

Analysis of Alienation Phenomenon in The Great Gatsby From the Perspective of Image

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ABSTRACT

The Great Gatsby, representative work of Francis Scott. The extravagant New York life and chaotic interpersonal relationships described in the novel reflect the author's condemnation of the alienation between people and individuals within the capitalist system.

KEYWORDS

Fitzgerald; The Great Gatsby; American dream; Image

1 Introduction

In the United States in the 1920s, After the end of World War I (1918), the Great Depression (1929) has not yet arrived. During this period, the traditional Puritan morality has collapsed and hedonism has become popular. In Fitzgerald's words, "This is an era of miracles, an era of art, an era of spending money like water, and an era full of ridicule." This is the era of material supremacy and pleasure supremacy, and it is also the era of crazy growth of the American dream. After combining the characteristics of the specific historical era, the author completed a book with extremely high evaluation of the Great Gatsby. Gatsby is an ordinary peasant boy, and he is determined to be a Franklin figure. After joining the army, he met Daisy, a rich lady, and fell in love with her at first sight. When Gatsby went to Europe to fight in the war, Daisy married a dude named Tom. After the war, Gatsby made a fortune by selling bootleg liquor. At this time, Daisy was in the seven-year itch with Tom. In retaliation for her husband's cheating, Daisy and Gatsby rekindled their old relationship. Then, Daisy accidentally killed Tom's mistress, Mert. Even though Gatsby wanted to take the blame for her, the cowardly Daisy conspired with Tom to blame Gatsby for Mert's death and instigated Mert's husband to shoot Gatsby.

The prototype image holds a very important research position in literature, especially valued by Western writers and scholars. Jung proposed that the prototype image is a "prior existence" and a "pre formalized potential". It can be said that the prototype image is an instinctive and unconscious prior existence of human beings. This article will analyze the alienation of characters from images such as "Green light" and "Dr. Ecklenburg's eyes".

2 Green light

In The Great Gatsby, the image of the green light appears three times. The first time was after Nick attended Daisy's dinner party, when he saw a gentleman "standing alone, stretching out his arms towards the dark sea. It was so strange, and even though I was far away from him, I could swear he was trembling. I couldn't help but look up at the sea and see nothing except a green light". The second time was when Daisy and Gatsby rekindled their relationship, Gatsby said to Daisy, "There's

always a green light at the end of your dock that stays on all night".The third time was at the end of the novel,"when I sat there reminiscing about that ancient, unknown world,I also thought of the surprise Gatsby felt when he first recognized the green light at the end of Daisy's dock".

The green light became symbol of Gatsby's love: when the green light first appeared, Gatsby missed Daisy very much, so he walked to the dock and looked at the green light on Daisy's dock from afar across the bay. He tried to reach out and grab it, but the green light was so far away from him. At this point, Daisy was unaware that Gatsby had already developed, and he was still immersed in a beautiful fantasy about Daisy; When the green light appeared for the second time, Daisy had already returned to Gatsby's side, and his longing for the green light had begun to fade away; And two years later, the third green light appeared when Gatsby had already passed away, his feelings for Daisy had long been extinguished.

In the novel, Gatsby's feelings for Daisy caused him to undergo a transformation of alienation. Gatsby fell in love with Daisy, the "noblewoman", uncontrollably after meeting her. He made Daisy mistakenly believe that he had a good family background and won her heart. After falling in love, he could do anything for her, even if it meant losing himself. This alienation caused the emotional balance between Gatsby and Daisy to be disrupted. In this relationship, Gatsby lost his personal agency and was controlled by alien spiritual forces, which also led to the abnormal development of Gatsby's emotions.

In the five years they were apart, the perfect Daisy was only Gatsby's own imagination. He imagined Daisy as a beautiful and noble girl, but in reality, Daisy was not what Gatsby imagined. Five years ago, Gatsby was studying at Oxford. At that time, he had neither social status nor enough money. Daisy chose to marry Tom. Five years later, when Gatsby gained a large amount of wealth and a certain social status, she began to hesitate between her former lover and husband again.

