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Viewing gender imprisonment on the shoes of female characters in the novel 'The Great Gatsby': A Feminist approach.

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Abstract

The characters in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel are introduced in a way that showcases their unique flaws and cleverness. This article interprets the characters as representations of the culture of the American Jazz Age. It explores the reasons behind their pursuit of the 'American Dream' and why they fail to achieve it. The paper also examines the novel's male-centric perspective, where women are portrayed as mere ornamental figures and inferior to men. It discusses how women in literature were depicted in a way that reinforced societal expectations of femininity and acceptable female aspirations, referencing Barry's concept of role models (117). Analyzing *The Great Gatsby* through a feminist lens, the paper reveals how female characters like Daisy Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson are oppressed by a patriarchal society, with Tom Buchanan acting as the central figure of this oppression. The paper also explores how some women challenge the 'New Woman' prototype, highlighting the struggles they face when defying societal norms, echoing Simone de Beauvoir's assertion that "one is not born, but becomes, a woman."

Keywords: New woman, hysteria, working class, patriarchy, Feminism.

Introduction

Written in 1925 by F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* is a tragic love story, a mystery, and a social critique of American life. The novel can be categorized into various genres depending on the reader's perspective. It depicts the extravagant lifestyle of four wealthy characters, observed through the eyes of the narrator, Nick Carraway. It's plausible to assume that Fitzgerald uses Nick Carraway as his narrator, as Nick hails from Minnesota, the same home state as Fitzgerald. Nick, an Ivy League graduate and a World War I veteran, moves to New York after the war. Throughout the novel, Nick reveals his internal struggles as he navigates high society, grappling with numerous questions that will unfold as the story progresses.

The readers of this novel will gain insight into the challenges women faced in a patriarchal

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society during the "Roaring Twenties," or the Jazz Age, a term coined by Fitzgerald (Tyson 121). Set in New York and Long Island, about a decade after World War I, the novel depicts a time when women struggled to assert their rights and navigate a society that limited their freedoms. The story also introduces Jordan Baker, a character whose distinctive lifestyle represents a form of women's empowerment, offering a glimpse into their efforts to break free from societal constraints. The novel's plot focuses on how the American Dream, rather than inspiring hope, became a corrupting force that motivated individuals to pursue power through deceit. During the 1920s in America, the granting of suffrage to women led to significant societal changes.

"Before the war, standard dress for women included long skirts, tightly laced corsets, high-buttoned shoes, and long hair demurely swept up onto the head. A few years after the war, skirts became shorter, laced corsets began to disappear, modern footwear frequently replaced high-buttoned shoes, and "bobbed" hair became the fashion for young women." (Tyson 121).

Jordan Baker is one of the women in the novel who challenges the patriarchal norms of society. In contrast, other female characters like Myrtle Wilson, Daisy, and Catherine are unable to fully realize their potential as individuals living their own lives. These women are not independent but are instead controlled by their husbands. They are portrayed as unemployed, with no experience of working or engaging in public life. Their primary roles are to maintain the household and enjoy the wealth provided by their husbands.

"Before World War I, women in America lacked the freedom to make significant changes in their lives". However, as time progressed, societal norms began to shift, and women were seen smoking and drinking alongside men—behavior that was once considered unusual in American culture. Over time, these changes became more accepted, marking the influence of women's suffrage and the rise of the "New Woman." Unlike other feminists who actively fought for equality with men, these "New Women" sought simply

to break free from the constraints of traditional patriarchal roles. At the parties they hosted, these women embodied this new form of independence, focused on escaping societal limitations rather than demanding direct equality.

In literature, the portrayal of female characters serves as a form of "socialization," offering role models that guide both women and men in understanding what defines acceptable femininity and legitimate female aspirations (Barry 117). In *The Great Gatsby*, the plot is shaped by a patriarchal structure. The male characters, while somewhat loyal to their wives, always expect unwavering loyalty from their spouses in return. These men are committed patriarchs, and the female characters are portrayed as conforming to the expectations set by this patriarchal system, adjusting their behavior and roles accordingly.

