



The Incomplete Mirroring of the American Dream by Gatsby's Character in *The Great Gatsby*

Ni Made Dina Ayu Anjani, Putu Ayu Asty Senja Pratiwi, I Komang Sumaryana Putra

Udayana University, Denpasar, Bali, Indonesia

Correspondence email: ayu.anjani002@student.unud.ac.id, senja_pratiwi@unud.ac.id, sumaryana_putra@unud.ac.id

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Corresponding Author: Ni Made Dina Ayu Anjani, email: ayu.anjani002@student.unud.ac.id

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Abstract

This article entitled *The Incomplete Mirroring of the American Dream by Gatsby's Character in The Great Gatsby*, aims to explore the incomplete mirroring of the American Dream by Gatsby's character in *The Great Gatsby* movie adaptation in 2013, focusing on Gatsby's character development and the desires that drive him to pursue the American Dream. This study applied psychoanalysis theory developed by Lacan to find out how Gatsby's character development through Lacan's three orders and objet petit a. It explores how his identity is shaped by both his fantasies (Imaginary) and societal expectations (Symbolic). Lacan's theory shows the clash between Gatsby's dreams and the harsh truths he faces. Daisy's role as the unattainable desire, or objet petit a, that disrupts Gatsby's dream. Using a qualitative research method, the primary data was taken from the 2013 movie *The Great Gatsby*. The result of the study shows that his formation from James Gatz, seeks wealth to escape his poor background (the real), then he creates idealized version of himself as Jay Gatsby (the imaginary) to win Daisy's love (objet petit a). The symbols from the society, like the green light and large parties, keep him trapped in emptiness. His story warns that becoming obsessed with illusion can lead to loneliness when those illusions fade away.

INTRODUCTION

The American Dream symbolizes success and happiness for some, but it is not always everyone's perfect dream. The United States is often called "the land of opportunity," reflecting its history as a nation built by immigrants from many different backgrounds (McNamee & Miller Jr., 2009, p. 4). This idea comes from the experiences of people who came to America looking for a better life. Many immigrants left their home countries to escape poverty, oppression, and unfair systems that limited their chances for success (Alvarado, 2010, p. 10). Historian James Truslow Adams, who first used the term 'American Dream' in his 1931 book *The Epic of America*, describing it as a fair society where everyone has equal chances to succeed based on their talents and effort. He defined it as "the dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement" (Adam, 1931, p. 404). He emphasized that the American Dream is not solely about wealth and possessions; rather, it is about creating a society where individuals can reach

their full potential and be recognized for their abilities, regardless of their background.

However, it is important to remember that not everyone has the same opportunity to succeed, as barriers such as economic inequality, discrimination, and limited access to education can make it difficult for many individuals to reach this dream. This ideal is often framed as an aspirational goal, one we feel is within reach. Like *leave it to beaver*, it's like a picture like a bourgeois and nuclear family which reside in the countryside blessedly (Wang, 2020). While some people do attain what they consider the American Dream—like owning a home, having a stable job, and enjoying a comfortable life—the reality is often more complicated. For many, the American Dream feels like an ideal that is out of reach, revealing the gap between the promise of opportunity and the real challenges faced by many in America. The meaning of the American Dream is always changing, but its promise of happiness through material success often clashes with the never-ending desires (Samuel, 2012, p. 167). This shows the complexity of the American Dream, as it offers hope while also revealing the inequalities that keep many people from achieving it.

The Great Depression produced many literary works that explored the idea of the American Dream, often showing its difficulties and challenges. The author wrote about the struggles of individuals and families trying to find happiness and success during the hard times. For example, in *The Sun Also Rises* written by Hemmingway, characters like Jake Barnes and Lady Brett Ashley represent the disappointment and disillusionment of the "Lost Generation". In the context of the American Dream, the statement suggests that for these characters, the ideals of success, happiness, and fulfilment that the American Dream represents have become difficult to achieve. Instead of finding meaning and purpose, they experience a sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction (Hemmingway, 2006). Meanwhile, in *The Great Gatsby* written by Fitzgerald, published in the 1920s, the story still matters today. Gatsby becomes a wealthy man who hosts large parties in his grand mansion, successfully achieving the American Dream. However, despite his success, he remains deeply unfulfilled, longing for the love of Daisy Buchanan, which he can never fully attain. This shows that having money doesn't guarantee happiness, making this theme interesting to explore (Fitzgerald, 1925).

