



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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The Great Gatsby Vs. “Death of a Salesman”: Mocking the American Dream

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of
a Master Degree in Literature and Civilization**

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Academic Year: 2018/2019

Dedication

We would like to dedicate this dissertation to our parents, who have given us endless support throughout our years of struggle, who never lost hope in our career, who continuously gave us the inspiration to be who we are today.

To our teachers who gave every bit of effort into shaping us, and building us to be the students of tomorrow.

To our comrades and classmates who cheered us behind the scenes and in the front rows when no one else did, who gave us words of wisdom that let us overcome all the hard challenges of life.

Zakaria MESBAHI & Khalifa AHMADI SALEM

Acknowledgement

All Praise be to the all mighty Allah for giving us strength and patience to fight and strive to reach this important moment in our educational career. Accomplishing this dissertation is one of our greatest achievements, and a happy moment in our lives that should be celebrated and appreciated. We praise Allah for giving us strength, patience and will to be where we are today. We are extremely grateful for our parents who gave us support, prayers and love throughout the years of our struggle. We give a proper applause for our comrades for their constant support and spirit of solidarity throughout the years. We are in debt to our dear teachers for their sacrifices in paving the road to our success. Our special thanks to the dear people who have engaged and aided us into making this dissertation possible, whether by support or encouragement. We want to announce that the potential lacks and mistakes included in this dissertation are because of our deficiency and lack of knowledge because it is our first experience in conducting a research.

Abstract

The American Dream is considered a national American ethos that advocates values of equal opportunities and pursuit of happiness. These values were highly discussed in many themes of the 20th century writings, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Arthur Miller's "*Death of a Salesman*". This paper aims to examine the historical roots of The American Dream as a concept and its possible links to other theories such as Modernism and Post-Modernism. It also aims at extracting elements from *The Great Gatsby*, and "*Death of a Salesman*" in terms of their correlation to the mockery of the American Dream. The study assumes that there is a link between these two pieces of work, and The American Dream, as well as the other theories related to it. This study is conducted through analysis of The American Dream, its components and its different stages, as well as the analysis of the two pieces of work at hand separately. The study revealed that the American Dream is highly present in the analysis of both *The Great Gatsby* and "*Death of a Salesman*", and it also concludes a great deal of similarities in terms of their mockery of the American Dream.

Key words: American Dream, *The Great Gatsby*, "*Death of Salesman*", Comparison, Mocking the American Dream.

الملخص

يعتبر الحلم الأمريكي عنصرا أخلاقيا هاما في المجتمع الأمريكي. حيث ينادي بقيم المساواة في الفرص و السعي وراء السعادة. و قد تمت مناقشة هذه القيم بقوة في عديد المواضيع الأدبية في القرن العشرين، ومثالا على ذلك نجد رواية قاتسبي العظيم للكاتب سكوت فيتزجيرالد و القصة الدرامية موت بائع متجول من تأليف آرثر ميلر. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي تاريخ الحلم الأمريكي كمفهوم و علاقته المحتملة بالنظريات الأخرى كنظرية الحداثة و ما بعد الحداثة. و كما تسعى أيضا إلى استخراج العلاقة بين الموضوعين المدروسين و موضوع السخرية من الحلم الأمريكي. و كما تطرح هذه الدراسة فرضية وجود علاقة بين الحلم الأمريكي و موضوعي الدراسة ، إضافة الى وجودها مع النظريات المذكورة سالفًا. و تم إجراء هذه الدراسة من خلال الاعتماد على تحليل الحلم الأمريكي و مكوناته و مراحله المتعددة، بالإضافة إلى تحليل العاملين الادبيين كل على حدة. لقد أظهرت الدراسة أن الحلم الأمريكي كان حاضرا و بقوة في كل من رواية قاتسبي العظيم و قصة موت بائع متجول، و كما ابانت على نقاط تشابه عديدة فيما يخص انتقاد الحلم الأمريكي و السخرية منه

الكلمات المفتاحية: الحلم الأمريكي. قاتسبي العظيم. موت بائع متجول. مقارنة. السخرية من الحلم الأمريكي

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General Introduction

General Introduction

The topic of American Dream is a subject of discussion for many writers and thinkers. The American Dream is the idea that the government should protect each person's opportunity to pursue his or her own happiness. The idea of the American dream dates back to the founding fathers of The Declaration of Independence which ultimately protects the American Dream. The Founding Fathers put into law the revolutionary idea that each person's desire to pursue happiness is not just self-indulgence. It is a part of what drives ambition and creativity. As fore-mentioned, this idea was heavily depicted in many works of the 20th century. To give close example, we may mention Arthur Miller's "*Death of a Salesman*", and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*.

This research sheds light on the implication of the American Dream in the literary pieces of writing, such as *The Great Gatsby*, and "*Death of salesman*". This study aims to examine the American Dream, its component and tackle the similar features found in both pieces of works.

The uniqueness of the American Dream and its complication pushed us to investigate further about its nature, its historical roots and its dominance over 20th century writings.

The debate at hand is whether these works really reveal their mockery for the American Dream, or whether they are simply traditional writings with no reflection of social life whatsoever. In other words, to what extent are these two works similar in their mockery of the American Dream?

The main aim of this research is to investigate the link between F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" as means of social criticism to the American Dream, which is portrayed in both the characters, and themes of both works. In order to provide sufficient understanding, both works will be dynamically linked to the American Dream during the analysis.

This study attempts to answer the following questions. How do these works mock the American dream, and how far do the characters socially comment about the status of America during that time? What are the various similarities between the two works in terms of theme, characters and plot?

The present study assumes the following hypothesis: Both *The Great Gatsby*, and "Death of salesman" strongly comment on the state quo of American lives of the 20th century, and that is by having the characters, plot and theme serve a mutual goal which is the mockery of the American Dream.

The method adopted to conduct this research is comparative analytical that depends on a qualitative research since it is based on collecting data through websites ,articles and analyzing speeches of authors in order to construct an overall idea about the topic regarding the American Dream as a theory, and then its application on the literary works at hand.

The study at hand is divided into three chapters. The first chapter opens up with the concept of the American Dream, its theory and its roots. As well as its link to literature, and the pieces of work at hand. In the second chapter, the study breaks down the elements found in *The Great Gatsby*. And then attempts to find a link between these elements and the American Dream. These elements include: characters, themes and literary devices. The third chapter is concerned with

analyzing “*The Death of a Salesman*”. In this chapter, elements that have strong link to the topic of mocking the American dream are extracted. Finally, after each piece of work is analyzed separately, a conclusion is given regarding the amount of elements that can be compared to the American Dream.