In the novel, the protagonist, Jay Gatsby, claims to have graduated from Oxford University, and society immediately accepts this without question. However, when Jordan Baker, a professional golfer, is introduced, society views her with suspicion. This contrast shows how society judges male characters based on their wealth, while women who step outside traditional roles are often scrutinized and questioned.

The primary purpose of Gatsby's extravagant parties is to attract Daisy, highlighting how some men of the Jazz Age believed they could win a woman's attention through wealth, rather than genuine love and affection. Though Gatsby's wealth and grand gestures are meant to win Daisy's favor, it's clear that he loves her deeply and unconditionally. Daisy, who lives across the bay in the more glamorous East, becomes a symbol of unattainable desire for Gatsby. The green light on her dock, often a symbol of hope and approval, instead represents the unreachable wealth and status that keeps her distant.

Daisy, who is a married woman and also a mother, is still recognized by Gatsby as his "golden girl." This reflects how men of the Jazz Age were not made to feel guilty for defying societal norms, but when women did the same, they were often criticized. Daisy met Gatsby when she was a young woman from a

wealthy family, and Gatsby, then a military officer, promised to return and marry her after the war. However, Daisy broke that promise, marrying Tom Buchanan, a wealthy man and classmate of Nick. While it wasn't Daisy's intention to marry for wealth, societal pressure and the long wait for Gatsby's return led her to marry Tom. This situation illustrates that, during the Jazz Age, women had limited freedom to marry for love, as society placed immense pressure on young women to marry and not remain single for too long. The inequities of gender roles in the society has been successfully advocated. "This belief in the inborn inferiority of women is a form of what is called biological essentialism because it is based on biological differences between the sexes that are considered part of our unchanging essence as men and women." (Tyson 85).

Patriarchy fails to recognize that women are not inherently complex in their femininity, but are instead molded to fit passive, compliant roles. Society rewards women who are non-confrontational and obedient, viewing submissiveness as virtuous and worthy of praise. This is evident in fairy tales, where women are always granted a "happily ever after," but only if they conform to patriarchal norms. Women who challenge these norms in such stories are typically cast as villains, witches, or deceitful characters.

In *The Great Gatsby*, female characters are divided into 'good' and 'bad' based on their adherence to patriarchal expectations. As Tyson (89-90) suggests, patriarchy views women as objects, existing solely to be used for men's benefit, without regard for their own desires or feelings. The dichotomy of 'Madonna' versus 'whore' or 'angel' versus 'bitch' reflects how women are judged according to their compliance with these societal standards. Women who are sexually assertive or who attract men with their appearance are often seen as selfish and unworthy of respect. They are rejected by male characters who deem them unfit to be wives or mothers, reinforcing the idea that they don't deserve better treatment.

The Great Gatsby not only critiques the American Dream but also highlights the limitations imposed on women. Except for Jordan Baker,

no other female character in the novel dares to live freely. The rest are constrained by the fear of societal judgment, which keeps them from breaking away from patriarchal norms.

Fitzgerald's focus on female characters over male ones is notable. As Tyson (122) points out, these women, with their distinctive clothing and behavior, represent the 'New Woman,' but they are portrayed negatively-shallow, exhibitionist, and deceitful. Apart from Daisy, the women attending Gatsby's parties embody some degree of patriarchal conformity. Despite their desire for freedom, they are also fearful of society's judgment. Gatsby's parties become a rare space where they can express their will and momentarily escape the pressures of their restricted roles.

At Gatsby's party, some women displayed poor behavior by gossiping about others in their absence. This is harmful because gossip often turns into rumors, and society tends to accept these rumors as truth, tarnishing the reputation of those being talked about. Unfortunately, women often fail to realize that such gossip undermines their own gender's dignity. Additionally, women tend not to gossip about those of higher social standing, revealing that women also judge and respect each other based on social status.