This phenomenon can be understood through the lens of Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, especially his concept of "*objet petit a*." According to Lacan, human desires are never fully satisfied because they are based on something that is always just out of reach (Lacan, 1992, p. 83). When people think they have achieved the American Dream, they often find that it doesn't bring the happiness they expected. Instead, they may start wanting more, leading to a cycle of ongoing dissatisfaction. This endless desire shows the psychological challenges in the search for happiness and meaning. The American Dream is not just a final goal; it is a changing story that reveals the gap between people hopes and the imperfect realities people face (Samuel, 2012, p. 3). Thus, while the American Dream can inspire and motivate, it can also leave people feeling empty when they realize that material success doesn't always lead to true satisfaction or a lasting sense of purpose.

This study will explore about the incomplete mirroring of the American Dream by Gatsby's character in *The Great Gatsby* movie. Gatsby, a wealthy and mysterious millionaire living in a grand mansion on Long Island. He is famous for hosting large parties while not getting close to his guests and stay being the most mysterious person. He represents the ideal aspiration of the American Dream. Even though Gatsby achieved the American Dream and became wealthy, he still feels empty because he longs for Daisy, who represents his *objet petit a*. His success doesn't bring him satisfaction, as he remains unfulfilled. Gatsby's mentor, Dan Cody, represents the ideal

of the American Dream, but Daisy disrupts this goal. Gatsby's unattainable desire for her prevents him from completely achieving his dream. Through Lacan's concept of the three orders—the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic—will be used to explore how Gatsby's character are developed that finally leads him to tragic fate. In addition, exploring his “*objet petit a*” that creates the incomplete mirroring of the American Dream.

Besides all his success, Gatsby feels unhappy because he cannot be with Daisy. His longing for this ideal love shows that the American Dream is not perfect for everyone, highlighting how human desire is never-ending; people constantly seek more and chase uncertain goals, even when they have real successes right in front of them. Gatsby's story serves as a warning about the dangers of thinking that material success equals true happiness. Thus, this study will show that the search for satisfaction and meaning in life often leads to feelings of emptiness, even when someone has achieved material success. By examining Gatsby's character through Lacan's ideas, it can better understand the complexities of desire and the elusive nature of the American Dream.

This study will use Lacanian analysis to explore why Gatsby is so driven to seek wealth and status, as well as the inner conflicts that arise from his unattainable desires. By applying Lacan's idea of the three orders—Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real—it can better understand Gatsby's character development and the desires that shape his reality. Lacan's theory will show the clash between Gatsby's dreams and the harsh truths he faces. It helps us see how his aspirations are built on illusions and the disappointment that follows when those dreams don't match reality. Gatsby's transformation from James Gatz to Jay Gatsby illustrates how his identity is shaped by both his fantasies (Imaginary) and societal expectations (Symbolic). Overall, Lacan's theory provides valuable insights into the complexities of Gatsby's motivations and the tragic nature of his journey.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of previous literature contains a summary explanation (sourced from books, articles, slides, etc) of the topic discussed by the researcher. This study related to the American Dream, long emblematic of opportunity, self-reinvention, and success, has been the focus of critical attention in American literature, particularly when its promises prove hollow. Several studies have explored how the American Dream functions as a socio-political ideal and as a literary motif that often results in disillusionment, marginalization, or existential conflict. However, these studies tend to focus on structural, thematic, or sociological dimensions, rather than deeply exploring the unconscious psychological dimensions behind the pursuit of the dream. This review considers three prior studies that critique the American Dream and contrasts them with this study.

The study Sam Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class* was conducted by Sumarsono et al. (2020). This study analyzes the failure of the American Dream in Sam Shepard's *Curse of the Starving Class*, highlighting how the dream degenerates within the working-class family, leading to despair and moral collapse (Sumarsono et al., 2023). Their analysis focuses on class struggle and the socio-economic entrapment that renders the dream unattainable. The study concludes that the American Dream, as experienced by the characters, is both inaccessible and corrosive. While this aligns with the tragic futility found in Gatsby's pursuit, the focus remains on external societal forces rather than internal psychic mechanisms of desire.

The study related to the American Dream was conducted by Wang (2020) explores the American Dream in the film *The Pursuit of Happyness*, showing that Chris Gardner achieves success through hard work, determination, and family responsibility (Wang,

2020). This presents a positive view of the dream—as something still attainable through personal effort. In contrast, Gatsby's story ends in failure despite similar persistence. Unlike Wang's focus on motivation, this study uses Lacan's psychoanalysis to explain Gatsby's failure. It argues that the American Dream is not just difficult, but based on an unreachable desire (*objet petit a*) rooted in the unconscious. Gatsby's dream becomes an illusion—something he chases but can never truly attain.

