attempts to live a lavish life by what Tom bought her and that is the essence of their affair. Myrtle's husband is not rich and is a working man. This brings a theme that women will always marry men who have more money compared to those that don't. Most of the men in the novel often chase after the 'hard to get' women like Daisy. Both Tom and Gatsby tried to fight for her to win her. She was something that they could show off as a prize.

Fitzgerald commonly wrote about these ideals in his other works and in his real life. When he met his wife Zelda, he spent all of his energy chasing to get her.

However, before they finally got married, Zelda had broken up with because of his lack of money (Dickstein). This compares to Gatsby, who could not get with Daisy before he was able to host his lavish parties.

Friedrich writes, “Because they considered themselves glamorous, they would live glamorously, and somebody else could work to pay the bills (Friedrich 395)”. Fitzgerald and Zelda acted like they had more money than they had. They threw parties and drank, and forgot about all the things they had to do. This is just like the party-goers at Gatsby’s parties. They lived very happily until Zelda cheated on Fitzgerald with a french aviator in 1924 (Friedrich 397).

Friedrich states, “now there was doubt about the marriage for which he had gambled and won, the romance to which he had committed his belief in the romance of life. (Friedrich 397)”. Fitzgerald saw Zelda cheating on him and was very upset. This situation is very similar to what actually

happens in the Great Gatsby when Daisy or Myrtle cheats. Fitzgerald may have been inspired by his wife and her actions to write the women in the Great Gatsby the way that he did.

The Great Gatsby had many plotlines centered around the American Dream. Gatsby’s was the most prevalent. Gatsby started out very poor and built himself up several times. He was able to get very rich by bootlegging and he hosted lavish parties to attract Daisy. However, he never made any real friends and barely anyone showed up to his funeral. He wasn’t able to keep Daisy either. This plot showed how the American Dream usually never truly works out in the end, and ends up hurting everyone involved. Gatsby was never able to truly be content even with his money and everything ended drastically. This theme is also shown in Fitzgerald’s life.

It is clear that within Fitzgerald's life he had a complicated relationship with money. His father was an unsuccessful businessman, and he was only able to get into a quality boarding school because of a rich aunt he had (Friedrich 393). When he was older, he struggled to find a job or a stable job. He turned to writing, but even that did not start off well. He got rejection so often that he made "a beautiful frieze which ran around his room out of the one hundred and twenty-two rejection slips which he received from editors (Wilson)". Although, he did end up having several successful books after years of trying, and married his wife who previously rejected him for his finances. However, he still did not believe that money could bring true joy. Dickstein noted that, "He took note of how much and yet how little their money could do for them—how much freedom and style it gave them, but how little protection it furnished against disappointment and unhappiness

(Dickstein)". Fitzgerald was disappointed with the outcome of money even when he was able to be successful. However, he may have had his own version of the American Dream aside from wealth.

Fitzgerald's stride for luxury was a consequence of his attempts to allure his love. He wanted to keep Zelda, and he thought that to do that he needed to be more wealthy. Friedrich states, "Fitzgerald loved his wife more than his career. His love for her was an integral part of his dream. In many ways, it was the dream (Friedrich 395)". Fitzgerald, like Gatsby, cared more about catching and keeping his love more than how much money he made. Both of these stories ended similarly. Gatsby lost his love to Tom and then died alone, and Fitzgerald's wife cheated on him and then went insane later in life. F. Scott Fitzgerald then died from medical problems most likely caused by his alcoholism (Irwin). Both Gatsby and Fitzgerald attempted to make it

out in the world, but they both were doomed to fail in society. Gatsby showed Fitzgerald's worries that ended up coming true.

Some people might argue that Gatsby's story did not come from the woes of Fitzgerald, but is actually a retelling of the life of Max Von Gerlach. Kruse writes, "it would seem to suggest that Max Gerlach played a more significant role than he has been credited with in the making of *The Great Gatsby* and the shaping of its protagonist (Kruse 47)". This comes from the correlation between Gerlach's life and Gatsby's plot. Gerlach was a suspected bootlegger, as well as a commander in World War 1 (Kruse 47). He also hosted lavish parties, claimed to go to Oxford and said phrases like 'old sport' (Kruse 47). It is possible that Fitzgerald really knew Gerlach that Gatsby's main backstory could have been influenced by him, but I do not think that would disprove the fact Gatsby was also

a reflection of Fitzgerald's life. Similar to Gatsby, Gerlach died from a gunshot, although his wound was self inflicted (Kruse 48). However, this event took place in 1939, which is far after the book was finished and published. Gatsby's downfall, whether influenced or not, still came from Fitzgerald's imagination. His prediction of Gerlach's ending showed the worldview he had gained through the life he lived.