Although many women are present at Gatsby's parties, the author focuses on three women in particular: Daisy, Myrtle Wilson, and Jordan Baker. Set during the rise of the "New Woman" concept, these three women embody that emerging ideal. However, despite their outward appearances as New Women, their inner struggles reveal their conflict with the judgmental norms of a patriarchal society. Throughout the novel, these women lead lives filled with emptiness and dissatisfaction. While they attempt to challenge societal norms, their efforts ultimately fail, highlighting the difficulty of breaking free from the constraints of patriarchy.

Tom Buchanan, the womanizer

As Lois Tyson points out in *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, the link between classism and colonialist attitudes is particularly clear in Tom Buchanan's womanizing behavior. He does not pursue women from

his own social class but instead targets working-class women. For example, he seduces a chambermaid at the Santa Barbara Hotel (where Tom and Daisy stayed after their honeymoon), Myrtle Wilson, and a "common but pretty" young woman at one of Gatsby's parties.

Tom Buchanan, a wealthy and arrogant womanizer, is Daisy's husband. Through Tom's character, Fitzgerald explores the power dynamics and dominance of the patriarchal society. Tom embodies the male chauvinist attitude, consistently displaying a sense of superiority throughout the novel. He and Daisy live in East Egg, and Tom is unfaithful to his wife, secretly having an affair with Myrtle Wilson, the wife of a garage owner. Despite his wealth, Tom exercises his power over the working class, believing they are too submissive to challenge him. Meanwhile, Daisy, too, remains passive, unable to confront her husband's infidelity. This illustrates the emotional and psychological pain she endures.

Tom's relationship with Myrtle is not based on love but on lust and control. He demonstrates his dominance over her through physical violence, as seen early in the novel when he punches Myrtle in the face after she disobeys him. This act of aggression further emphasizes Tom's need to assert control, not only over Myrtle but also over women in general, reflecting the cruelty men exhibited toward women during the Jazz Age.

Tom's sense of power over women stems from their powerlessness, which he exploits to dominate them. While he doesn't manage to make every woman submissive, he succeeds with Daisy and Myrtle. Though he interacts with other women at Gatsby's party, he treats them with politeness. However, when Myrtle tries to pronounce Daisy's name and compares herself to her, Tom violently breaks her nose out of anger. This act reveals Tom's deep contempt for working-class women, whom he views as inferior, unworthy, and merely objects for his physical satisfaction. His outrage at Myrtle's audacity to compare herself to Daisy reflects his belief that working-class women should never expect respect from the upper class.

Tom's view of Daisy also reveals his prejudice, as he considers her superior and worthy of admiration, while Myrtle is nothing more than an inferior object to be used for pleasure. This highlights Tom's selfishness—he never respects Myrtle's emotions or sees her as a person with feelings. He uses her as a mere tool for his desires. Furthermore, Tom and Myrtle's affair represents a breakdown of moral values, as both are married and engaged in a secret relationship. It also underscores the societal reality for middle-class women, who often viewed marriage to a wealthy man as a dream worth breaking patriarchal norms for. Despite this, Tom's cruelty toward Myrtle is unjust, though it's important to note that Myrtle must face the consequences of her choices.

As Lois Tyson writes in *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*: "Mrs. Wilson . . . was now attired in an elaborate afternoon dress of cream-colored chiffon. . . . With the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. . . . Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment." (443)

Tom Buchanan's actions lead Myrtle to adopt the mindset of a subordinated, colonized individual, accepting and conforming to Tom's expectations. His attitudes toward class and gender are intertwined, and his approach to womanizing reflects a form of "othering." Just as orientalism views Eastern people as outsiders, Tom sees working-class people as outsiders, beneath him. Myrtle, dazzled by Tom's wealth and social status, becomes willing to do anything to keep him in her life, viewing his affections as something precious that she must hold onto at all costs.

Tom is fully aware that cultural superiority cannot exist without creating cultural inferiority, and he uses his financial and social power to maintain control over the working class, preventing them from rising or improving their position in society. He views the upper class with a sense of entitlement and superiority, while regarding the working class, especially Myrtle, with a condescending "big brother" attitude, asserting as much dominance over her as possible.

