

An Analysis of the Character Daisy in *The Great Gatsby*

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Abstract

Daisy Buchanan, the central female figure in F. Scott Fitzgerald's seminal novel *The Great Gatsby*, has been traditionally characterized by critics and admirers alike as a superficial, vulgar, and materialistic individual. However, this pervasive portrayal fails to account for the intricate social context and personal upbringing that shaped Daisy's identity. The conventional perception of Daisy not only misrepresents her character but also neglects Fitzgerald's nuanced stance on women. Critics who adhere to this conventional viewpoint often align themselves with Nick Carraway, the novel's narrator, whose evaluations of the primary characters are inherently influenced by his personal biases and limitations as a narrator. This thesis aims to challenge and rectify these prevailing perceptions by presenting a more balanced and nuanced view of Daisy Buchanan. It is organized into three distinct subsections, each dedicated to a thorough exploration of a pivotal aspect of Daisy's identity. The thesis concludes that Daisy, much like Gatsby, was a victim of the oppressive and disillusioning social dynamics of the Jazz Age. Despite her apparent wealth and privilege, Daisy faced her own tragic circumstances and struggled to cope with profound sorrow and bitterness in a manner unique to her experiences and personality.

Keywords

Daisy, *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald, The Jazz Age, Challenge

1. Introduction

1.1. Traditional View

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's seminal novel *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy Buchanan fell deeply in love with Jay Gatsby before he went off to fight in World War I. Despite her strong feelings for him, she ultimately married Tom Buchanan, a wealthy and socially prominent man, due to the pressures and expectations of her time. Despite

her marriage, Daisy found herself unable to fully erase Gatsby from her heart and mind. Years later, through the assistance of Nick Carraway, Daisy and Gatsby were reunited, and their feelings for each other were rekindled. This led to a brief affair between them, marked by moments of intimacy and open acknowledgment of their relationship. However, when faced with the ultimate choice between her husband Tom and her lover, Gatsby, Daisy struggled and fled. While driving Gatsby's car after an emotionally charged confrontation at the Plaza Hotel, she accidentally struck and killed Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress. Gatsby took responsibility for the accident, shielding Daisy from legal and social consequences.

In the novel, Daisy was portrayed as a woman of striking beauty and enchanting charm, who captivated and was relentlessly pursued by the protagonist, Jay Gatsby. This aspect of her character is universally acknowledged among critics and readers, and her superficial appearance is consistently depicted in a positive light. However, as a meticulously crafted fictional figure, she also possessed numerous and complex flaws that invite diverse interpretations and understandings.

The disparity in opinions between critics and fans stems from their varied approaches to interpreting and comprehending these flaws within Daisy's character. Traditionally, Daisy Buchanan has been viewed negatively by many. Jackson R. Bryer and Nancy P. Van Arsdale said in *Approaches to Teaching Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby* that "Hating Daisy Buchanan seems to be a common response to *The Great Gatsby*. Critics have famously dubbed her 'criminally amoral', the 'Dark Destroyer', and 'vulgar and inhuman'. She is the 'classical Siren', the seductress who detours Gatsby's romantic quest through the wasteland and into destruction. She epitomizes the materialism that alienates him from the society. She is the tarnished golden girl" (Beyer & Van Arsdale, 2009: p. 178). Chang Yaoxin described Tom and Daisy as dehumanized and dehumanizing individuals for whom nothing is held sacred except, possibly, themselves (Chang, 2008). Kirk Curnutt's *A Historical Guide to F. Scott Fitzgerald* noted that Daisy was depicted as gorgeous and overwhelming in the novel, but lacks the power to make decisions, which the author attributes to the abrupt change of social context during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

In general, the traditional view tends to see Daisy Buchanan as someone who possesses remarkable facial beauty and an alluring charm that captivates those around her. However, beneath her captivating exterior, she is often characterized as having a corrupted interior, marked by shallowness, selfishness, and a lack of moral fiber. This simplistic portrayal fails to fully grasp Fitzgerald's nuanced and complex perspective on women. It ignores the role of Nick Carraway as an unreliable narrator, whose biased observations may color our understanding of Daisy's character. Furthermore, it fails to consider the intricate social context and personal upbringing that shaped Daisy's identity. By overlooking these crucial elements, the traditional view offers an incomplete and somewhat distorted interpretation of Daisy Buchanan's character.

