
Theme Of Dishonesty In The Great Gatsby

Throughout the novel 'The Great Gatsby', F. Scott Fitzgerald has created many characters and key themes that were developed during the 1920s, but the plot is still very relatable to the modern world. Fitzgerald has implemented many literary techniques that present the flaws of main characters which are important in conveying key themes in the novel. The key aspects that will be discussed include, how Gatsby is being expressed as being obsessed with the past, and how his failure to achieve his dream relates to the American Dream. Fitzgerald also developed the character of Nick Carraway, where at the start of the novel, he was expressed as being non-judgemental; this perception was later changed by his dishonesty and judgemental nature. The Buchanans also had many characteristic flaws, such as their empty pursuit of cynicism, that created the key theme of the differences between social classes.

Being one of the most significant characters in the novel, Gatsby's characteristic flaws are being developed throughout, which is important in developing the different themes, such as the disintegration of the American Dream. As expressed by the paradox 'repeat the past' (page 106), Gatsby is presented as being obsessed with the dream of recapturing his past relationship with Daisy and he is unable to wake up from his dream and accept reality. However, this dream is ruined by their difference in social status and hence, he resorts to crime to accumulate enough wealth to impress her. The metaphor 'her voice is full of money' (page 115) highlights how their love symbolises the American dream as, just like Daisy's and Gatsby's love, the American Dream has been corrupted by money to the point where it is no longer viable. Gatsby's self-destructive approach of "boot-legging" (page 60) shows how he sees wealth as the solution to his problems, pursues money via shady schemes, and reinvents himself so much that he becomes hollow, disconnected from his past. Gatsby's failure of not being able to re-live his love life is shown in the ironical symbolism "Shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is" (page 153) where Nick imagines that Gatsby must have felt a sense of grief about how the events had unfolded. This failure of Gatsby is significant in creating the theme of corruption and differences in social status involved in the American Dream as the rigidity of the American class system means Gatsby is fated to fail to achieve his dream.

As the novel progresses, the dishonesty of Nick's character is shown through his judgmental nature, shown in the characterisation: the Buchanans are 'careless people' (page 170) and Jordan is 'incurably dishonest' (page 58). This evidence shows that Nick is being hypocritical and disloyal to himself and his friends. It also disproves the earlier hyperbole, "I am one of the few honest people" (page 59) and characterises him as being the opposite of this. He introduces himself as someone who refrains from judging others, yet as a narrator judgement is a rather constant habit for Carraway. Nick has a significant role in developing the key theme of dishonesty, which is shown through his actions and his judgemental nature.