"These people! You have to keep after them

all the time,' " she says (36; ch. 2). Then she "swept into the kitchen, implying that a dozen chefs awaited her orders there" (36; ch. 2)

Through this it could be seen that Myrtle does not behave in her real self, because she knows her real self would not be good enough to attract Tom and hence she voluntarily acts in the way Tom would fall for her.

Possession of wealth

"merely atmospheric, their bodies part of the decor" (Froehlich & Hazleton 87)

When Nick enters Daisy's room, he is struck not just by the luxurious belongings but more so by Daisy herself, suggesting that women are viewed mainly as decorative objects. In that era, marrying a fair-skinned woman was believed to elevate a man's social standing and add beauty to the home. Similarly, during the Jazz Age, it was commonly thought that a woman's status would rise if she married a wealthy man, earning her more respect in society. Daisy embodies this idea-she chose to marry Tom because of his wealth. Though she is a loyal wife, she willingly accepted a life filled with sadness. Despite having opportunities to escape her unhappiness, Daisy's deep-rooted belief in patriarchal values kept her from doing so. Among the three women characters, Daisy is the only one who has fully absorbed and accepted these patriarchal ideals.

"actions depicted in the story are seemingly being under the control of Tom. She is confined by Tom from developing her personhood. The story also reveals her inability to free herself from Tom's control . . . Daisy is fully aware of the oppression which she experiences. She realizes that she is oppressed by her surroundings"(Affronia & Hendrarti 7)

In another perspective, wealth and material possessions were essential for women's survival during the Jazz Age, as they were not permitted to work or compete in the public sphere like men. To avoid the threat of poverty, women often had no choice but to marry wealthy men, relying on their husbands to provide financial stability. Although Daisy considers leaving Tom due to his mistreatment, she ultimately chooses to stay for the sake of her daughter. Over time, she comes to accept

the hardships of her life in silence. This acceptance reflects a deeply ingrained belief in Daisy's mind-that a woman shaped by patriarchal values should never challenge her husband. As a result, she loses the courage to question him and passively follows the course her life takes.

'All right.' I said, 'I'm glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool-that's the

best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.(Fitzgerald 20)

Daisy utters these words to Nick when Nick comes to see her, through these words two things could be noticed, the first thing is that it expresses the fear of Daisy, she is not happy to have a daughter because she herself being a woman has undergone many struggles in her life so she fears that her daughter would also undergo the same sufferings in future and the second thing to be noticed is that she would never teach bravery to her daughter to fight for her rights, as Daisy is so obedient to her husband she would bring up her daughter also in the same that she must be submissive to her husband.

Is Fitzgerald against feminism..?

"to a charming wraith, a being who exists only as a fragile veneer, a shining radiance of Gatsby's construction, the centerpiece of Tom's wealth, rather than a woman with a personality of her own. Fitzgerald allows Daisy to exist only in the images men create of her" (Strba 45)

When Fitzgerald introduces Daisy in The Great Gatsby, she is depicted as lacking individuality or a distinct identity. She is defined mainly by her relationships with male characters, such as being Tom's wife or Gatsby's cousin, highlighting how men are given precedence over women in her characterization. This reflects how, in Fitzgerald's writing, women are often confined to personal, less significant roles (Strba 41).

However, this portrayal does not suggest that Fitzgerald was deliberately trying to suppress women; rather, he was illustrating the social realities of the Jazz Age. Some critics argue that The Great Gatsby contains no significant female characters (qtd. in Turnbull 197), but

this overlooks the deeper layers of the novel. While it may seem on the surface that women play minor roles, a closer reading reveals that female characters are crucial to the storyline. For instance, although Gatsby is the main character, the narrative would not unfold without the presence of Daisy and Myrtle.

One critic claims that women are given "secondary roles" in line with the traditional belief that they lack a voice (Wrenn 12). However, Jordan Baker challenges this notion-she lives life on her own terms and demonstrates independence. Thus, not all female characters conform to patriarchal expectations; women like Jordan stand out as strong, self-directed

Another important observation is that nearly all the female characters in the novel are portrayed as middle-aged. While it would have been common to include younger women, Fitzgerald deliberately chose middle-aged characters for two key reasons. First, despite their age, these women are shown as lacking emotional maturity—they are unable to escape life's struggles and often behave like obedient children. Second, these women are presented as role models for the next generation, representing the ideal patriarchal woman that men in the novel expect their daughters to emulate.