1.2. Necessity to Reevaluate Daisy

1.2.1. Limitations in Fitzgerald's Creation of Daisy

It is likely that prominent writers often create characters based on someone they met in life, and their personal experiences and perspectives inevitably influence the characters they develop in their works. "More than most writers, he (Fitzgerald) based a good deal of his fiction on his own personal experiences" (Gross & Gross, 2008: p. 17). In light of this, examining Fitzgerald's biographical information can provide valuable insights into understanding Daisy.

Fitzgerald admitted that all women over 35 who "without any of the prerogatives of youth and beauty, and demanded continual slavery from their men" ought to be murdered (Wilson, 2004: p. 58). When being asked how far Fitzgerald thought the young married woman was to blame for the damnation of her own life and that of her husband, Fitzgerald promptly declared that they were largely to blame. Later, he claimed that American women in his generation were utterly useless leeches.

Based on his personal experiences with women, including his mother and wife, Fitzgerald held rather negative views towards them. Despite his mother's unusual care for him, Fitzgerald reacted negatively to her because "he was embarrassed by her carelessness in dress and awkward manners. He saw her as representative of the nouveau riche, a group relying on wealth and social pretensions rather than on the cultural 'breeding' that he associated with his father" (Rielly, 2005: p. 3). In letters discussing his wife, he revealed that he found her to be selfish during their honeymoon. "Fitzgerald's depiction of Daisy Fay fits Zelda in several respects: her beauty, her upbringing as daughter of a wealthy southern family, her fear of poverty, along with her wish that her one daughter grow up 'a beautiful little fool'" (Tanner, 2008: p. 78).

The character Daisy serves as a compelling illustration of Fitzgerald's ideas about women. Daisy is portrayed as a figure whose primary attributes are her beauty, fading youth, and the status derived from her prominent social class. Her limited utility beyond these superficial qualities is a critique of the societal values that prioritize appearance and material possessions.

1.2.2. The Narrative Point of View

F. Scott Fitzgerald employed both the first-person and the third-person narrative to unfold the plots of *The Great Gatsby*. He intentionally chose Nick Carraway as the narrator, presenting the story through Nick's personal experiences and the information he gathered from others. The reader's understanding of the narrative is entirely shaped by Nick, who openly declared himself to be an honest individual. However, despite Nick's honesty, it is challenging for the reader to escape his personal biases towards the main characters. Consequently, understanding Daisy on a literal level often involves accepting Nick's judgments without critically examining their accuracy.

Nick Carraway occupied a unique position in *The Great Gatsby* as both an outsider and an insider to the story. As an outsider, Nick was able to observe the

events and individuals involved from a detached perspective, weaving them into the fabric of the novel. From that vantage point, he offered his own understanding of the events and passed judgments on the characters, providing valuable insights that a purely objective observer might have offered. In that role, Nick served as a reliable third-person narrator, offering a clear and coherent narrative.

However, as an insider to the story—as Daisy’s cousin, Tom’s old college friend, and Gatsby’s neighbor—Nick’s reliability as a narrator was somewhat compromised. His personal connections to the main characters may have introduced biases or emotional attachments that could have influenced his perceptions and judgments. Therefore, as readers engaged with the narrative, it was essential to consider Nick’s dual role and assess the potential impact of his biases on the reliability of his observations and judgments.

Nick facilitated Gatsby’s reunion with Daisy and arranged his funeral after Gatsby’s death. However, Nick had a different attitude towards Daisy and Tom compared to Gatsby. He admitted limited contact with Daisy, his cousin, and agreed with Gatsby that her voice was “full of money.” Nick held Gatsby in high esteem, but his final judgment of the Buchanans was devastating. He told Gatsby, “they’re a rotten crowd... you’re worth the whole damn bunch put together” (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 192). The two extremes that Nick went to have readers ponder over his reliability, thinking to what extent his personal feelings got involved in this evaluation.