Chapter One:

Introduction to the American Dream

Introduction

From the moment when it was discovered, America was considered the land of chance and opportunities. It is named the new world, and immigrants started to come from everywhere looking for a better life and better conditions. After the independence from the United kingdom, the United States created a new system of regulations under the name of “the Declaration Of Independence”. The major values and points in this declaration said that liberty and opportunity is for everyone, and all people are able to achieve success through hard work. These values helped in shaping the image of America as the dream Land where success is available for everyone. From there, came the idea of the American Dream and the pursuit of happiness.

Although the values and spiritual beliefs of the American dream have been originated in the Declaration of Independence, the term “American Dream“ was not coined until the twentieth century, when the historian James Truslow Adams mentioned it in his book “*The Epic Of America*” in 1931.

1.1 The American Dream

The American dream is the closest depiction of the American society. The dream includes all the beliefs and values that the American society was built on. Those beliefs and values appeared since the independence of America, and were clearly shown in the declaration of Independence. Freedom, individualism, same opportunities, respect and the pursuit of happiness

are the major values that were brought by the American dream. The American dream grants happiness and success through hard work and determination. People, regardless of their social, racial background can reach successes and wealth, like what Cal Jillson said in his book *The American Dream: In History, Politics, And Fiction*:

The American Dream is the promise that the country holds out to the rising generation and to immigrants that hard work and fair play will almost certainly lead to success. All who are willing to strive, to learn, to work hard, to save and invest will have every chance to succeed and to enjoy the fruits of their success in safety, security, and good order (Jillson 6).

As a concept, the American Dream is the pride of a new World that was meant to be open opportunity for hopeful young folk to seek a great life that praises integrity and hard work. But its reality proved it to be quite flawless as the dream blinded them from seeing how things really are. Several issues arose from the dreams and these are only some of them.

1.2 Blackness and Slavery in the American Dream

Although the American Dream is meant to be equally for all people, it was in fact in white man hands who gained the biggest advantages and profits. It has been opened to wealthy white men rather than women and black people. And even where immigrants, minorities, and women won rights, it was not a big deal but to satisfy them and show some respect to the Declaration of Independence values. Despite the fact that some people gained a place in society, it was a limited and weak position just to satisfy them. In fact, factors like race, gender, wealth,

and religion were used to exclude and illuminate some groups in the American society (C. Jillson 7).

In her thesis “From Pure Values to Corruptions”, Hedhili talks a bit about Tom Beacanun and his thoughts on race and racism. She states that for the typical white American at the time, they wanted to keep their country safe from immigrants and other races that could potentially “have control of things” (Hedhili 33). This was a common belief for people of upper class who promoted white supremacy over the natural selection. The “Intermarriage” between white and black was unheard of. The discrimination and segregation were not limited to only blacks, but also immigrants and aliens, and even the class differences. This creates Xenophobia or the fear for the “outsider” and was very common in modern America at the time (Hedhili 33).

From the first moment their feet landed on the new world, black people were always underestimated and considered as servants to the white people. They were harshly treated and were behaved as animals. The only place for black people was farms and plantations where they spend the majority of their lives working for the white. Instead of achieving the American Dream black people got slavery and discrimination. Black people were oppositely treated than values of the American dream.

White men established slavery houses and markets where they sell and buy black people as cattle. Though the Constitution recognized the bad behaviour and the Savage abuse of the black, there was nothing done to stop it. Slave trade was officially ended in 1808. However slavery continued to expand until the beginning of the civil War. Most of the black people were living in farms and plantations with animals, and were given the hardest jobs and were totally prevented from all rights (C. Jillson 7).

The problem arises when the contradiction becomes clear that the Dream itself is very biased towards a specific group of people. Those people who already have power, money, and influence. Those who are not black, immigrant or of lower class. This concludes the hypocrisy and corrupt nature of the Dream that serves only specific people.

1.3 Women's Quest for Equality in The American Dream

As previously stated, comes with the dream a bundle of corrupt principles that only apply to specific "kind" of people. That rule is no exception to women at the time, who struggled to make their voice heard in a world of slavery of their own.

In *The Great Gatsby*, women are portrayed as having no mind of their own. And those who have freedom, tend to do nothing with it. They do not seek for a dream just like men do. They are constantly expected to do the same thing over and over again. Most of them are shallow and materialistic, superficial and dishonest. The novel depicts them as irresponsible towards making tough decisions so they tend to be subjugated and controlled by men. These social and traditional barriers prevent them from making their own future. They are a victim of the man's control (Hedhili 36).

Judith Fetterley criticized the novel in her book "The Resisting Reader" as being hostile towards women. Stating that Daisy is being used as a scapegoat for the things wrong about the Dream (Fetterley 67).

These women were not given a specific role or personality that makes them stand out. They are treated as property with no identity to stand on their own. They are often belittled by men. Women struggle for equality was as difficult as the black people struggle for freedom. It could be

said that women also were owned, by father before marriage, and by husband after marriage due to the religious and cultural beliefs they have. The Christian teachings say that women are to love, care, honour, and serve the husband which was approved by the common law principals. Woman's property also goes to her husband, and so does any other income she gets. She could not sue in her own name in courts, vote, and serve in juries. Case of divorce is very rare. And if it happens her children and property go to the husband. This situation continued until the middle of twentieth century when movements of race and gender equality began to gain attention (C. Jillson 7).

Though the Americans claim that their country is the holy land and the chance there is for everyone, however, discrimination and exclusion were obvious and notable in the American dream and the two categories mentioned above clearly show that. The process of dehumanization, and objectification of females in the time, and stripping them off their identity has contributed more into the corrupt nature of the dream. And that sums up the gender situation in relation to the American Dream. Women were objectified and oppressed and treated as property that was meant to only either "entertain or be entertained" (Hedhili 41).

1.4 Consumer Society and Capitalism in the American Dream

From the foundation of the American Dream until the twentieth century, the American dream was about moral values and spiritual growth and sense of humanity which is based on respect, freedom, equality, liberty, and happiness. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the principles and values of the American Dream began to change into different direction, to materialistic view that seeks wealth, position, and mobility.

In the early years of the twentieth century, the modern style of life in America was highly recognized. The American society turned to be a very consumerist society. The development in technology, electricity, car industry, and telecommunication increased the level of Americans live, and all Americans began to consumer more and look for the most expensive goods and materials to show the high social class they have (C. Jillson 153).

There are different definitions to *Capitalism* ,in general, it is an economic system that gives individuals the property of means of production and the open markets and the free earning , Meyer Weinberg has given a precise definition to Capitalism in the book *A Short History Of American Capitalism* according to Meyer Capitalism means “private ownership of means of production”, free wage earning, it is in fact the accumulation of the social, political, commercial, and governmental structures to enhance and protect private property and investment (1).