Daisy's life, in particular, has been deeply affected by patriarchy. She is forced to remain silent even when her husband is openly involved with another woman. In contrast, Daisy is so restricted that she feels nervous about simply speaking to her cousin, Nick. Even during brief conversations with him, she is constantly aware of being watched and fears that someone might notice, highlighting how little personal freedom she truly has.

Myrtle Wilson the innocent woman character

Myrtle Wilson's tragic death is the result of her own choices-specifically, her decision to have an affair with Tom Buchanan. As a middle-class woman, she could have chosen a modest but peaceful life with her hardworking husband, George. However, she desired luxury and chose to engage in an illicit relationship with Tom, violating patriarchal expectations and making morally questionable decisions. Myrtle is first introduced in the novel during a

phone call scene where she disrupts Tom during dinner. Jordan remarks, "Tom's got some woman in New York... who hasn't the decency not to disturb at dinner" (Fitzgerald 16), highlighting Myrtle's boldness and lack of guilt in intruding on Tom's family time.

Despite George's efforts to support her, he couldn't fulfill all of Myrtle's material desires, which drew her to Tom. Though Myrtle's actions were ethically wrong, she still deserved to be treated with dignity. However, Tom never saw her as more than an object for physical pleasure. He abused her, both emotionally and physically, even though she was open and expressive about her sexuality. In contrast, Myrtle, despite her lower-class status, often behaves more decently than Tom, who, although from an elite background, acts in a highly uncivilized manner.

Fitzgerald shows that Myrtle pays a heavy price for her openness and sensuality, while Tom escapes without consequence (Strba 44). By the novel's end, Myrtle's single mistake-adultery-leads to her brutal death, whereas Tom feels no remorse and continues his lifestyle without facing consequences. Myrtle isn't given a second chance or the opportunity for redemption. Her violent death, marked by the disturbing detail of her exposed breast, is symbolic-a warning to women not to defy patriarchal standards.

As one of the key female characters in *The Great Gatsby*, Myrtle is portrayed as someone deeply influenced by the false ideals imposed by society. Her innocence and immaturity make her vulnerable, and Tom exploits this. When Myrtle says, "I married him because I thought he was a gentleman" (Fitzgerald 1925), it reveals her regret in marrying George, though she doesn't feel the same guilt about her affair with Tom. She was misled into believing George was wealthy, and upon discovering the truth, she became disillusioned. Despite Tom's mistreatment, she endures it in hopes of gaining wealth. This shows Myrtle's intense greed and how she sacrifices her dignity, rights, and even her humanity in pursuit of material comfort.

Jordan Baker a typically new woman

Another significant critique of patriarchal society in **The Great Gatsby** is reflected in the character of the "New Woman," best represented by Jordan Baker. Unlike the other female characters, Jordan is physically and symbolically distinct-described as having a firm posture and a small chest, which gives her a masculine or androgynous appearance. She is even said to resemble a cadet, a traditionally male role (Affroni & Hendrarti 8). Her name, Jordan Baker, also resembles a typical male name, which sets her apart and adds to her nonconformity. Professionally, she is a golfer and is financially independent, unlike the other women in the novel.

Tom Buchanan, who exerts control over other women in the story, finds himself unable to dominate Jordan. He disapproves of her lifestyle because it challenges traditional gender roles. Even Nick Carraway, though initially attracted to her, ultimately refuses to fully accept her. This suggests that despite appearing kinder than Tom, Nick shares similar patriarchal attitudes. According to Strba (41), Nick perceives Jordan as "unfeminine" and more like a boy than a traditional lady, indicating an underlying bias against women who do not fit conventional gender roles.