Fitzgerald deliberately crafted Nick with paradoxical traits. While Nick believed he could remain unbiased in judging others, he was actually quite judgmental towards nearly everyone. He claimed to be honest, yet he was clearly not without his own biases. He socialized with people, yet he maintained a sense of detachment. Being an insider has granted him an ideal vantage point for telling the story, but his narrative was inevitably colored by his personal experiences and personality.

Overall, Nick is depicted as an unreliable narrator, which casts doubt on the extent to which readers should agree with his judgments and perceptions of Daisy. His biases, limitations, and personal perspectives influence his narrative, potentially distorting our understanding of Daisy’s character and actions. Therefore, it is crucial for readers to approach Nick’s portrayal of Daisy with caution, considering the broader social context and multiple facets of her identity.

2. A Social and Cultural Analysis of Daisy

2.1. Daisy, a Girl of Jazz Age

Apart from his imagistic and poetic writing techniques, part of the reason that *The Great Gatsby* has been so popular is that Fitzgerald captured a cross-section of American society, known as the Jazz Age, and offered the reader with, among other things, a window through which to observe life in the 1920s. The Jazz Age, or 1920s—here defined as the period between the end of the First World War in 1918 and the Wall Street crash of 1929—was a period of both continuity and flux. “In *The Great Gatsby* we are not only intended to see the psychological state or

moral metabolism of Daisy Fay Buchanan, but also to be guided, by the language of description, to an idea about a new generation in America” (Berman, 2001: p. 17).

Economically, the United States flourished under Frederick W. Taylor’s theory of “scientific management” and a series of technological innovations. By the end of World War I, the United States had achieved the highest standard of living any people had ever known. Technological improvements increased productivity and, at the same time, decreased overall production costs. The commercial growth of the Jazz Age brought about rampant materialism. Affluent people began to spend their money on consumer goods such as cars, radios, telephones, and refrigerators at unprecedented rates, profoundly transforming how Americans lived, traveled and entertained themselves. Wealthy people also squandered on recreation and leisure. Consequently, during this decade, mass production and mass consumption emerged, creating a fertile ground for nurturing and exacerbating materialism.

Moralistically, the war itself had a great impact on the manners and morals of young Americans. Soldiers, both male and female, who were drafted and sent to Europe to fight were distant from America’s moral code and its defenders. “They experienced more relaxed European manners and standards about sex. For many of these young men and women, the result was a breakdown of traditional restraints and taboos” (Ciment, 2008: p. 18). The novel also said that “it was nearly impossible for this generation of Americans to return home from the war unchanged and willing to accept without question morality of their elders” (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 18). The absence of restraint from old mores and morals placed them in a precarious situation. Furthermore, the bustling economy and wild entertainment seemed to provide them with the perfect backdrop for their newfound freedoms.

“Two weeks after *The Great Gatsby* was published, Fitzgerald attributed its lackluster sales to his unsympathetic treatment of Daisy” because “The book contains no important woman character and women control the fiction market at present” (Curnutt, 2008: p. 76). Whether the low sales of the novel were correlated with Fitzgerald’s handling of Daisy is difficult to know. However, through the character of Daisy, Fitzgerald vividly illustrated the life and predicaments of wealthy young women during the Jazz Age, an era that economically and morally diverged significantly from previous periods. This portrayal serves as a reflection of reality that deserves special attention.

2.1.1. Her Lifestyle

It is evident that Daisy in the novel led a life of ease and lightheartedness. However, this lifestyle can also be characterized as purposeless, meaningless, and devoid of vitality. Nick first saw her when she was buoyant up with Jordon on an enormous couch, the only completely stationary object in the room. This description shows Daisy’s idling life, which lacks spice and interest. Her total aimlessness in life comes to full relief when she asked “what do people plan” and “what will we do after thirty years” (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 14). The dull and monotonous nature of Daisy’s life is

portrayed in a straightforward manner, eliciting pity and compassion from readers.