Another study was conducted by Nooraida et al. (2022) examine *The Greatest Showman* and explore how the American Dream is portrayed among marginalized minorities. Their study focuses on representation, spectacle, and the commodification of difference. It emphasizes how Barnum and his performers must constantly negotiate identity and acceptance to attain recognition (Nooraida & Saraswati, 2022). Although similar to Gatsby's performative identity, this study emphasizes cultural and visual representations, not the unconscious processes driving these performances or their psychological incompleteness.

Unlike the previous studies, this article uses Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory—especially the concepts of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real—to explore why Gatsby's version of the American Dream is incomplete. Gatsby's dream is not just about money or status, but comes from a deep, unfulfilled desire. In the Imaginary, he misrecognizes what he truly wants; in the Symbolic, he is limited by the rules of society and language; and in the Real, he faces something missing that can never be filled. His love for Daisy and the dream she represents can be seen as *objet petit a*—a desire that can never truly be satisfied. This article argues that Gatsby's failure is not just caused by class or rejection, but by a deeper problem: the dream he chases doesn't match what he really desires deep inside. In the end, the American Dream becomes a false promise of completeness—a mirror that can never reflect the wholeness Gatsby longs for.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article used a qualitative method to conduct the research. Qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2018). This section covers four points: data source, method and technique of collecting data, method of analyzing data, and method and technique of presenting analysis. This article used *The Great Gatsby* movie in 2013 as primary data. The secondary data used in this article were taken from previous studies and book on psychoanalysis.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the formation of Gatsby's desires and the incomplete mirroring of the American Dream in the movie adaptation. The process began by streaming the film on HBO Max to observe key scenes, with a focus on moments that reveal Gatsby's psychological struggles, societal pressures, and unattainable goals. Notes were taken to document critical scenes, such as his impoverished past (the real order), his creation of a wealthy persona (the Imaginary order), and societal norms like classism and materialism (the symbolic order). Special attention was given to Daisy's role as the *objet petit a*—the unattainable desire driving his obsession—and scenes highlighting his emptiness despite achieving wealth. The collected data was then organized into categories, such as Gatsby's true identity, his fantasies, and societal influences. Using Lacanian theory, these categories were analyzed to understand how his desires and the American Dream's promises collide, leading to his tragic fate. To ensure accuracy, findings were cross-checked against the movie's narrative and theoretical framework. Finally, the study concludes by synthesizing how Gatsby's pursuit of an idealized self and Daisy exposes the hollowness of the American Dream, emphasizing the psychological and societal forces

that render his desires insatiable and his success ultimately meaningless.

This research used the documentation method with note-taking and recording techniques to collect data. In collecting the data, first, watch the movie from HBO Max, with a focus on moments that reveal Gatsby's psychological struggles, the American Dream, and unattainable goals. Next, taking notes and record the important parts such as Gatsby's original self (real order), Gatsby's idealized self-images or fantasies he creates around his life (imaginary order), the societal norms that influenced his desires (symbolic order). In exploring the incomplete mirroring of the American Dream, special attention was given to Daisy's role as the *objet petit a*—the unattainable desire driving his obsession—and scenes highlighting his emptiness despite achieving wealth. Then, listing and arranging the data collected. The method and technique of analyzing data used in this research is qualitative descriptive by Creswell (2018). Using Lacanian theory, these categories were analyzed to understand how his desires and the American Dream's promises collide, leading to his tragic fate. To ensure accuracy, findings were cross-checked against the movie's narrative and theoretical framework. Finally, draw a conclusion to show the discussion result.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Great Gatsby written by F. Scott Fitzgerald, is set in the summer of 1922 and narrated by Nick Carraway, a young man from Minnesota who moves to New York to work in the bond business. He lives in West Egg, a district of newly wealthy people, and his mysterious neighbor, Jay Gatsby, throws extravagant parties in his grand mansion. Nick has a cousin named Daisy Buchanan, who is married to the wealthy but morally dubious Tom Buchanan. Unfortunately, the married life of Daisy is not as happy as it seems. Tom secretly has an affair with Myrtle Wilson, who lives in a rundown area between West Egg and New York City. During the dinner with Daisy and her friend Jordan Baker, Nick becomes more curious of his mysterious neighbour Gatsby. It turns out that Gatsby and Daisy had known each other for years, as he still loves Daisy, since the first time they met in 1917. Gatsby's large parties are meant to attract her. Nick helps arrange a reunion between Gatsby and Daisy, which is initially awkward but rekindles their romance. Gatsby has transformed himself into a rich man to win Daisy's Love. His time has already come, Gatsby finally reveal his true original self to Nick, as he told him that his real name was James Gatz.