Capitalism also glorified the means of personal gain rather than enterprises by having a set of characteristics which aims are protecting and preserving the individual rights of the citizen of the American society. Meyer Weinberg, in his book *A short History of American Capitalism* states the very basic rules that Capitalism provides in its ideology. These rules are; (1) the ability to own personal means of production, (2) the right to a private ownership for personal profits, (3) having a specific type of labour, governed by a well-defined structure and social productivity and the ability to invest in and sell those products freely in the market, (4) the ability to have an influence over governmental decisions using trade, and finally (5) a protection of the rules listed above as well as protection of personal productions and property (Meyer Weigberg 1).

It is worth noting the pattern that comes apparent with the Capitalist ideology is the glorification of “personal” gains and profit. Unlike Communism with promotes and All above One, Capitalism on the other hand redefines success as the ability of “making it” by pure personal work.

In paper, this may seem highly noble and respectful, but in reality, those rules only apply to a certain number of individuals who already have a founded base to begin with. And, in the end, it is safe to assume that the American Dream, which shares the same basics rules as Capitalism, may as well be in fact an early stage of Capitalism itself.

1.5 Capitalism in Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism and Postmodernism represent two different phases of Capitalism. The shift from modernism to postmodernism does not mean shift from Capitalism to post capitalism or other form, but it is a sea-change in the nature of Capitalism and the capitalist accumulation still exists. Modernism was originated in the Enlightenment era. This latter represents technology, rationality, and standardization of knowledge. Enlightenment also believes in the linear progress and the absolute truth. However, Postmodernism is considered as a reaction to modernism though it shares some aspects with it. Postmodernism sees the world as fragmentations, it rejects determinacy, meta-narratives, comprehensive and universalistic theories about the world and history (E. M. Wood 23, 24)

Terry Eagleton argues in his article “Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism” that to be a Capitalist, which is to most Bourgeois the “right way of living” is to have a means of production added to a labor and some sort of investment. When combining these three elements, we can achieve capitalism. Eagleton also states that commodity is the basis of Capitalism. Both Modernism and Post Modernism had mass productivity culture. When art is created by Modernism and Post-modernism; in the forms of pastiche, parodies and other forms, it becomes a product in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, and eventually will dissolve into social life (Eagleton 386, 387).

Eagleton additionally points how Capitalism had influenced the way art is made. He states that Art is no longer an image of itself, but rather an image of what the consumer wants to see in their commodities. It has somehow lost its reflection to the world it was previously mirroring (Eagleton 387).

Both Modernism and Post-modernism tried to merge their genre in Capitalist stages. They had common points of focusing their attention to self-identify, and ultimately both sunk and merged with Capitalism under a single title.

1.6 The American Dream in Literature

At first the American dream was about religious and spiritual values and beliefs. However, in the twentieth century it became an interesting and exciting topic for many American writers. Both F. Scott Fitzgerald and Arthur Miller have written amazing literary works centred on the American dream. The American Dream is also praised for creating the American experience (Grieder 1).

Although the Dream's aim is the universal prosperity of American citizen as a whole, it still holds some racial and class inequalities in societies despite its higher goals (Johnson 6, 8). It is also very important that while the Dream stresses the irrelevance of social groups when it comes to success, it is often quite the opposite as the advantages and disadvantages are often tied to these social groups (Johnson 9, 10).

For many authors such as Sinclair Lewis, and F.Scott Fitzgerald, the Dream is an artistic opportunity for satire which came in the form of their novels in the 1920's, titled "Babbitt" and "*The Great Gatsby*" respectively, using those titles to reflect the very materialism nature of the

Dream of modern America (Dalton & Marylean 5). For other Authors such as John Steibeck, in his book “Of Mice and Men”, the American Dream is highly present. It shows that the Dream is not meant for everyone, and that only few can achieve it, and those who can indeed achieve it are highly privileged that others who cannot.

In 1925, Fitzgerald presented his classic novel *The Great Gatsby* in which he presented the protagonist as a character who is in the quest to achieve materialistic wealth in order to gain his love. The novel is a reflection to the modern American society at that period, a society which changed the moral values and start looking for materialistic values and wealth. At the end of the novel , Gatsby failed to reach his love though he gained wealth, which was not enough to reach happiness , and image that portrayed many people in that time.

Arthur Miller, in his turn, he chose the American dream as theme to his play *Death of A Salesman* in 1949, this Postmodern literary masterpiece talks about the failure in achieving the American Dream. The protagonist, Willy Loman is a family man who wants to be rich and gain success through hard work, as it is said in the American dream. Though Willy struggled a lot to reach his goal, he ended up with failure and lost his life. In similar vein, Hunter S. Thompson reflected the very dark nature of the Dream in his “Fear and Loathing in Last Vegas: A savage Journey into the Heart of the American Dream” (Stephan 518).

The dark and corrupt notion of the American dream has pushed many authors to tackle the issue of corruption that it has been spreading for decades. These writers bravely represent the harsh and bitter truth of what became of the once honest dream that is now a harsh reality. In this aspect, Arthur Miller presents his masterpiece “*Death of a Salesman*”, and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* in their attempt of exposing the corrupt truth about the American Dream.

Both works focused on the illusion of the American dream, this fruitful dream which seemed as chance to change life and to pursue happiness. However, it was in fact a big failure and big lie that has awoken the daydreamers, and has put them in front of the real-life struggle.

1.7 The American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*

In this novel, F. Scott Fitzgerald focused on the corruption found in the American Dream, in which he portrayed as delusional. He did so by creating a cast of characters who reflect the American society in the 20th century. This novel gained huge success and was highly appreciated since it was like a mirror reflection of the American people.

When talking about the Dream in *The Great Gatsby*, it is very evident throughout the novel that it is heavily symbolic novel. The characters, the settings and the themes are set to present powerful image of the American Dream in its purest form. From these symbols we can derive the geographical definition of the dream. Two areas for example, are in contract of each other. Being the Midwest where the poor struggle to make a living, and the east i.e. New York is where the rich pursue to get richer. Those who are not fortunate to live there are “missing out” on the Dream. The Narrator of the novel makes a clear statement that being successful in the right place is what defines a man (3). This concludes the redefinition of the American identity, and how money and wealth can define a “man” (Hedhili 22). There is a certain level of obsession over the New York and how it is considered the centre of the Dream. Those who do not live in New York are not living the dream, according to the novel. This pushed residents of the Midwest to shift from the “cow-boy” life style into the modern and more industrious life style in the city. Though, this shift has come a cost of stripping people of their morals, and replacing it with a new philosophical ideas of immoral

life style. Though both worlds Midwest, and East are harsh in their own way, it is more apparent in the rich world than it is in the poor one (Hedhili 22).

