

Fourth Grade / Novel

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The great Gatsby (F. Scott Fitzgerald)

Lecture 8

Discussions and explanations of the most important issues in the novel

After that I felt a certain shame for Gatsby--one gentleman to whom I telephoned implied that he had got what he deserved. However, that was my fault, for he was one of those who used to sneer most bitterly at Gatsby on the courage of Gatsby's liquor and I should have known better than to call him. (9.69)

Gatsby was unable to parlay his hospitality into any genuine connection with anyone besides Nick, who seems to have liked him despite the parties rather than because of them. This highlights a clash of values between the new, anything-goes East and the older, more traditionally correct West. The East is a place where someone could come to a party and then insult the host - and then imply that a murdered man had it coming! Compare this to the moment when Gatsby feels uneasy making a scene when having lunch with Tom and Daisy because "I can't say anything in his house, old sport." (7.102).

"When a man gets killed I never like to get mixed up in it in any way. I keep out. When I was a young man it was

different--if a friend of mine died, no matter how, I stuck with them to the end. You may think that's sentimental but I mean it--to the bitter end....Let us learn to show our friendship for a man when he is alive and not after he is dead," he suggested. "After that my own rule is to let everything alone." (9.95-99)

Wolfshiem's refusal to come to Gatsby's funeral is extremely self-serving. He is using this quasi-philosophical excuse in order to protect himself from being anywhere near a crime scene. However, in a novel which is at least partly concerned with how morality can be generated in a place devoid of religion, Wolfshiem's explanation of his behavior confirms that the culmination of this kind of thinking is **treating people as disposable**.

It also plays into the novel's overriding idea that **the American Dream is based on a willful desire to forget and ignore the past**, instead straining for a potentially more exciting or more lucrative future. Part of forgetting the past is forgetting the people that are no longer here, so for Wolfshiem, even a close relationship like the one he had with Gatsby has to immediately be pushed to the side once Gatsby is no longer alive.

Myrtle's Death by Gatsby's great car is certainly no accident is certainly no accident ,The details are sketchy ,glorious ,huge car .Fitzgerald is sending a clear and obvious manifestation of American materialism .Discuss

It is tragic that Myrtle dies so brutally ,but her death takes on greater meaning when one realizes that it is materialism that brought about her end .

It's clear that Myrtle aspires to wealth and privilege. She wants all the material comforts money can provide.

Her desire for money led her to have an affair with Tom ,because of fashionable way ,he was dressed Myrtle's death is sadly poetic ,a woman who spent her life acquiring material possessions by whatever means possible has been ,in effect ,killed by her own desires.

Dwelling too much on material things ,Fitzgerald says ,can not bring a positive resolution , Materialism can only bring misery as seen through Myrtle.

The tragic side of the American Dream, as Gatsby is gunned down by George Wilson . Discuss

The death is brutal ,if not unexpected and brings to an end the life of the paragon of idealism ,the pure idealism can't survive in the harsh modern world.

Gatsby's death ,alone in his pool brings forth a couple of distinct images .On the one hand ,his death is a rebirth of sorts .Gatsby has done nothing more than follow a dream.

Despite his money and his questionable business dealings ,he is nothing at all like the East Egg socialites he runs with.

One admires him ,if for no other reason than his ability to sustain a dream in a world that is historically inhospitable to dreamers .

His death, in a sense ,removed him from his mortal existence and allowed him rebirth into a different hopefully better life ,As Nick says "Gatsby must have felt that he had lost the old man warm world."When his dream died.