F Scott Fitzgerald was not purposely trying to predict his own future, but his life dictated his writing and outlook. When he wrote *The Great Gatsby*, he could have never known how accurate his writing would become. The novel was just a window into his insecurities while he was writing it. Fitzgerald wrote about what he saw in the world and in other people. The characters and their actions reflected the people that Fitzgerald had known. We can see all of this by comparing his life compared to his work. This could also be

applied to other authors. Writers are always being influenced by their environment. We can even look into ourselves and identify our own influences to improve our writing. F Scott Fitzgerald and his works show his feelings of his life during the time as well as a doorway into his own world.

Cover Letter

I wrote this essay about F Scott Fitzgerald's life because I enjoy dissecting an author's worldviews through their work. I wanted to know what influenced Fitzgerald to write what he did in *The Great Gatsby*. I think that people should think about how their environment influences them in their writing and art and I believe my essay showed that. I believe that I showed my stance and motive well. For my counter argument, I struggled a bit to find one at first. The more I researched though, the more information I found to support my thesis as well as my counter argument. I

developed my argument more as I learned more information. I developed my counter argument later in my research when I was able to learn about Max Gerlach.

I think my best paragraphs in my essay were about Fitzgerald's alcoholism. I think that the argument is very strong and I was able to support it very well. I think that my worst paragraphs are about the comparisons between Daisy, Gatsby, and Tom and Fitzgerald and Zelda. I think that my argument is strong, but I think I could have written it better. I cannot exactly figure out what I can change, but I think that it could be stronger. To support my argument in the essay, I compared *The Great Gatsby* to cited evidence of Fitzgerald's life. I believe that this was able to show how similar Fitzgerald was to his novel. In my counter argument, I was able to use the counter argument to also support my argument in the essay.

In my conclusion, I tried to end the essay by stating how this type of analysis could be used to analyze other authors. Everyone is constantly influenced by different ways and that is being embedded in whatever you write or make. I think I did well showing these ideals in my conclusion and throughout my essay.

Multimodal Media Project

For my multimodal project I decided to make a Gatsby inspired vest. I enjoy sewing and so I wanted to sew something that could represent my argument.

Materials: locally sourced and thrifted fabrics! + fancy buttons (and thread)



The outside fabric on the vest reminded me a lot of Gatsby and is very formal so I wanted to use that for the outside. The buttons have little anchors on them which represent Gatsby's sailor arc in the book.

On the inside, Each side represents a different part of Gatsby. On the right side, we have green fabric forming rays that represent the green light in the book. The green light is a very important thing in the book for Gatsby that represents his longing for Daisy. On the left side, each fabric

represents a different thing. The blue eye themed fabric reminded me of nosey people like Gatsby's guest that spread rumors about him. The green tile fabric above it reminded me of a mansion floor and it represents the luxury and wealth that Gatsby has gained near the end of his life. The one above it reminded me of a cocktail party kind of scheme. It represents Gatsby's parties that he hosts to attract Daisy's attention. The fabric above that is music notes because of the musicians he hires for his parties and house. There is also a flower themed fabric above that represents the scene where Daisy and Gatsby meet again.



On the inside of the back of the vest, there is a big heart. The heart represents Gatsby's main ambition: Love. The fabric itself has

wheat on it because of how he had to do things like bootlegging to have the chance at getting his love again.

On the outside the vest is very put together and clean, but on the inside there are a lot of loose edges and hanging threads. This was on purpose for my argument. I wanted to show Gatsby's feelings of not being able to fit in with rich people with his new money. It shows how he looks very clean cut on the outside, but is still the same person on the inside. Even though he was able to meet so many people at his parties, none of them stayed. His relationships through wealth were shallow and so was the rich persona he put out to people.

Final Cover Letter

I believe that I have evolved over the semester in my writing and techniques. I have gotten better in my writing in general

and improved my analytical skills. I think that if I could go back to the beginning of the year I would tell myself to give myself more time to reread the source texts and analyze them more. I think that I could have stronger arguments if I were able to sit down and work through the tiny details more.

I really enjoyed being able to analyze societal issues and worldviews and such in my essay. I think that it has made me realize how much I myself have been influenced by my environment in my writing. I have also learned that I work better by gathering my information first, and then structuring my argument. I believe that the structuring of my essays have also specifically improved, and I am better at revising essays. I think that having a chance to revise essays has been really helpful to learning how to revise writing. I am going to be able to use these revision, organization, research, and other skills in other classes and future assignments. I can apply my analysis for

societal influences that I learned to identify to think more about the writers behind works.

I think this class is very well done for undergraduate students. I myself struggled a bit with time management, but that was most likely due to outside factors. All in all, I do believe that I improved quite a bit through this course.

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