Throughout the novel, *Gatsby* is Fitzgerald's representation of the dying dream. A dream where the main character seeks higher hopes than he could achieve. It is a mirror of the society that values materialistic possession more than actual hard work and integrity.

1.8 The American Dream in "*Death of a Salesman*"

The piece of writing which talks about the American dream is not a traditional novel or story, but a play written by Arthur Miller. "*Death of a Salesman*" is multi-prize winning play which features its own depiction of the "Dream". It is widely considered to be one of the greatest plays of the 20th century.

It explores the life of Willy Loman, an old salesman with his two sons, Biff and Happy. The play revolves around the old salesman being a dreamer about success by pure privilege rather than hard work. Although the dream has been beneficial and great for most Americans, and industrial boom was a great hit in the market, it was not so beneficial for simple labourers just such Willy and his sons (Hedhili 42). Willy is an anti-hero, according to American audience. He is a man with American virtues and ideals that faces an unfortunate turn of events. Willy is the embodiment of success the American way. In addition, Miller uses a set of visual cues that indicates a change in the time line, the mood and the tone of the play. I.e. to symbolise a certain flashback is being played. This contrast makes it clearer to understand the difference between what Willy thinks success really is and how his reality is (Hedhili 43).

Death of a Salesman is a play about failure of the American Dream. Compared to other failures, this one may seem more dramatic. When talking about Dreams, they are varied and can be achieved by multiple people but usually the word “success”, especially in modern America, goes along with the word “money”. It is a world where the money defines the man, the suit he wears, the car he drives, the house he lives in, and the neighbourhood his lives in.

Arthur Miller specifically called the protagonist “a salesman” and not the salesman because through Willy Loman character alone, he speaks in the mind of all dreamers who hope to achieve something greater than they are. The play represents the death of the dreamers who hope to be rich and reach happiness. The play conveys the message that wealth obsession may blind you from seeing the true wealth and happiness which is represented in the love and care that family gives. If family is united, members achieve happiness despite the need, and the family is divided no one feel happy even though money exists.

1.9 Modernism and Postmodernism

A. Modernism

To put things in perspective, the starting point of Modernism was in Europe. Modernists believed that the traditional means of living were not coping well with the advances of technologies and society as a whole. It was meant as a way of optimistic view to the way with brand new ideas and ways of thinking that rejects the old beliefs up to 1914.

Ellen Wood stated that both Modernity and Post-modernity are two phase of the same coin labelled “Capitalism”. She further explains that according to theorists like Jameson and Harvey, modernity and post modernity represent two different phases of capitalism. The shift from one

movement to the other is in a form of a reaction and a continuation from the previous point. It is a shift that later settled in a more cultural form (E.M. Wood 22)

While most people confuse the two theories of Modernism and Post-Modernism, Ellen Wood makes the distinction between the two, and how they are both under the umbrella of Capitalism. They both were meant to serve the same purpose of enlightenment as some sort of breakthrough from the tradition norms by introducing new ideas, ideologies and ways of living and thinking. These basics were reflectively greatly in the mind of Americans, and especially the minds of writers.

Modernism means modern thought, character, or practice. It refers to the modernist movement with it is cultural movements from the western society in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Modernism was a reaction against the values of realism. It came to reject the tradition and to break the ordinary styles. In general, modernism encompasses those who felt that the old forms in art, literature, architecture, religious faith and social organization are outdated and expired and they need to be changed.

More importantly, the horrors of the war led people to doubt the optimistic view of Modernism to the world. There has been a loss in goodness in people, and suspicion in science and technology, and a doubt about world order and structure. And as a direct result from these events, comes Post-modernism as a reaction to modernism.

B. Postmodernism

The interesting turning point that led to the rejection of Modernism is post WWI, where people witnessed the horrors of the war, and the technological advances. A sceptic view to the

world began as people doubt science and technology since they were made as weapons of destructions. A new pessimism wave was launched across Europe post the war, and specifically the Holocaust, and Atomic Bomb.

Postmodernism is then refereed to a capitalist phase where it settled on a more productive phase; commodities are high on the market and the business is booming. Labour has gained a few new titles such as “Lean Production”, “Team concept” and “Just-in-time” production which were more business oriented compared to previous stages of post-modernism. The new age of technology has made it possible (E.M. Wood 23). As previously mentioned, Post-modernism is a reaction to the enlightenment project, and has its roots set in modernism. It may also be linked to scepticism which is about doubt and change. There is no unity in Post-modernism. The word is fragmented and we cannot understand the total unless we understand the part. It rejects all forms of universal political projects where the aim is not defined and particular (E.M. Wood 24).

What comes to mind when talking about Modernism and Post-modernism in the literary scene is the features that can be seen floating around the pieces of writing in the 20th century. Probably two of the most remarkable are *The Great Gatsby* and “*Death of a salesman*” which are comparable to one another as Modernism is to Post-modernism.

Conclusion

The first chapter dealt with definition of American Dream as a concept, as well as its application in many of literary works such as *The Great Gatsby* and "*Death of a Salesman*". This chapter also talked about the rising problems surrounding the American Dream such as women's inequality and slavery. These problems show the hypocrisy of the dream. It was explained that the American Dream can be infused with both modernism and post-modernism as both aim to discuss the moral aspect of the society. Next, it was discussed how both *The Great Gatsby* and "*Death of a salesman*" use the American Dream in their work, and how they reflect the mock the reality of the dream. A brief introduction was given to both works as well as small analysis was made which would be explained furthermore in the latter chapters.

Chapter Two

The Failed Dream of Gatsby

Introduction

The pursuit of the American Dream is indubitably one of the most prominent themes of *The Great Gatsby*, and essential to the storyline. “The setting is an American that it witnessing big changes in social and economic values. It is a period of economic growth, increasing capital, powerful corporations and mass industries. The society emerges and immigrants arrive on the eastern shores of the United States” (Hedhili 21). In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald uses a variety of literary devices to portray the American Dream. How women were materialistic with no interest in hopeful men such as Gatsby, just as Daisy was. Fitzgerald uses these symbols to convey the illusory nature of the American dream. These details will be discussed in this piece of writing. We will examine the failure of the American Dream in the novel. We will compare the themes, the settings as well as the characters in this Novel and their representation of the American status quo in the 20th Century. We will explore how much has the American dream influenced the ideology of American people, and their mistaken pursue of success by pure hard work.

2-Modernism in the Great Gatsby

In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald uses Modernism as a literary and artistic movement to reflect rise of technological advances and urban life style that arrived as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution.