Gatsby finally reunites with Daisy, who suggests they run away together. However, Gatsby refuses because he wants to have Daisy for himself in a legal way. Meanwhile, Tom becomes suspicious and confronts Gatsby at the Plaza Hotel, revealing Gatsby's past and illegal activities. This makes Daisy see Gatsby differently, especially when he loses his temper during the argument with Tom. Even though Daisy has feelings for Gatsby, she returns to Tom. Tragedy strikes when Daisy accidentally kills Myrtle with Gatsby's car. Tom tells Myrtle's husband, George, that Gatsby was driving, which leads George to kill Gatsby and then take his own life. Gatsby ends up facing death for an accident he didn't cause. As a result, Gatsby is no longer seen as "Great." Nobody attends his funeral, and Daisy decides to leave the area to live a happy life with Tom, far away from Gatsby.

Desire Formation of Gatsby

In the story, Gatsby's transformation from a poor farmer boy becoming a rich man with emptiness. Even though he has succeeded reaching the American Dream, he still feeling something missing. This was such a unique narrative phenomenon, where live was not always as what people had expected. Even though people have fighting to be

better, but that does not change the destiny. Therefore, this part will explore into the formation of Gatsby's desire that will lead him to his tragic fate.

The Real

According to Lacan, the real is that which resists symbolization and exists prior to the mirror stage, the imaginary, and the symbolic. It cannot be fully expressed in language or symbols, as symbolization distorts the real, transforming it into something that is no longer truly real (Lacan, 1977, p. 53). The real is human experience that linked to basic human needs (Darma, 2004, p. 159). For example, a newborn baby exists in a state of pure experience, responding to fundamental needs like hunger and comfort before developing a sense of self or identity. The real as a whole and complete, where all the basic needs can be satisfied. The real is when a person live in a complete life, experiencing comfort and happiness, they will remain in the stage of the real and will not feel any lack in their life (Bracher, 2017). The real phase is the phase of the original self, without any influence from others, it could be form the society and itself (Manik, 2016, p. 77).

Related to Gatsby, the original self of Gatsby is his original childhood, who was born in North Dakota, named James Gatz. This represents the complicated nature of identity and the quest for the American Dream. His transformation from a poor boy in North Dakota to a rich man on Long Island highlights the conflict between who he truly is and the image he creates to fit into the upper class. This can be seen from the scene where Gatsby reveal his true self to Nick:

"Gatsby's real name was... James Gatz. His parents were dirt-poor farmers from North Dakota... But he never accepted them as his parents at all." (*The Great Gatsby*, 2013, 01:08:08-01:08:23)

Based on that scene, Gatsby reveal that his real name was James Gatz, he was not from a rich family. His family was dirt-poor farmers from North Dakota, which made him feel inadequate and hungry for a life filled with wealth and success. This feeling of 'lack,' as described by Lacan, represents a basic human need to find fulfilment beyond what people have. From a young age, Gatsby turned away from the life his parents provided, seeing their poverty as something that held him back. He decided to run away when he was 16 and changed his name into Jay Gatsby. He begins his new life and his desire for a more glamorous future. Gatsby's story highlights the complicated nature of identity and the painful gap between where people come from and where people want to go, illustrating the common struggle to rise above the circumstances in search of a better life.

In this real order, Gatsby struggles with his identity while trying to achieve the American Dream. His desire for wealth comes from a deep feeling of 'lack' that he has felt since he was a child. Growing up poor made him feel incomplete, that drives him to be rich. To escape this emptiness, he ran away at 16 to find a better life. Gatsby's journey shows how hard it can be for people to balance where they come from with where they want to go, and how easily identities can become weak when they are based on false images instead of reality.

The Imaginary

The term "Imaginary," as defined by Lacan, refers to a person's experiences shaped by identification and duality, existing even before language acquisition and complex family dynamics (Sikana, 2005, p. 170). For example, when a children begin to form their self-image through their reflection in the mirror, although this recognition is not entirely accurate, influencing their idealized self. This process leads to the "phase of demand," where the child starts to express needs to their parents, believing their mirror

image represents their true self.