Daisy's upbringing in an upper-class family spared her from the need to work for a decent livelihood, but it also robbed her of the opportunity to experience a fulfilling and spiritually enriching working life. It is accurate to describe her lifestyle as parasitic. However, such a way of living is largely connected to the social context of the Roaring Twenties. While women in the Jazz Age were challenging traditional norms, Daisy, as a Southerner, was not bold and courageous enough to get rid of the shackles imposed on girls from her social echelon. These constraints included the belief that marriage was a real career available to women and that wives should be obedient to their husbands (Gross & Gross, 2008: p. 110). If Daisy had fully liberated herself from these shackles, she could have secured a decent job and achieved economic independence. Yet, she had not found the newer and more avant-garde principles in life to abide by. Under this circumstance, Daisy led a superficially carefree but fundamentally meaningless life.

2.1.2. Her Materialistic Conception

Equally unarguable with her facial beauty is Daisy's materialistic outlook. She was with Gatsby because he "had deliberately given her a sense of security; he let her believe that he was a person from much the same strata as herself—that he was fully able to take care of her" (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 186). It is highly questionable whether Daisy would have embarked on a romantic relationship with Gatsby, or even considered the possibility of falling in love with him, if she had known that Gatsby was "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere" (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 162), as Tom dismissively referred to him. She probably married Tom for the same reason: Tom possessed money and power, and there was a wholesome bulkiness about his person and his position that flattered Daisy, who enjoyed the benefits she received from these things (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 189).

Daisy's materialism was staring the reader in the face when she buried her head into the shirts Gatsby had thrown at her and began to cry stormily, solely because seeing them made her sad—shirts she had never seen before and yet so beautiful. Her emphasis on material possessions made her voice sound like the jiggling of coins, revealing her deep-seated materialism.

Although Daisy erroneously placed her faith in superficial external means such as money and materialism, neglecting the importance of nurturing and enhancing her spirit and mind, it becomes easier to comprehend her materialism when we situate her within the specific society and age in which she lived. The mass production in the Jazz Age greatly attracted people's attention and curiosity, leading to mass consumption and fostering a societal trend that provided a fertile ground for well-developed materialistic attitudes. This trend was exacerbated by the emptiness and hollowness in people's spirits, which encouraged a money-loving mindset. In an attempt to fill their spiritual void, individuals often resorted to using money as a substitute.

Daisy's materialism was not just a personal choice but a reflection of the Jazz Age's ethos, where wealth and possessions were seen as symbols of success and

social status. In such a society that equated material goods with happiness, Daisy's attachment to wealth could be understood as both a survival strategy and a societal expectation, particularly for women of her social class. Her struggles stemmed from the hollow promises of this materialistic ideal, which ultimately failed to provide her with emotional fulfillment or autonomy.

2.2. Daisy, a Beauty Desired and Pursued

Daisy, as the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville, had her telephone ringing all day long. A large number of men desired Daisy and tried hard to win her heart. Gatsby was the one among them who actually won Daisy's heart.

Daisy was an overwhelmingly beautiful girl who came from an upper-class family. She was the embodiment of superficial beauty and wealth. The love she received from young men could be categorized into two types: the kind of purely innocent love to her, and the love that admired her facial beauty and representative wealth. Given the circumstances in which the story took place, presumably, it was hard to offer innocent love for a girl. Women were objectified throughout the ages and considered mere appendages to their husbands. Gatsby was no exception in this regard; he kept his little secrets while pursuing Daisy. "Readers who assume that *The Great Gatsby* is a love story fail to appreciate exactly why Gatsby seeks to win back Daisy after she is unhappily married to Tom Buchanan" (Curnutt, 2008: p. 59).