“[T]he term Modernism is widely used to identify new and distinctive features in the subjects, forms, concepts, and styles of literature and the other arts in the early decades of the present century, but especially after World War I.” (167) M.H. Abrams states. Although different writers

and critics have assigned Modernism varying definitions, they all agree that at the heart of Modernism is a “deliberate and radical break from the traditional bases not only of Western art, but of Western culture in general” (Abrams 167). In other word, Modernism is not merely a literary writing style but entirely new world-view which is reflected in the novel.

F.Scott Fitzgerald uses the Modernism writing to reflect the moral corruption of the society using the many features found in Modernism such as imperfect narration, unbalanced chronological order, themes and symbolism (“*Explain how: The Great Gatsby*”).

Evidently, the narration of *The Great Gatsby* is told by unreliable narrator named Nick. In the beginning, Nick declares himself as a neutral observer who does not judge others, but later on he begins to give many insights and comments into the characters actions in the novel. For example, he states that Daisy’s murmuring which “was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming” and also “the kind...that the ear follows up and down as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again” (11). And most importantly, Nick himself falls victim to the changes found in the novel such as the Death of Myrtle Wilson which made him less fond of Daisy and Tom “...*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. . . .*” (191). This is intentional because it shows how these events affect Nick’s moral judgment to the things happening around him. Therefore, we perceive things in the novel based on how Nick sees them. Therefore, he is our window to the novel. That is why his judgments are unreliable.

Another trait of Modernist style in the novel is the order of events that takes place. For

Example, during his narration, Nick states the events that happens in the novel separately, for example, the reader does not know about Gatsby's past until chapter 6 of the novel. Moreover, there seem not to be flow in the plot where it follows linear structure, instead, you find mixture of beginnings with end and then jumping back to beginning ("*Explain how: The Great Gatsby*").

The moral corruption and materialism of Jay Gatsby, Meyer Wolfsheim, Tom Buchanan, and others exemplifies that of many during the Roaring 20s. When he met the wealthy Dan Cody, who made his money in the Gold Rush, James Gatz changed his name and "to this conception, he was faithful to the very end" (105). Gatsby wanted to follow the same life style of striking it rich that Meyer had. Meyer Wolfsheim is a gangster who was involved in the scandal of the "Black Sox" in which players intentionally lost the 1919 World Series. On the other hand, Tom Buchanan is obsessed with his wealth; he even purchases Daisy as his wife as if she were a product with pearls that cost three hundred and fifty thousand dollars ("*Explain how: The Great Gatsby*").

What makes *The Great Gatsby* so great? Among other things, it is a fine example of the Modern novel, dealing expertly with several of the main theoretical pillars of the Modernist movement.

2. a Modernist Gatsby

Jay Gatsby is the perfect example in the Modernist setting that is a self-made man, whose focus is merely diverted to personal choices that were opposite to that of society. Nick says that Gatsby had "an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again" (4) Because Gatsby has

rejected his original life style that we lived through as a kid which consists of traditional life style of farming, he was sucked into the modern and materialist world which had no mercy for the weak. Eventually, Gatsby was rejected by both worlds (“Modernism and *The Great Gatsby*”).

Because Gatsby is stuck at the cross road of choosing whether to pursuit his dream or let go, he finds himself rejected by the harsh reality. Gatsby is seeking to redeem the past that he so hopes to retrieve, at a time where he felt comfortable and happy, as we see during flashbacks in the novel. However, he is inclined to pursuit that dream by immigrating into the modern life style that he so despises, and ironically, is the reason he lost Daisy in the first place. Money, status and power is the language this modern world only speaks in, and Gatsby, alas, is too naive to realize it.

2. b Narration from a Single Vantage Point

An interesting feature that exists in the Modernist’s style of writing is the stream of Consciousness which allows the characters to express their thoughts through narration. In *The Great Gatsby*’s case, Nick is the narrator of the story, so everything that happens is filtered through Nick.

In the Novel, those who have money are called Old Money or (No Money), and those who do are often called The New Money. The narrator, Nick Carraway, stands between the Old Money and the New Money. He is someone who is not in either’s favor but he does indeed understand both sides, but in the end the readers can sense that he is more in favor of Gatsby. According to Mizener, Nick is "torn between the superficial social grace and the unimaginative

brutality of the wealthy and the imaginative intensity and moral idealism of the socially absurd and legally culpable self-made man" (135). He does not approve of Tom's and Daisy's behavior, which is visible in the chapter when he is having dinner at the Buchanan's and does not feel comfortable talking to them, saying that Daisy makes him uncivilized (Fitzgerald 10). He can understand why Tom and Daisy behave the way they behave because Nick is, as Mizener explains, "in manner and in superficial feeling, an Easterner, but his moral roots, though he does not fully realize it until the end of the novel, are in the Middle West" (131). And perhaps of all, Nick might be the closest person to achieve the dream compared to everyone else around him (Hocenski 8).

Throughout the novel, we see things only as Nick sees them, hear only as Nick hears, and we understand things only in the way Nick understands them. Making use of an imperfect and limited narrator helps Fitzgerald to express another foundational idea of modernism: that reality and truth are relative and dependent upon perception. In our case, Nick acts as the filtered window of reality. And in other case, we make up our reality based on how we personally perceive it.

2.c Questioning Reality

One of the most prominent themes and the idea behind *The Great Gatsby* is the new perspective to life. As we all know, in modernism, there has been a shift from the traditional life style of moral and belief to industry. However, the other most notable change is the rejection of those beliefs due to the effects of war at the time. Moreover, the poverty and injustice in society has provoked this new idea that life is not guaranteed and that one must be well equipped to defend themselves from such horror at the expense of people turning into mindless clocks that

values only possessions. In addition, in *The Great Gatsby*, it seems like rich people and people in general have a loss in human existence. What this means is that people completely rejected God existence and the belief that there are rules in the universe. They also accept the idea that life is unfair, and men should suffer in it. There is no unity, and one must struggle alone in his or her quest for profit. This is essentially the base core of the Great Gatsby's themes.

A modern novel's purpose is to expose social injustices instead of indoctrinating readers with rose-tinted views of society. In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald employs the innovative features of a modernist novel such as an unreliable narrator, symbolism, non-linear narrative structure, a retrospective viewpoint, ambivalence and an amalgamation of genres. *The Great Gatsby's* narrator is the character of Nick Carraway who gives a profound moral insight throughout the novel and the author himself, Scott Fitzgerald identifies himself with this character, claiming Nick is very like his mature self while romantic Jay Gatsby is his naïve younger self. Nick likes to think that in consequence of his upbringing in the traditional West of America he is "inclined to reserve all judgments" (3) however it becomes very clear that Nick is an unreliable narrator due to his insistent hypocrisy throughout the narrative. Firstly Nick has a dual vision of Gatsby as a character, unable to maintain a impartial view of him as his smile of "eternal reassurance" clouds his judgment. Nick in the first chapter describes Gatsby as having an "extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness" but yet in consistently overlooks Gatsby's career as a bootlegger ("*The Great Gatsby as Modernist Novel - 1381 Words*").