In Torrance's "Alienation and Alienation in Phenomenology of Spirit" Hegel's concept of alienation is mentioned: the subject grasps the object through needs and desires, not treating the object as an external world composed of incompatible entities or a manifestation of external forces, but as an object of desire, which excludes the subject itself. In the process of pursuing love, Gatsby gradually lost himself and became a slave to Daisy's emotions. Gatsby's feelings for Daisy were exactly like this: he bought a more luxurious villa across the bay from Daisy's mansion on Long Island. He often holds grand parties just so that one day Daisy will walk in here and reconcile with him; He managed to meet Miss Baker and Nick, two friends of Daisy, through his party, and later reunited with Daisy with Nick's help. Later, Daisy drove her car and killed Tom's mistress, Mert. Gatsby stayed outside Daisy's window all night and was willing to take all the blame for Daisy. But he never expected that the timid Daisy and Tom would frame Mert's death on him, leaving him alone to face the insane Wilson. At this point, Gatsby had no chance to look at the green light again, and his love dream was ultimately shattered.

3 Dr. Ecklenburg's eyes

The promotional advertisement for Dr. Ecklenburg's ophthalmology is like a god gazing at this vibrant and dirty New York City. "Dr. Ecklenburg's eyes are blue, incredibly large - the pupils are a yard high... those two eyes, due to age, sun and rain, paint peeling off, their radiance is not as good as before, but still thoughtful, looking down on this land in a gloomy manner." This billboard stands by the edge of Ashes Valley, observing the people on this land like an observer.

These eyes first appeared in the novel when Tom Cumberland took Nick to meet his mistress; And its second appearance witnessed the scene of Tom's mistress, Mert, dying in a car accident. These eyes, like God, quietly gaze upon the humans on the ground - those who are busy trying to change

the world but are invisibly altered by it.

In the movie "The Great Gatsby", there is a line that describes the social background of the novel-New York City: The parties were bigger, the shows were broader, the buildings were higher, the morals were looser and the ban on alcohol had backfired making the liquid cheaper. It is precisely in this era of great material abundance and extreme spiritual emptiness that people's alienation is more likely to occur.

3.1 Gatsby

Gatsby was born into a poor family in the Midwest of the United States, and he had great aspirations from a young age, which can be seen from Gatsby's father: he set a timetable and "personal determination" for himself; Later, he ran away from home and changed his name to Jay Gatsby, demonstrating his determination to bid farewell to his impoverished and hopeless past and start a new life; After meeting the wealthy woman Daisy, he even wanted to gain honor and status by participating in wars. Before this, Gatsby was an ambitious young man. However, after Daisy betrayed him, he believed that only with money could he have love. So he began to work hard to earn money, even resorting to selling bootleg liquor by any means necessary. After five years, he succeeded and acquired a large amount of material wealth. He began to exchange money for what he wanted: expensive shirts, grand parties, entering high society, and even the lost love with Daisy. He hoped to fulfill his love dream by realizing his dream of money, but he never thought that his dream of money finally destroyed by Daisy.

3.2 Daisy

Daisy's appearance was accompanied by a beautiful and pure white veil, but this seemingly glamorous woman was a shallow and materialistic gold digger, as Gatsby said: 'Her voice was full of money'. Five years ago, Daisy abandoned Gatsby and chose to marry Tom, the wealthy and prestigious heir of the family. At the beginning of the novel, Tom had a mistress, who was none other than Mert, the wife of gas station owner Wilson. Daisy was also aware of her husband's infidelity, and even as early as their honeymoon, Tom was caught having an affair with a hotel waitress due to a car accident. Even though they had a daughter later on, Tom remained unfaithful. Daisy was helpless and resentful towards Tom's infidelity, so when she met Gatsby again, she had an ambiguous affair with him out of revenge for her husband.

Whether five years ago or five years later, Daisy has been choosing between these two men. Five years ago, Tom was able to give her a necklace worth 350,000 yuan, but five years later, her former lover has gained a lot of wealth. Regardless of her choice, Daisy ultimately returned to Tom's embrace and maintained her title as the so-called Mrs. Cumberland.