The mirror stage as one of the example for this concept, as individuals recognize themselves but also feel alienated from their reflection, resulting in conflicting emotions (Faruk, 2012, pp. 194–195). During the mirror stage, three key developments occur: first, the child becomes aware of its separation from the mother, leading to feelings of loss and a desire for reunion. Second, the child realizes something is missing and learns to express its wants, although it cannot articulate these needs clearly, often resorting to crying. Third, the child experiences a process of identification, confusing its reflection with the images of others, which leads to a misrecognition of self and the formation of an ideal "I" (Faruk, 2012, p. 187). Lacan associates the imaginary with images, identification, and perception, emphasizing that it involves the visual aspects of self-formation through identification with images, particularly during the mirror stage. In Lacan's imaginary order, the interplay of image, identification, and perception shapes an individual's self-concept and worldview, with the mirror image serving as the foundation for identity development.

In this context, Gatsby has already had his idealized self-images since he was a kid as, he believed in his own imagination, "*He was a son of God, destined for future glory. Chasing his destiny, a 16-year-old Gatz ran far, far away*" (Luhmann, 2013, 01:08:25-01:08:39). Based on his dream, he already pictured himself having a glorious future ahead. As he runaway at the age of 16 and met Dan Cody on his way, he finally became what others describe him as "*Richer than God*". Gatsby has separate himself from the real, then mirroring himself into his mentor, Dan Cody. He began to create his idealized self-images that he told everyone. This can be seen from the scene where Gatsby telling Gatsby about himself while riding into the town.

"I am the son of very wealthy people from the Middle West. Sadly, all of them were dead now." (Luhmann, 2013, 00:36:24-00:36:28)

In this moment, Gatsby tells Nick that his parents were rich, trying to convince him about how he got his wealth. He wants to connect himself to the wealthy social class he admires, even though the truth is very different. This shows how much he wants to be accepted and recognized in a world that often judges people based on their money and family background. However, when he mentions that his parents are dead, it adds a sad twist to his story. It suggests that even with all his money and status, he feels lonely and lacks real family connections. This reflects the ideal image Gatsby wants others to see—a successful man with a glamorous background.

Gatsby's desire to create this image is part of his larger dream of achieving the American Dream, where anyone can rise to success regardless of their origins. He believes that by presenting himself as someone from wealth, he can gain the respect and admiration he craves. This is just an ideal-image that Gatsby creates for people around, hiding the truth of his humble beginnings and the emptiness he feels inside. In addition, Gatsby's struggle to maintain this image highlights the theme of identity and the lengths people go to in order to fit into a world that values appearances over reality.

"I was brought up in America but educated at oxford because of all my ancestors, have been educated there for years. It's a family tradition" (Luhmann, 2013, 00:36:31-00:36:37)

In this moment, Gatsby told Nick that he was raised in America but educated at Oxford due to a family tradition. This shows Gatsby's desire to create a perfect image of himself to Nick. By highlighting his education at Oxford, Gatsby tries to boost his social status and show that he belongs to the wealthy elite, which is part of the American Dream (Vanspanckeren, 2006). This is clear in how he carefully shapes his image, throwing large parties and surrounding himself with signs of wealth and sophistication. When he claims to be an "*Oxford man*", he not only wants to impress Nick but also to hide his modest background and the illegal ways he made his money. This contrast

shows how far Gatsby is willing to go to gain acceptance in a society that values family background and education. However, this made-up identity is weak because it depends on lies and how others see him. This shows the theme of illusion versus reality in the story.

"After my family died. I ran into a great deal of money. After that, I lived like a prince in all the capitals of Europe..." (Luhrmann, 2013, 00:36:42-00:36:49)

This line shows that Gatsby wants people to believe his wealth comes from good luck instead of illegal activities. During the Roaring Twenties, many people became rich quickly, and Gatsby represents this new group of wealthy individuals, known as the *'nouveau riche'*. He tells Nick that he got *'a great deal of money'*, trying to convince him and others that he belongs to the upper class. This story of sudden success fits the American Dream, where hard work and luck can lead to wealth. By saying his fortune came after a personal tragedy, Gatsby tries to gain sympathy and admiration, presenting himself as a self-made man who has overcome challenges. This ideal image is important for him because it helps hide the truth about his past and how he really made his money. Additionally, by claiming to have lived *"like a prince in all the capitals of Europe,"* Gatsby shows off his style and culture, which are highly valued in the society he wants to join. This image not only boosts his status in Nick's eyes but also distracts from the truth about his illegal activities.