2.1 Dream of the Great Gatsby

Jay Gatsby was born James Gatz. He was a Midwest boy with traditional life style.

He met Cody Dan for whom he worked. Gatsby admired Cody's wealth and wanted to be like him one day. However, upon Cody's death, Gatsby did not earn anything. Gatsby's persona of living rich was his own invention because he grew up poor. What made him become determined at become rich is that he fell in love with a rich girl named Daisy, but he could not marry her because he had no money. Eventually, Daisy left Gatsby for another man Tom Buchanan who offered Daisy what Gatsby could not, money. Becoming devastating, Gatsby quest began at striking it rich for the sole purpose of winning the old time with Daisy by having as much wealth and reputation as possible. Eventually, Gatsby moved to West Egg, which is close to where Daisy lived. At that time, he is an "elegant young roughneck, a year or two over thirty" (Fitzgerald 48). After few attempts of showing her his love and his wealth, Jay realizes that his dream is crumbling. Daisy cannot lie and say that she does not love her husband and, consequently, Gatsby takes responsibility for her action and eventually gets killed (Hocenski 5).

Gatsby's love towards Daisy is endless, and everything he does is because of her. It is evident from the beginning of the novel that Daisy represents Gatsby's American Dream. According to Handley, Gatsby's: "own dream for himself is modified somewhat when, as an officer waiting to go overseas during the war, he meets Daisy Fay and falls in love with her, while realizing that she lives in a rather different social world" (Fitzgerald 33). She was his own version of the dream that a lot of people would seek after: "The officer looked at Daisy while she was speaking, in a way that every young girl wants to be looked at some time, and because it seemed romantic to me I have remembered the incident ever since" (Fitzgerald 48). Daisy leaves Gatsby for another man due to her materialism and obsession with money. For that reason, Gatsby devotes his life to win Daisy by having as much wealth as possible even illegally. Gatsby "is driven by an overwhelming ambition to make money, motivated by only one reason – the

need to win Daisy back" (Hocenski 6). As stated, the difference between Daisy and Gatsby is the purpose of the dream, while Daisy's is shallow and for the personal monetary gain, Gatsby's is spiritual of innocent love (Hocenski 6).

Daisy on the other hand is the ultimate definition of the dream which is empty of all emotions and mercy. She is extremely shallow and judgmental and reflects greatly the mentality of materialist people of society at the time. She is one of the "careless people" who "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". Likewise, the American Dream is also "careless" (Fitzgerald 114). It is not interested in the prosperity of all but the prosperity of the individual (Hocenski 7).

Daisy is the example of the lost generation whose innocence were influenced by power and wealth. At some point of the novel, we are informed that she wanted to make her own decision but ironically her own decision was influenced by what she had around her "something within her was crying for a decision. She wanted her life shaped now, immediately—and the decision must be made by some force—of love, of money, of unquestionable practicality—that was close at hand" (161). Although Daisy may have initially had some love for Tom, her decision was materially influenced and therefore, it was for monetary gain ("Modernism and *The Great Gatsby*").

What the latter proves is the naivety of the young man into achieving the dream through all possible means regardless of the outcomes. Which, ironically in return, lead to the destruction of the dream by his own hands. This picture was not present with only Gatsby, but also the rich folk who used to attend his parties. Almost all his guests would desire more of what they already

have. This lust of materialistic possessions and power has led America far from the freedom and justice they sought. In Actuality, the dream has died long ago when it has been replaced by quest to conquer for more wealth and power, and discard morals behind. The novel perfectly creates this picture of illusion in the eyes in the characters in the story, which has been admitted by the narrator multiple times throughout the novel.

2.2 Symbolism and representation of American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*:

One literary device the novel used to depict the American Dream is motif; one motif is geography as represented by East and West Egg. West Egg is where the new rich live, those who have earned their money through illegal and criminal activities such as Gatsby. They are known to be over the top, and exquisite when it comes to showing off their wealth. For example, Gatsby's pink car, and Gatsby's awkward social skills. They are basically a copy of the East Egg who have always had money and did not know what to do with it. This shows how much empty minded people are when it comes to money and what they can do with it. Therefore, they are disregarded as having no class, dignity and manners. ("F.Scott Fitzgerald portray the Dream").

On the other hand, East Eggs is filled with those who have always had money. Although, they claim to be better than West Eggs who lack manners, and style. They are in fact no better or worse when it comes to the moral aspects. One prime example is that both Tom and Daisy are cheats. Everyone from East Eggs who have attended Gatsby's parties act all sort of profanity while they are in there. This shows that with great success and money that the American dream brought, it also brought destruction to those who were not ready for such wealth.

This is a highly symbolic novel, and Fitzgerald uses symbols to represent various aspects of

the American Dream. The first is the Valley of Ashes, a place which depicts the consequences of the self-absorption of the rich they were careless people, Tom and Daisy--they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money of their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made ("F.Scott Fitzgerald portray the Dream").

One of the results of this representative carelessness is the Valley of Ashes. The rich have made their money on industry and carelessly tossed the waste, resulting in this gray, poverty-stricken stretch of land. The people and the place matter not at all to those who selfishly left their waste for others to live in and deal with, another consequence of the American Dream, according to Fitzgerald.

An unmistakable symbol used to depict the American Dream, as well as its demise, is the green light at the end of Daisy's dock in East Egg. It represents Gatsby's inspiration and his aspiration--the unattainable dream and perhaps jealousy as the color green suggests. When he was poor, Daisy could not marry him because he had no money, so he had to work hard to get the money and success in order to win her over. Although his means of getting the money is questionable, it cannot be denied that he was a self-made man who started from nothing and went straight for his quest for the Dream, thinking that all those possessions will entice Daisy into loving him again. Nick philosophically compares the green light to the Pilgrims seeing America for the first time ("F.Scott Fitzgerald portray the Dream").

2.3 Reflections of Great Gatsby to American Society:

Themes in the novel speak loud and clear about the mentality of an American dreamer who seeks salvation and success through means that led to its destruction in the first place. One prime example in the novel is the Valley of Ashes. Which was a real Valley back in the 20th century composed of people's depositories of New York residents. In that Valley, there exists the billboard of the eyes Dr. T.J. Eckleburg which is an advertisement with a picture of staring eyes looking down the Valley. George Wilson is also a resident in the Valley, with his wife Myrtle. He enters a state of shock and grief after his wife's death in a hit-and-run accident, to which he struggled to remain cogent. Looking up to the billboard with the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, Wilson becomes confused, and says "God sees everything". He does not know who killed his wife, but God knows. This implies that God looks upon the Valley of Ashes and Judging American Society as a moral wasteland. Fitzgerald portrays the 1920s as an era of decayed social and moral values, evidenced in its overarching cynicism, greed, and empty pursuit of pleasure ("F.Scott Fitzgerald portray the Dream").