Nick, too, exhibits subtle male dominance. He is drawn to Jordan physically and begins a romantic relationship, but if he were truly a gentleman, he would have respected her individuality without becoming romantically involved for shallow reasons. His behavior shows that, like other male characters, Nick also lacks certain gentlemanly qualities.

In the novel, Nick refers to Jordan and, without truly understanding her, labels her as dishonest. He says, "Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply" (Fitzgerald 48), revealing that his judgment is based not on careful observation but on preconceived gender norms. Simply because Jordan defies traditional expectations, Nick unfairly questions her character, exposing his own biases rooted in patriarchal thinking.

Jordan Baker's character serves as an inspiration and role model for women seeking freedom from patriarchal restrictions. The author presents her as distinct from the other female

characters in the novel. In addition to being a professional golfer, she is notable for not marrying, which sets her apart. Compared to Daisy, Jordan is portrayed as a more capable and refined woman. She can be seen as Daisy's opposite-confident and self-assured. Jordan lifts her chin confidently when interacting with others, whether male or female, symbolizing her refusal to be submissive and her belief in her equal standing.

She challenges traditional expectations about how women should behave, proving her independence by doing things society assumes women cannot do. While male characters in the novel are depicted as using manipulation to gain power-like Gatsby engaging in illegal activities or Tom exploiting Myrtle-Jordan also uses manipulation, seen when she cheats in a golf game, to pursue her ambitions.

Though all three main female characters face difficulties, the nature of their suffering differs. Daisy and Myrtle endure hardship largely because of their own choices and submission to societal expectations. In contrast, Jordan's struggles arise from her desire to live as an independent woman in a male-dominated world.

Plight of acquisition of wealth

In *The Great Gatsby*, all the characters, including the women, ultimately face disgrace due to their intense desire for wealth and social recognition. Initially, many of them seem to possess good values, but they are corrupted by the temptation of riches and high status. Napoleon Hill's quote, "The men of greatest achievements are men with highly developed sex natures; men who have learnt the art of sex transmutation" (Hill 155), can be applied to Tom and Gatsby. Both men are charming and skilled at attracting women-Tom wins over Myrtle and Gatsby captivates Daisy. They are also rich and influential, yet despite these advantages, they lack moral integrity. Neither man feels remorse for being involved with another man's wife. This reveals that they don't genuinely value the women they pursue but see them as instruments for their personal gratification. They expect the women to adjust to their wishes, yet they are unwilling to do the same for the women.

Another of Hill's quotes-"The man who cannot be stimulated to great heights of achievement by love, is hopeless; he is dead, though he may seem to live" (Hill 169)-applies particularly well to Gatsby and George Wilson. Gatsby thrived when he was in love with Daisy, but their relationship couldn't lead to marriage. After losing her, he was unable to return to a normal life. Although he appeared successful and joyful, he was constantly haunted by the memories of Daisy. It was the influence of a patriarchal society that prevented Daisy from choosing Gatsby, and in his desperation to win her back, he pursued wealth through illegal means, which only added to his downfall. Once a noble soldier in World War I, Gatsby's unfulfilled love turned his life in a tragic direction.

On the other hand, George Wilson's ambition to gain money through buying and selling Tom's car set off a chain of events that ultimately led to tragedy. This car deal brought Tom and Myrtle together. When George found out about Myrtle's affair, he was devastated and became enraged. He couldn't find it in himself to forgive her. Both George and Myrtle desired wealth, but society judged them through different lenses based on their gender. Fearing public shame, Myrtle ran away from home and was killed. In this sense, George's reaction and the choices he made contributed to her death.

Jordan Baker's character reflects Hill's line: "The world has become accustomed to new discoveries. Nay, it has shown a willingness to reward the dreamer who gives the world new idea" (Hill 30). As a representation of the 'New Woman,' Jordan can be viewed in two ways. On one hand, she symbolizes courage and determination-a woman who pursues her goals independently. On the other hand, her lifestyle, which defies traditional norms, raises ethical questions about going against patriarchal values. Among the three major female characters, Jordan suffers the least because she never allows others to dictate her emotions or self-worth. Her inner drive and independence push her to pursue ambitions that were typically reserved for men.