In this imaginary order, Gatsby creates many idealized images of himself to impress Daisy and fit into her world. He wants to be seen as a wealthy and sophisticated man, even though his true background is very different. From a young age, Gatsby dreamed of a glorious future and shaped his identity based on this vision. He tells stories about his rich parents and his education at Oxford to convince others that he belongs to the elite class. By claiming his wealth came from good luck and personal tragedy, he tries to gain sympathy and admiration, presenting himself as a self-made man. However, these images are built on lies and distract from the reality of his original background and illegal activities. His idealized self is a reflection of his deep desire for acceptance and love, especially from Daisy, but it also reveals the emptiness and loneliness that come with living a life based on illusions.

The Symbolic Order

In *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan states, "The symbolic is the register, first and foremost, of language, and for Lacan, it is language that Freud has failed to reckon with" (Lacan, 1992, p. 60). This highlights that the symbolic aspect of reality is primarily about language and communication, which Freud did not explain. Lacan argues that an individual's unconscious is structured like a language, meaning their experiences and self-perception are shaped by the words and social rules they adopt. This perspective shifts the focus from biological explanations of behavior to the influence of language and social interactions on identity.

Lacan emphasizes the role of language as a signifier, showing how it shapes people's understanding of reality and organizes their experiences. The symbolic order is linked to societal norms and beliefs, representing the "law of the father," a metaphor for the invisible authority that dictates behavior and defines personality in society. He introduces the concept of desire within the symbolic order, noting that it is mediated through language and symbols, creating a gap that prevents complete satisfaction. Lacan also points out that language is a cultural force with its own prohibitions and laws, shaping children from a young age without their awareness (Faruk, 2012, p. 187). This relates to how desires formed in the imaginary become symbols that individuals can understand and share. The symbolic order is crucial for expressing personal desires within the social world, helping individuals understand their identities and their place in

culture.

In this context, the symbolic order in *The Great Gatsby* based on the societal norms, language, and cultural laws that dictates Gatsby's Desire. There are several symbols within the story, such as the green light and large parties. This can be shown from several lines from the movies:

"If it wasn't for the mist, we could see the green light." (Luhrmann, 2013, 01:03:48-01:03:53)

From this line, the 'green light' as a signifier for Gatsby's unattainable desire. Meanwhile the 'mist' as a signifier for the barriers and illusions that blur Gatsby's view represent the challenges, he encounters in reaching his dreams, especially his perfect love for Daisy and the American Dream. The 'mist' in this context could be Daisy's husband, Tom Buchanan. This line implies that if there were no obstacles in his way (like Tom), Gatsby would have achieved Daisy's love and embraced his dream girl without anyone standing in his path. It paints a picture of a world where his aspirations could flourish unimpeded, allowing him to finally grasp the happiness he has longed for.

Gatsby frequently references the 'green light', showing its importance to both Nick and Daisy. This 'green light' symbolizes his dream and served as his life goal or everything he wants to achieve. He often stands by the bay, gazing at the green light across the bay, as he tries to reach the light. In fact, he strategically positioned his bedroom to have a view of the green light, as a reminder of his goals.

"Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us." (Luhrmann, 2013, 02:08:12-02:08:19)

This line reflected the idea of the American Dream and how it relates to social expectations. For Gatsby, the 'green light' signifies his hopes and dreams to be with Daisy for a better future. This belief shows his idealism and the efforts he is ready to make to reach his dreams, representing the happiness and success that the American Dream promises. However, the phrase *"orgastic future"* implies that this dream is powerful but also temporary, suggesting that what he longs for might not be sustainable. The idea that this future *"year by year recedes"* emphasizes the unfortunate truth of Gatsby's journey, as no matter how hard he works, his dreams seem to get further away. This reflects the disappointment that often comes with chasing success in a society that values wealth and status.

In this context, the green light represents the societal norms and values that shape people's aspirations. Gatsby's attention to the light illustrates how personal goals are affected by external expectations. His belief in the green light shows his connection to the American Dream, which promises happiness but often results in emptiness. Gatsby's chase of the green light highlights the difficulties people encounter when pursuing their dreams, demonstrating how hope can motivate them while also revealing the tough realities of life.

"You see, the rest of New York simply came, uninvited... The whole city packed automobiles and all weekend, every weekend, ended up at Gatsby's... And I mean everyone: from every walk of life, from every corner of New York City, this kaleidoscopic carnival spilled through Gatsby's door..." (Luhrmann, 2013, 00:23:37-00:24:13)

This line represent the large parties Gatsby throw to attract Daisy's attention. Living just across the bay from her, Gatsby hosts these grand gatherings without sending out formal invitations, inviting a diverse crowd from all over New York City. His intention is clear: he hopes that one day Daisy will attend one of his parties, allowing them to reconnect. Gatsby also remain mysterious as when Nick tries to find out who is hosting the party, he learns that no one has actually seen Gatsby in person. This mystery makes Gatsby more interesting but also shows how alone he is, even when

surrounded by people. The large parties are not just for fun. Meanwhile, they are a way for Gatsby to attract Daisy's attention.