Gatsby's and Tom's perceptions of Daisy were more or less the same. They were infatuated with Daisy's appearance for a short span, but it was other values attached to her that sustained their feelings for longer. The values of Daisy not only preserve their male dignity, but also make it stronger. So they were like two lions fighting over their territory, their male ego at stake, to have Daisy. Through the juxtaposition of the two versions, we can see the miseries of Daisy; though loved by others, it was not wholehearted love for her.

2.2.1. Gatsby's Version of Daisy

Gatsby, a man of humble origin, was the son of an unsuccessful and shiftless farmer. He despised the class he was born into, and he bent himself on cultivating good manners and adopted what he believed were the appropriate mannerisms. He rejected his name, and he disliked being poor. His aversion to the poor played a part in admiring and chasing after Daisy. "The same impulse that causes him to reject his origins, and even his names, also prompts him to see in Daisy Fay qualities that are proportionate to his vision" (Long, 1981: p. 102). It was written in the novel in this way: "Gatsby was overwhelmingly aware of the youth and mystery that wealth imprisons and preserves, of the freshness of many clothes, and of Daisy, gleaming like silver, safe and proud above the hot struggles of the poor" (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 187). From this, it could be concluded that Gatsby was attracted to Daisy not as much by her appearance as by the culture she represented. Gatsby was drawn to Daisy for the very reason that she possessed all that he had longed for, and thus she became an icon of his dream.

“Jay Gatsby’s doomed effort to win the heart of the debutante Daisy Fay Buchanan is a quest symbolizing his desire to escape his working-class roots and enter the upper-class world of privilege and prestige” (Curnutt, 2009: p. 40). In this understanding, Daisy functioned only as an entry ticket to Gatsby, although this judgment was somewhat harsh on Gatsby, considering he was willing to shoulder the responsibility for the hit-and-run accident after Daisy ran over Myrtle.

Gatsby threw fabulous parties, hoping that Daisy would someday drop by. When this plan failed, he waited patiently for a long time before arranging a meeting with the help of Jordan and Nick. The rationale behind all these actions was to showcase his mansion and wealth. While showing Daisy his mansion, Nick believed that Gatsby “revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-beloved eyes” (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 112). It was crystal clear that Daisy was desired and pursued by Gatsby as the embodiment of beauty and wealth; it was this vision, rather than innocent love for Daisy, that motivated him to strive for “greatness”.

2.2.2. Tom’s Version of Daisy

If Daisy were in the position of Myrtle, Daisy might be treated in a similar way, being petted and then ignored. It was the social class that differed Daisy’s position from Myrtle’s (Beyer & Van Arsdale, 2009: p. 130). Myrtle dreamed of scrambling into the upper class by marrying Tom, but Tom clearly had no such intention. It was evident that Myrtle’s place in Tom’s life was tangential when they had a fight over whether or not she was allowed to say Daisy’s name, and Tom broke her nose when she insisted on doing so. In a pivotal scene at the Plaza Hotel, Tom persisted that Daisy “loved me when she married me and she loves me now” (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 164). He also confessed that “once in a while I go off on a spree and make a fool of myself, but I always come back, and in my heart I love her all the time” (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 164). Tom’s actions and words underscore the extent to which social class influenced relationships and defined people’s lives in their society.

Tom would not relinquish Daisy easily, as the loss of her would deal a severe blow to his male dignity. When he perceived the possibility of losing her, he resorted to various tactics to reclaim her affection. He confessed his love, reminisced about their intimate past, and vowed to take better care of her. However, when these methods failed to sway Daisy, Tom played his final card by disclosing his investigation into Jay Gatsby, leveraging his knowledge that Daisy would not be willing to associate with someone outside her social class. As anticipated, Daisy retreated to Tom for assistance. Tom’s relentless pursuit and willingness to go to any lengths to win back Daisy’s affection highlighted the depth of his feelings for her and the significance she held in his life.

2.3. Other Identities of Daisy

Daisy, a Jazz Age girl, faced numerous misfortunes and challenges throughout her life. However, her family life also played a significant role in shaping her destiny

and contributing to her tragedy.