Moreover, there are some subtle hints throughout the novel that suggests the Author's mockery of the American Dream. For instance, there is a particular scene in the novel where a drunk driver gets into an accident immediately after getting on his car. And even though, the wheel has fallen off, the drunk man still tries to drive the car anyway. This perfect metaphor sums up the idea that the broken car represents the moral and social standards of American citizens, and the drunk driver is delusional for thinking he can move the car (dream) further after it has been broken. In other words, the Dream has been broken by the people who want to revive it, and even though it's impossible to do so, they keep trying with no success.

2.4 Americans Regrets of Past and Future:

As established earlier, Gatsby is not particularly content with his current situation and strives to retrieve what has been lost to him. The sense and urgency to reclaim the lost past is a highly and recurring theme in the *Great Gatsby*. In this sense, Gatsby is a reflection of the regrets and sorrows of American individuals who lost their innocence and purity to the materialistic world. Moreover, Gatsby himself is a symbol of both the corrupt Dream and the uncorrupt dream; He sees that wealth is the solution to his problem. So, he pursues to making more money despite having it through shady schemes, and then reinvents himself that he has become hollow as a result. At the same time, his vision of uncorrupt Dream relies in his quest to reconnect with his past and retrieve his lost love for Daisy. Gatsby's failure does not prove the folly of the American Dream, but rather it proves that corruption and materialism prevail and overshadow the hard work, integrity, and real love. The sense of regret and repent is what distinguishes Gatsby from the rest of the characters in the novel; all of whom are empty beyond just their lust for money (“*The Great Gatsby*: Themes analysis”)

Conclusion

In conclusion, *The Great Gatsby* may be a mere love story about a couple who want to reunite together but in deep perspective, it is an entirely different representation of the American Dream, where our protagonist Gatsby is desperate to satisfy the loss of his beloved Daisy to his rival Tom, and Daisy is the personification of the dream that Gatsby so desperately want to achieve. Not only that, but one of Gatsby's goal is not mere pursuit of love, but pursuit of what has been lost. Even though Daisy still in love with him, he still wanted to go back in time to a point where he felt safe, innocent and comfortable like he once did. This also suggests the unsatisfactory of American citizens towards their life styles and their regrets about their past lives. Gatsby's death in the end is considered a sign that hints the death of the dream itself. People wanted to repair what they have broken with the same means that had broken it in the first place which adds even more chaos and violence to what they already have. The dream has died, and so have those who went after it.

Chapter Three

The Failures of the Salesman's Dream

Introduction

In “*Death of a Salesman*”, Arthur Miller wants to depict a specific ideology in regards to values, dreams, and success in the postmodern consumer society. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the American people began to strive for a better materialistic life. Everyone was obsessed with success, money, and the material possessions. Arthur Miller’s play appeared in 1949 to reflect the bad situation of the American society after the Second World War. Willy Loman the play’s protagonist is a man in the sixties who has strived to achieve the American dream for over 30 years, however he ended up with a miserable failure. Willy continuously highlighted His importance in the world and in the work as a salesman to his sons, and he insisted on them to follow the same path when they grow. However, Willy was not in fact that hard worker, he was no more than a daydreamer. Willy wanted his sons Biff and Happy to achieve the success that he could not achieve as a salesman. At the end when Willy realized his Failures, he decided to commit suicide through having a car accident in order to ensure that his sons get the insurance money on his life.

3. Postmodernism in “*Death of a Salesman*”

After the Second World War, a new movement appeared in the world. Postmodernism as the word itself suggests it means after modernity. This postmodernism came as a reaction against modernism and to criticize the miserable situation after the Second World War. Postmodernism is characterized by opposing fixed ideas, or as postmodernists put it “Grand narratives”. Postmodernism rejects history, and it sees it as a subjective science not as an objective one (Esmat

1)

Arthur Miller's play is considered as a postmodern literary work. From the first look at the play, it is easy to find the stream of consciousness, and it is very clear in Willy's illusion and day dreams. The American consumer society was portrayed as a wild predator that only seeks consumption. The feelings of alienation and loss are greatly felt in the play, especially in Biff and happy characters. They both feel lost and don't have any anticipations for the future (Esmat 6).

The play is a mirror reflection of the story of a common man struggle in a postmodern society. This man feels lost and alienated from the new materialistic society that he can no longer recognize. Willy Loman is a symbol for the failure in the American society. He represents all those men who have struggled and fought for the American dream, but ended up with failure (*"Shattered Dream: The Delusion of Willy Loman"*).

The modern Life has changed many common people and turned their lives into a mess, Arthur Miller depicted this in the beginning of the play through the protagonist character Willy Loman:

*WILLY: The street is lined with cars. There's not a breath of fresh
air in the neighborhood. The grass don't grow any more, you
can't raise a carrot in the back yard. They should've had a law
against apartment houses." (Miller 6)*

Willy can no longer live the ordinary life that he used to have, nor can he adapt with the change and melt in the new materialistic society. He was stuck in between. This caused the feeling of delusion and agony and led to the tragic destiny of Willy (Esmat 3). There were two major themes in the play. The first was the father and son relationship. And the second was thinking idea of success. When he was younger, Willy had a good relationship with his sons.

However when he got old this relationship collapsed due to the huge list of Willy to achieve success (Esmat 6).

3.1 The Salesman's Reflection of the Dream

The American dream for Willy Loman was concluded in becoming rich and having a high level of life. Through the play it could be easy to get that Willy is willing to reach successes not by hard work and determination, but through personality. He wanted his sons to have the same mentality. One example of that is when Biff told him about how he made fun of his math teacher, here Willy was more interested in the reaction of Biff classmates, because he wanted his sons to be well liked (“American Dream a Theme of ‘*Death of a Salesman*’?”).

Willy Loman represents many of the American people, he feels lost and cannot grasp the change that happened in the American society. He could not to rise to the commercial values that have dominated and limited his life. The mental despair that Willy reached led him to think of suicide as the last solution to his problems, and to give his sons a chance to get the insurance money for his life (Esmat 2).