In the novel, on Daisy's first visit to Gatsby's mansion, Gatsby "took out a pile of shirts... the soft and expensive shirts were piled higher and higher - striped shirts, patterned shirts, checkered shirts... Suddenly, Daisy made a very unnatural sound and buried her head in the pile of shirts, crying loudly." "These shirts are so beautiful, I feel sad because I have never seen such a beautiful shirt before; Daisy originally had the idea of divorcing Tom and starting a new life with Gatsby. After learning that Gatsby's background and financial background were not as he described, she hesitated. "Her panicked eyes showed that no matter what intentions or courage she had had in the past, they would definitely disappear now."

After killing Mert, Daisy disregarded Gatsby's feelings for her and planned to blame Gatsby alone with Tom, while she traveled and played with Tom; All of these actions confirm that Daisy is a genuine 'golden girl'.

3.3 Tom

Tom's alienation is mainly reflected in his numbness and lack of humanity. When Tom appeared, he was a shallow, muscular, and crude man. The novel mainly depicts his emotional entanglements with two women: his wife Daisy and Mrs. Wilson Mert. He acquired Daisy's wife with a necklace worth 350000 yuan, and attracted Mert with his appearance of wearing a suit and leather shoes. Both of these women have a close relationship with him, but he doesn't love them. On a hot summer day, they made an appointment to go to the city to cool off. On the way from Long Island to New York, Tom learned that his mistress was about to move out of here, and his wife was also having an affair with another man and planning to elope. The two women he could control were about to escape from his control. Tom panicked and wanted to regain control of everything. So he had a big argument with Gatsby here and made public the things he secretly investigated about Gatsby. At this time, Tom was furious and completely devoid of any so-called high society reserved. At the end of the novel, Nick ran into Tom on the street and learned that Tom and Daisy conspired to blame Gatsby for Mert's death. "Tom and Daisy, they are numb people - they smash things, destroy people, and then retreat to their own money or numb or whatever ties them together, leaving others to clean up their mess."

In the novel 'The Great Gatsby', there are many descriptions of the extravagant lifestyle in New York at that time, and behind this lifestyle, people's thoughts and spiritual world are extremely empty. In the rapidly developing materialistic society, people have lost their pursuit and exploration of themselves, and it is easy for them to lose themselves and become alienated individuals manipulated by money, love, and other factors. The main narrator in the novel, Nick, is the best witness. Nick comes from a wealthy family in a Midwestern city in the United States. He grew up in a good environment and became a cultured, humble, and cautious person. Back then, Wall Street attracted countless young people from all over the United States, and everyone dreamed of making a name for themselves on Wall Street, including Nick. In the novel, there is no specific description of Nick's New York Dream. He is like an observer, yet also a player in the story. After arriving in New York, he met his neighbor Mr. Gatsby and became his most loyal observer on Gatsby's pursuit of love. He witnessed Tom's infidelity, Daisy's tolerance, and Gatsby's obsession with emotions. Nick has never been the protagonist of the story, yet the story cannot do without him. He participated in the grand party of Gatsby's family and also attended Gatsby's lonely funeral. While watching Gatsby's love dream shatter, he also felt the coldness of human emotions in the city of New York. In the end, he chose to leave here. Nick's American Dream shattered so quietly, without any grandeur, and the way it ended in a quiet atmosphere was even more poignant.

In the early years of the United States, the declaration of the American Dream of "equal opportunities for all regardless of wealth or status" was promoted. However, after the end of World War I, the American Dream gradually declined as people indulged in drunkenness and pleasure all day long. In the United States of the 1920s, beneath the surface of economic prosperity, there was a hidden undercurrent of profit seeking and declining social trends. The pursuit of economic interests replaced people's moral pursuits and emotional appeals, plunging them into a state of alienation. In such a society where materialism prevails, the once lofty American Dream is bound to deteriorate, and any lofty ideal cannot escape the fate of being shattered.