2.3.1. A Southern Girl Deprived of Free Choice

While Daisy's fortunate upbringing in a wealthy family allowed her to be raised like a little princess, it also exposed her to the expectations and pressures of society's elite, for which she was destined to pay the price.

"Rich girls do not marry poor boys", a line from the movie *The Great Gatsby*, vividly illustrates the complexities of marriage for a girl from a wealthy family. Daisy lived under the strictures of a patriarchal society. Consequently, her mother effectively prevented her from traveling to New York to bid farewell to a soldier named Gatsby. Her family would never sanction her spending the remainder of her life with a financially unremarkable man. Furthermore, her upbringing limited her ability to be with Gatsby permanently. She had been conditioned to believe that she could only marry someone from her own social class. This mindset, combined with the patriarchal constraints imposed upon her, was the reason why Tom was able to gain the upper hand in his confrontation with Gatsby, even as he was nearly losing Daisy to him.

The oppressive force of patriarchy, coupled with her own ingrained mindset, ultimately determined that Daisy could not marry the man she truly loved.

As a girl living in the Jazz Age, Daisy defied certain traditional norms for women by smoking cigarettes, wearing makeup, and flirting with men during her unmarried years. Yet, despite these rebellious acts, Daisy did not fully shed all her constraints and achieve complete liberation.

"Regional differences with regard to women's role, which allows them to see that Daisy's being Southern is essential to her character" (Elkins, 2009: p. 187). Influenced by the "genteel southern women" standard, which emphasized obedience to husbands and viewed marriage as a woman's primary pursuit, Daisy's thoughts and actions were, to a certain extent, still constrained by this norm. Consequently, she behaved like an upper-class Southern woman. Despite her love for Gatsby, she chose to marry Tom, who could offer her the lifestyle she envisioned. Daisy was not an independent woman; she lacked a career and had no intention of pursuing one. "For women generally, marriage was the only career available." "But even more important than the lack of opportunity was the general assumption that a woman's only real career was marriage. Her social and economic status was provided by her husband." (Gross & Gross, 2008: p. 111).

Daisy knew the life she was meant to lead, and she adhered to it steadfastly. She would not and could not compromise that lifestyle.

2.3.2. A Girl Struggling between Dream and Reality

Daisy struggled noticeably twice in the novel, which profoundly illuminated her predicament and greatly aided in understanding her character.

The first struggle Daisy faced was her relationship with Gatsby. Daisy attempted to break free from the confines of the society in which she was raised, but ultimately, she couldn't completely sever ties and fell back on the familiar comfort of

money. She waited for Gatsby after the war, hoping for a reunion, but he never came. Feeling the pressure of the outside world, she longed to see Gatsby and feel his presence. However, Gatsby never appeared. When she wanted her life to take shape immediately, she encountered the wealthy Tom. They became engaged, but Daisy was unhappy with the marriage. Before the bridal dinner, she became so drunk that it even scared Jordan. She cried incessantly and wouldn't let go of a letter, likely a declaration of love from Gatsby. Her frantic state was evident in the efforts to calm her down: "We locked the door and let her into a cold bath," "we gave her spirits of ammonia and put ice on her forehead and hooked her back into her dress" (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 92). It's clear that Daisy was deeply in love with Gatsby and tried to be with him. But was her struggle worthwhile? Gatsby intentionally lied to her about his family background. If she had known he was "a penniless young man without a past" when they first met, rather than someone from her social strata, she might not have fallen in love with him (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 186). Besides society, Gatsby himself can be seen as another source of Daisy's tragic life.

The second struggle Daisy faced was her relationship with Tom. Although she was aware of his infidelity, she chose not to confront him. In the Plaza Hotel, when faced with the dilemma of choosing between Gatsby and Tom, Daisy struggled once again. She had feelings for both men; while her love for Tom had faded, she couldn't deny that she had once been deeply in love with her husband. Her love for Gatsby had been reignited upon their reunion. She declared "with a visible effort" that she was leaving Tom and all the memories associated with him behind (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 168). However, when Tom revealed his investigation into Gatsby, Daisy's resolve crumbled. "Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had had, were definitely gone" (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 168). She resorted to Tom and begged to leave, completely disregarding Gatsby's defenses against the accusations. This signaled her shift in preference, choosing Tom over Gatsby. The dilemma Daisy faced was that, while she loved Gatsby, she couldn't choose him due to her financial concerns. She retreated into Tom's arms, seeking a sense of security and protection.