Besides that, his large parties symbolized his wealth and his success, which he believes will make him worthy of Daisy's love. The media buzz surrounding his parties, often featured in newspapers, serves as evidence of his social status and the success he has achieved. These large parties represent the American Dream of the Roaring Twenties, a time when wealth was often seen as the key to happiness and social acceptance. During the Jazz Age, a period marked by economic prosperity and cultural change, people celebrated life through music, dance, and large parties. Gatsby's large parties are a reflection of this era, where jazz music filled the air and the pursuit of pleasure was at the forefront of society. Gatsby seeks not only validation from the social elite but also hopes to win back Daisy's love. He believes that his newfound wealth and success will prove he is worthy of her affection. However, these parties also highlight the societal expectation that equates success with material wealth and social status.

In the end, the symbolic order in Gatsby's character shows how his dreams and desires in the imaginary order turn into symbols, like the green light and his large parties, which represent his longing for Daisy and the American Dream. These symbols highlight the societal belief that wealth equals success and happiness. Gatsby's story reveals the challenges of chasing dreams and the loneliness that can come from trying to achieve an idealized love and life.

The Incomplete Mirroring of the American Dream by Gatsby

Jay Gatsby is one of the examples of people who has succeeded in achieving the "American Dream". He had transformed himself from a poor-farmer boy into the rich self-made man, the Great Gatsby. He has everything people had dreamed when achieving the American Dream. Starting out as James Gatz, the poor-farmer boy, and now success in transforming himself into a wealthy figure, complete with a grand mansion in West Egg, throwing large parties, and any luxurious items such as Rolls-Royce. His grand mansion is described as a "*I had the gates brought in from a castle in the Normandy,*" (Luhrmann, 2013, 01:00:03-01:00:05) complete with vast gardens and a ballroom filled with elite guests. He has success illustrating the American Dream's promise that anyone can achieve success through hard work and ambitions, regardless of their background.

What sets Gatsby's version of the American Dream apart from others is a deep sense of loneliness that lingers even after he achieves his goals. Gatsby begins his journey to achieve success on his own inspired by his mentor, Dan Cody, who represents wealth and success as the American Dream. It turns into an unhealthy obsession with winning Daisy's love, his unattainable desires. Unlike Dan Cody, who seeks wealth for its own sake, Gatsby sees money as a way to change his past and win back Daisy, the person he believes will make him happy and complete. Gatsby's search for wealth makes him lonely. Even with all his money, he feels empty because Daisy isn't there. His grand mansion and large parties can't fill the gap in his heart, proving that true happiness comes from love, not just money. His childhood poverty pushes him to leave behind his true self, sacrificing real connections for the false idea of status. In the end, he realizes that Daisy, a symbol of his idealized past, can never fulfill his dreams.

In the scene after Daisy and all the guest left. (Luhrmann, 2013, 01:20:43-01:21:04)

Gatsby : "*I've gotten all these things for her, and now she just wants to run away. She even wants to leave that.*"

Nick : "*Jay, you can't repeat the past.*"

Gatsby : "*Can't repeat the past? Why, of course you can!*"

Gatsby shows his refusal to accept reality. The dream he is chasing is just an illusion, leaving him stuck between a world that admires his wealth and a love that doesn't accept who he really is. This leads to a crucial question: does having money and status really bring happiness? Even though Gatsby is being a rich and successful man, he remains trapped in the illusion that the past can be repeated and that Daisy's love can fill the emptiness in his soul. Gatsby believe by achieving the American Dream will grant him to get a better life and win Daisy's love. Based on Gatsby's story, it reveals that while the American Dream may promise wealth and success, it does not guarantee true happiness or fulfilment.