Still, despite her efforts to live on her own

terms, society gradually begins to push her to the margins. Jordan is shown to have very few friends-Daisy being her only close companion. Nick Carraway, although portrayed as a thoughtful and moral man, ultimately rejects Jordan due to her unconventional lifestyle. This shows that even someone like Nick, who seems progressive, cannot fully embrace a woman who challenges patriarchal norms. In this way, Nick becomes a symbol of American society during the Jazz Age-a society that was not yet ready to accept the idea of a truly independent, modern woman.

As Munejah Khan said in his article, "Patriarchy maintains that women are destined for passive roles as they are indecisive and cannot exhibit control"(Khan 84) Daisy only finds her identity only by relating herself to male characters, the situation is such that a female right from the birth onwards finds identity only by their relationship with men, for example when a girl child is born she gets identity as daughter of her father or sister of her brother and after marriage a female gets identity as wife of her husband, women were always forced to be within the confinement laid by men, this confinement prohibits the freedom of women to express themselves. And men never intend to understand the emotions and feelings of women characters, in the novel it could be seen that although Daisy does have another choice to ignore Tom and live an independent life willingly she decides to live with a cruel husband who never had real care and concern for her. Not only Daisy even the character Myrtle does not have a unique identity, she gets an it through her relationship with male characters such as George Wilson and Tom Buchanan. Although Myrtle's intention was not to be disloyal to George but her attraction towards wealth made her to have a secret affair with George. When her husband George finds the secret affair between Myrtle and Tom she was not given freedom to tell her answers, instead George Wilson pours out his anger on her and made her to feel uncomfortable, she became too nervous that she lost the control of mind and ran out of the house and ended up facing an accident. If George could have been little more kind to her, Myrtle's life could have been saved.

Injustice in the society

When dealing with the American dream the critic says, "A central concern of the novel is how the American dream motivated people to succeed through Machiavellian means"(Khan 81). The so called American dream in the novel is the dream to possess more wealth and enrich their status in the society, from the novel it could be seen that men never felt guilty for doing Machiavellian things but the real victims were the women characters, Gatsby was never blamed for being a bootlegger and Tom was never blamed to have dominated women from Middle class family, they did all their best to earn wealth. But the moment when women characters step aside of patriarchy they were blamed, Daisy is accused for meeting Gatsby after many years, Myrtle was accused for her affair with Tom, and Jordan Baker was ignored by Nick just because she wasn't a patriarchal woman. Through the novel it could be seen that in Jazz age how men were least bothered about women, and how men could easily put the blame on women.

The dominance of men over women is clearly conveyed as, "It is not mentioned anywhere whether the girls had necessarily a choice to practise fasting or they were simply forced to stay in their house for publicity."(Baskar 6). The given phrase is proved right by the plot of the novel except in the character Jordan Baker, who is a resemblance of 'New woman'. When all the women were forced to stay inside the roof, she volunteered to chase her dreams and ambitions. And it could also be seen that when a woman starts pursuing her heart's desire the society either isolates her or ridicules her. The character of Jordan does not have any male companions, as Jordan remains unmarried two different interpretations could be made, the first one is, being a 'New woman' she does not demand any male support in her life, she was courageous enough to do things by herself, and the second is that she is isolated by males in the society. From Jordan's life it could be seen that once a woman starts to move away from the patriarchal norms she will not be given another opportunity to be a patriarchal woman again, it was uncommon in Jazz age for a woman to remain unmarried at the middle age. Jordan was a middle aged

women who was unmarried, and when she finally had desire to accept Nick as her male partner, Nick did not accept her and Nick did not have any other reasons to reject her but that she was a patriarchal woman.

But except Jordan, the above mentioned statement is applicable to all other women characters, Daisy did not have the freedom to say no to marry Tom on the day of her marriage. Daisy received a letter from Gatsby on the day of her wedding, but then she was battling an inner conflict within herself, although she had a choice to stop her marriage she did not do so, it was mainly because of the norms imposed by the patriarchal society, she fears that it would spoil her dignity if people knew that she had a love affair with some other man before her wedding. She never loved Tom truly but then she decides to tolerate all hardships and endeavours and lives with Tom. The patriarchal society made Daisy to stop imagining how beautiful a life could be but rather it made her to believe that a woman must be submissive to her husband.