Willy's suicide is a hopeless try in the face of the materialistic society that does not respect humanity and does not appreciate the pure hard work. Willy chose to suicide not because the feeling of guilty, he did so because he could no longer handle the difficult situation of need and despair. His death was like a deal, for him to get released from problems, and for his sons to get the insurance money (Zahran 91).

In the play, Arthur Miller did not mention what products Willy sold. The audience does not know the product sold by Willy. This was intentional and for purpose, because Arthur Miller

wanted to give the audience the chance to think of the product in order to link it with their own experience. It could be said that, through this Arthur Miller succeed to connect with his audience. The play has always been considered as a harsh criticism to the American dream. However, it gives a real life picture of the American dream in society (“American Dream a Theme of ‘*Death of a Salesman*’?”).

In the story, Willy feels envy of his brother Ben. For Ben, the American dream is what you can achieve from nothing and reach wealth. Ben when to Africa jungles at the age of seventeen, and went out of there at the age of twenty-one rich. Ben represents the strong and determinant character. Willy’s wife Linda is afraid of Ben because she sees him wild and danger. Through Ben, Arthur Miller wanted to signify that only few people can achieve the “rags to riches” version of the American dream. Yet, the play suggests that one must be tough and a bit wild to achieve the American dream (“American Dream a Theme of ‘*Death of a Salesman*’?”).

Even though he has discovered his father’s infidelity and felt angry. Biff had no capacity to pursue the dream because he was in an inner conflict. He was put between two dreams, one of his father as a salesman, and the second of nature, the great outdoors and working with his own. At the end, Biff realized that his father was a failure and his illusion led to his death. Biff felt sorry about his father who has done nothing and could not achieve the American dream that he chased until the grave (“American Dream a Theme of ‘*Death of a Salesman*’?”).

The end of the play was very tragic. Willy Loman could not reach success and happiness. Although he spent a long time trying to achieve the American dream, he ended up with empty hands. The delusion and detachment from reality led to the downfall of Willy. Through his quest for money and success, Willy has forgotten his family. The moral that could be conveyed through

this play is that greed and lust may blind you from seeing the true wealth and happiness which family and love.

3.2 The Conflict between Reality and Delusion in “*Death of a Salesman*”

In his play, Arthur Miller wanted to give his audience the chance of exploring the mentality of a delusional man who believed in his dream. Willy Delusion made him appear weak in front of reality and life struggle, because he always escaped to his dreams from life problems. Perhaps, the real character in the play was represented in Ben, a hard worker and tough enough to achieve the dream. Biff was dynamic character, that he recognized the failed vision of the dream of his father, and rejected it. Then he started shaping his own vision.

In the play, Willy told his sons Biff and Happy the key to success is to be well liked by people. According to him, popularity and personality are the way to reach success in life. However, at the end Willy was proven wrong and he failed in achieving the American dream (“Character Analysis of Willy Loman”).

Willy journey in the play was in the past and future. There was no present in his life. At first he always had flashbacks about past incidents in order to figure out how things went wrong, and to regret about past events. Then, he became a daydreamer who thinks of a better future and trust to escape from life problems. It is the mental despair that led many people in America run after the American dream though it was difficult to achieve for many reasons.

Conclusion

The play *Death of a Salesman* greatly portrays a specific ideology in regards to values, dreams, goals, and success in our consumer-driven society. In this chapter, the link between the “*Death of a Salesman*” and the American dream was present throughout the analysis that was made towards the story, the characters and the literary devices. From this point of view, that link became clearer as the chapter dwelt deeper into the many themes of the story such as: The American Dream, Success and the various social issues. The most notable result of this analysis is how well the play socially comments on the status quo of the 20th century: People at the time were delusional, dreaming of success and believing in hard work alone just as portrayed by the Play's protagonist Willy Loman. The last piece of advice the play offers in general is that dreamers are deemed to be dreamers. The only solution however is facing the harsh reality of the materialistic world which selectively favors race over another, and wealth over poverty. Those who do not possess either will end up a victim to their own delusion just as the fate of Willy Loman.

General Conclusion

This study attempts at finding the link between the American Dream and both pieces of work at hand: *The Great Gatsby*, and "*The Death of a salesman*". We broke down the various features of each piece of work that have link to the American Dream such as characters, themes and literary devices. On the other hand, both pieces of work tried to adopt both Modernism and Post-modernism in their style of writing. In *The Great Gatsby*, it is analyzed from a modernist point of view. On the other hand, the "*Death of a Salesman*" is done from a post-modernist point of view.

We can say that after the analysis, both works share interestingly good points such as the mockery of the American Dream in one hand, and social commentary on the other. By comparing the main characters in each story and play, it is evident that both protagonists are comparable to one another in terms of being delusional during their role in the story. We find Gatsby, for instance, very naïve in his own version of the "Dream" in which he believes that money alone will ultimately win Daisy back for him, just as it is the case with Willy Loman and his attitude towards ignoring the reality, which further damages his mental well-being as reality unfolds around him. In addition, these works featured many of the common themes and styles of writing found in Modernism and Post-Modernism respectively such as theme of identity and stream of consciousness.

Another interesting point is that we find the main antagonist in both works reaching to the past as some sort of redemption. Therefore, their best resort of escaping the reality is to roll back in time where they felt comfortable the most, in Gatsby's case, his comfort is his past time with Daisy, and with Willy's it is the time where his brother was still alive for instance. This point can be further expended to socially comment to the American Society as a whole in the 20th century. Because, in the end, people replaced their moral compass with materialism and the

quest of striking it rich which ultimately led to their cruelty towards the weak and the delusional who believed in a better world than the one they had. And, perhaps, their biggest regret is that they can only look into their past while there is nothing they can do about except moving on with their lives, which is the common theme in both *The Great Gatsby*, and *Death of salesman*.

In conclusion, the American Dream is a national American symbol that advocates opportunity towards success. Although in writing it seems generous and glorious, it also has its own set of flaws such as segregation and corruption. These issues were highly addressed in the 20th century writings such as *The Great Gatsby*, and “*Death of a Salesman*”. We can also conclude that both theories of Modernist and Post-modernism have contributed greatly in the formation of the dream since modernism advocates the shift from tradition life style to the urban one as it is proven in *The Great Gatsby analysis*. We can then conclude that “*Death of a Salesman*” is the second phase of the dream embodied in Post-modernist style. It represents the harsh reality of the urban world after the war; there is no more faith in science and morals. There is a sense of regret in the air. It is a cruel world that holds no place for dreamers, just as the case of Willy Loman’s character. In the end, both *The Great Gatsby* and “*Death of a Salesman*” are compared to one another as Modernism is to Post-modernism. They both contain elements from these two theories that represent the different phases of the dream, from its birth to its decline. That is why *The Great Gatsby* and “*Death of a Salesman*” are satire of the American Dream.

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