She became a victim of the Jazz Age, and readers should refrain from blaming her for leaving Gatsby. Gatsby was partly responsible for her struggles, as he deceived her twice, giving her the false impression that she could rely on him. However, the truth was that Gatsby did not understand Daisy as deeply as Tom did, who always had a firm hold on her.

2.3.3. A Wife Emotionally "Abused"

Although Daisy had once been deeply infatuated with Tom, their marriage was not truly happy. "She was an abused wife whose husband has a long history of infidelity" (Curnutt, 2008: p. 75).

In the novel, we observe that Daisy and Tom did share a brief period of happiness, but it did not last for long. When Daisy gave birth to their daughter, Tom did not accompany her home, and Daisy had no knowledge of his whereabouts.

She woke up feeling utterly deserted. Moreover, Tom's attitude toward Daisy in front of Nick was far from intimate, suggesting that Tom might have grown tired of her. The novel also indicated that the couple left Chicago due to Tom's "little spree". These incidents support Daisy's statement to Nick that she had "had a very bad time" (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 19).

In her marital situation, Daisy bore whatever she could endure. The stillness surrounding Daisy when Nick first spotted her reclining on a spacious couch serves as a metaphor for the expected submissive behavior of upper-class women. Despite her awareness of Tom's infidelity, Daisy refrained from confronting him about his extramarital escapades.

When Daisy and Gatsby reunited, they became intimate, which apparently annoyed Tom. When Daisy suggested going downtown, Daisy's and Gatsby's eyes met, "and they stared together at each other, along in space" (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 150). Tom interrupted quickly by saying that he was perfectly willing to go to town when Daisy said Gatsby resembled the advertisement of the man. Noticing no one moved, Tom's temper cracked a little, and his hand, "trembling with his effort at self-control, bore to his lips the last of his glass of ale" (Fitzgerald, 2004: p. 151). Obviously, Tom was not happy about such unusually close eye contact between Daisy and Gatsby. So, in the Plaza Hotel, Tom confronted Gatsby directly by asking him what kind of a row he was planning to cause in his house.

As the wife of a wealthy husband, Daisy had to endure her husband's infidelity on one hand, and on the other, she was denied the comfort of seeking solace from another man. This was a deeply tragic aspect of her marriage.

3. Conclusion

If we strip Daisy of the societal context in which she was embedded and view her solely through Nick's lens, she might appear materialistic, shallow, vulgar, and vicious. However, considering the specific era and Fitzgerald's perspective on females, we must acknowledge that Daisy faced her own tragedies. She wore a mask and concealed her genuine emotions to maintain a "proper" lifestyle, one that society imposed on women. While she pretended to thrive in the public eye, internally, her life felt like scraping by in a spiritually and emotionally barren land.

Undoubtedly, Gatsby was a victim of society, but so was Daisy. Moreover, Gatsby was partly culpable for her plight because he captured her heart among numerous socially prominent young men by concealing his humble upbringing, thereby becoming a secondary perpetrator in the unfolding drama of her life.

Daisy's true character was difficult to discern because she presented a carefully curated image to fit societal expectations, masking her inner struggles and emotions. However, two undeniable aspects of Daisy's character stood out. Firstly, she was a realist, fully aware of the life she had to lead and steadfastly adhered to it. Secondly, in matters of love, her sincerity was beyond doubt. When confronted with the dilemma of choosing between Gatsby and Tom, both of whom she loved,

her hesitation clearly underscored the authenticity of her feelings for them. Her traits were not readily apparent on the surface; instead, the author encouraged readers to delve deeper to comprehend her character fully.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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