

THE CRITICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S THE GREAT GATSBY

Amirova Zulayxo

Annotation: This article examines the critical interpretation of the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. It explores how the Dream transforms from an ideal of hope into an illusion shaped by materialism and inequality. The study focuses on key themes such as social class, moral decay, and illusion versus reality. The findings reveal that the American Dream becomes unattainable and destructive in the context of the Jazz Age.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается критическая интерпретация американской мечты в романе Ф. Скотта Фицджеральда «Великий Гэтсби». Исследуется, как мечта трансформируется из идеала надежды в иллюзию, сформированную материализмом и неравенством. Исследование фокусируется на ключевых темах, таких как социальный класс, моральный упадок и иллюзия против реальности. Результаты показывают, что американская мечта становится недостижимой и разрушительной в контексте эпохи джаза.

Keywords: American Dream, *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald, materialism, illusion vs reality, social inequality, moral decay

Introduction

The American Dream is one of the most influential concepts in American culture and literature. It is traditionally understood as the belief that anyone can achieve success and happiness through hard work and determination. However, this ideal has been widely questioned, especially in literary works of the 20th century. F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*, written during the 1920s Jazz Age, presents a critical view of this concept. The period was marked by rapid economic growth, social change, and moral uncertainty. Fitzgerald uses his characters and narrative to show how the American Dream becomes corrupted by wealth, illusion, and inequality. The purpose of this study is to analyze how Fitzgerald critiques the American Dream and presents it as a flawed and misleading ideal rather than a path to success and happiness.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative literary analysis method. The novel *The Great Gatsby* serves as the primary source of analysis. The research focuses on:

Character analysis (especially Jay Gatsby) Thematic analysis (materialism, illusion vs reality, social inequality) Symbolic interpretation (green light, Valley of Ashes)

In addition, secondary sources such as literary criticism and academic studies are

used to support the interpretation. The method involves close reading of the text and critical interpretation of key passages to understand how Fitzgerald constructs his critique of the American Dream.

Results

The analysis of the novel reveals several important findings:

The American Dream is no longer about equality and self-improvement but becomes focused on wealth and status. Characters measure success through material possessions rather than moral values. Jay Gatsby represents the Dream but also its failure. Although he becomes wealthy, his success is based on illusion and illegal activities. His dream of winning Daisy is unrealistic and ultimately unattainable. The novel shows a clear division between social classes. "Old money" characters like Tom and Daisy dominate society, while others struggle to improve their position. This proves that equal opportunity does not truly exist. Many elements in the novel are based on illusion. Gatsby creates a false identity, and his lifestyle is designed to impress others. The green light symbolizes hope but remains unreachable. The society in the novel lacks moral responsibility. Wealthy characters act carelessly and avoid consequences. This reflects the decline of ethical values during the Jazz Age.

Discussion

The findings suggest that Fitzgerald presents the American Dream as deeply flawed. Instead of being a source of motivation and success, it becomes a dangerous illusion. Gatsby's failure shows that ambition alone is not enough to achieve true happiness. His inability to distinguish between illusion and reality leads to his downfall. This reflects a broader societal problem where people chase unrealistic goals. The division between social classes further challenges the idea of equal opportunity. Fitzgerald demonstrates that wealth and background still determine success, making the Dream inaccessible for many.

Additionally, the strong presence of materialism highlights the loss of moral values. Characters prioritize pleasure and wealth over honesty and responsibility. This suggests that the Dream has lost its original meaning.

Overall, Fitzgerald criticizes not only individuals but also the society that promotes such values. His novel encourages readers to question the true nature of success and the cost of pursuing it.

Conclusion

In *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald offers a powerful critique of the American Dream. The novel shows how the Dream transforms from a hopeful ideal into an illusion shaped by materialism, inequality, and moral decline.

Through Gatsby's tragic story, Fitzgerald demonstrates that the Dream is not only unattainable but also destructive. It leads to disappointment rather than fulfillment. The study concludes that the American Dream, as presented in the novel, fails to deliver its

promise of success and equality. Instead, it reflects the deeper problems of society and human desire.

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