Hysteria is also an important highlighted theme in the novel and it is applicable to the two male characters Tom and Gatsby. 'The treatments for hysteria were practised to regulate female sexuality and their sexual desire, under the male supervision for its own convenience.'(Baskar 1). Gatsby however was in love with Daisy, he still had strong feelings for her, it was because of her beautiful and fair skin complexion he got attracted to her, just like any men who gets attracted to a woman. Daisy had romantic relationship with Gatsby even after her marriage, it was Gatsby who persuades Daisy to spend a romantic time with him, and he never had a guilt of having an affair with a woman who is married already. He also wanted Daisy to ignore her husband and elope with him, however Daisy loved Gatsby more than Tom, and she decides not to elope with Gatsby instead live with Tom. This shows that Daisy did not want to spoil her dignity, she gives first preference to patriarchal norms than her heart's desire. Meanwhile Tom Buchanan was also not guilty to have a secret affair with Myrtle who is another man's wife, but when he finds that his wife Daisy is in secret affair with Gatsby he accuses her and

makes her to feel guilty, hence it could be seen that during the Jazz age many times women were denied right judgements from men.

It could be seen that the way the women characters were brought up it was taught to them that their married life would be happy if and only they be submissive to their husbands. "The comfort they get from their husbands make them being dependent, unable to act on their own"(Affroni and Hendrai 3), perhaps that is what the women characters such as Daisy and Myrtle were not aware about their another side of life where they could live independently without letting their husbands to dominate them. In the case of Daisy except the comfort of luxury she did not experience any other comfort from her husband, even when it comes to procreation, Daisy's husband wants a baby simply because to escape from the criticism of the society, he did not really have affection towards his baby when he knew that it was a girl child, hence it could be seen that Tom had hatred towards a female child and expects only to have a male child.

As a father Tom is a failure to shower love and concern on his daughter and bring her up in a right way. Like Jordan, Daisy too had a potential to survive without the dependence of men but it is high time that she still remains humble to her cruel husband. In case of Myrtle, once again the selfishness of manhood could be seen, as Tom has a secret affair with Myrtle, he did not legally marry her as his second wife, in case if Myrtle becomes pregnant because of Tom, most probably Tom is going to ignore her and Myrtle would be left to her fate. Therefore it could be seen that women were not taught to fight if some injustice happens to them that is why they voluntarily become submissive to them.

The author leaves it to the readers interpretation to judge if it is love or lust that Gatsby had on Daisy "Green is related with envy or jealousy, that The Great Gatsby has"(Sameen 153), however there is a small clue in the novel which says that the green light was a symbol of envy and jealousy, Gatsby was jealous on Tom and in order to take revenge on him he wants Daisy to come back to his life, hence

Daisy serves as a tool to fulfill Gatsby's heart desire, if Gatsby was a fine gentleman and he loved Daisy truly, he should not even have tried to enter Daisy's life again, instead he must have ignored her and let her live with her husband.

Conclusion

To conclude my article I would like to highlight few patriarchal norms in the society which turns the plot of the story upside down. The first thing to be noted is that when women gained empowerment (for example Daisy driving car) the consequences of it was only a disaster, Daisy hits the car on Myrtle. And another important thing to be noted is that all the women characters who just moved sort from patriarchal norms were given punishment naturally, for example Daisy and Myrtle involved in illegal affairs and they faced the consequences of it, Myrtle's punishment was that she died at the hands of Daisy for having secret affair with her husband, and Daisy's punishment was she willingly decided to live with a cruel man throughout her life. But in reality it all happened not because of women's wrong deeds but it is because the society assumes that men can deal things better than women. None of the male characters in the novel felt guilty for their deeds, therefore patriarchal norms is all the root cause for the holocaust in the novel.

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