Daisy represents as his unattainable desire, or in Lacan's theory called the *objet petit a*. The 'a' in *objet petit a* was developed from Freud's idea of an "object" and Lacan's idea of "otherness". The *objet petit a* is an object that causes desire, but this desire may be unattainable (Katta & Nitali, 2023, p. 424). It is the object that is always just out of reach, and this unattainability creates desire. Lacan's *objet petit a* can never be achieved and that is the reason behind humans' continuous struggle for perfection and achievement (Lacan & Miller, 1998). Every person lacks something and this lack is caused due to imaginary and symbolic order. This lack is influenced by the Imaginary and Symbolic realms, which shape perceptions and aspirations. As a result, individuals often project desires onto people, goals, or ideals, believing that these can fulfil needs (Yousaf et al., 2023). Gatsby still lived in the imaginary phase of his relationship with Daisy in the past. After separated for 5 years, many things had changed, even Daisy had already married to another man. Meanwhile, Gatsby still believed in their idealized romantic relationship in 1917. For Gatsby, Daisy is not just a past love; she symbolizes his victory over the "old money" social class he has always longed to join. From their first meeting, Gatsby projects his ideal vision of life onto her: an elegant, charming woman from the elite world who holds the key to his social legitimacy. He believes that by winning Daisy back, he will not only regain her love but also prove that he deserves a place in the elite circles that have always looked down on him.

"I've never seen such beautiful shirt before!" (Luhmann, 2013, 01:03:24-01:03:29).

Gatsby's obsession in the scene where he shows off his mansion to Daisy. As he throws a pile of expensive shirts in front of her, Daisy begins to cry. Her tears are not for Gatsby, but for the materialism he represents. Gatsby, still lived on the memory of the young Daisy with her "voice full of money," fails to see that his desire is aimed at an illusion. The Daisy he idolizes is a romanticized version of the past, not the real, vulnerable woman trapped in the practical realities of the "old money" world. This mirrors how many people today chase after beauty in relationships, believing that an attractive partner will bring them success and happiness. Just as Gatsby overlooks the true Daisy, they often miss the deeper qualities that make a relationship meaningful.

"You see...She has to tell tom that she never loved him.... Then, we can go back to Louisville to her parents' house. Her parents are lovely people, Old Sport. We'll be...Married there." (Luhmann, 2013, 01:20:01-01:20:17)

Gatsby expresses his deep desire for Daisy to tell Tom that she never loved him, believing this declaration is the key to repeat their past and building a future together. His insistence reveals his desperation for validation, as he longs to prove that their love is pure and achievable. However, all of his planned did not goes as it was planned before. The climax of the conflict occurs in the confrontation scene at the Plaza Hotel, where Gatsby forces Daisy to admit that she never loved Tom. However, Daisy responds, *"There, Jay...You want too much. I love you now, Isn't that enough? I can't help what's past. I did love him once, but I loved you too."* (Luhmann, 2013, 01:39:17-01:39:28). This confession shatters Gatsby's fantasy that their love is pure and exclusive. For Daisy, love as something that can be negotiate, while for Gatsby, love is

the key to achieving the perfection of his dream.

"What was in the letter? The reason why after the war. I hadn't been able to return. I asked her to wait until I made something of myself, but she was...See, I felt married to her. That was all." (Luhmann, 2013, 01:57:40-01:58:02)

On this scene, Gatsby telling everything to Nick while they waited for the sun to rise up and waiting for Daisy's call. Nick asking about the letter to Gatsby, that he sent the day when Daisy married to Tom. He asked her to wait for him until he could make something of himself, believing he needed to be successful to win her love. When he says, "*I felt married to her*," it shows how deeply he feels connected to Daisy. He sees their relationship as a strong bond, even if they weren't officially married. Nick points out that, everything Gatsby has done such as, the grand mansion, the large parties. It was all for Daisy. Gatsby's luxurious lifestyle is not just for show; it's his way of trying to win her back. This moment highlights the main themes of the story: the pursuit of the American Dream, the idealization of love, and the lengths people will go to for their desires. It also shows the tragedy of Gatsby's quest, as his dreams are based on an illusion that ultimately leads to disappointment.

CONCLUSION

Jay Gatsby's character in *The Great Gatsby* represents the incomplete mirroring of the American Dream, which can be understood through Lacan's three orders concept and *objet petit a* as the unattainable desire that disrupts his dream. In the real order, reveals Gatsby's original self who starts as James Gatz, a poor farmer's son, and his desire for wealth and status comes from the feelings of lack. In the Imaginary order, he creates the idealized images of himself, thinking that if he becomes Jay Gatsby, he can win back Daisy Buchanan's love that will makes his dream perfect. However, this ideal is just an illusion that hides his true feelings of emptiness and loneliness. The Symbolic aspect shows how societal expectations shape his desires, leading him to believe that success equals happiness, represented by the green light at Daisy's dock.

Gatsby starts the journey of the American Dream by pursuing wealth and success, inspired by his mentor, Dan Cody. However, his goal twist into trying to win Daisy's love, believing she represents the perfect life he wants. Even though he becomes rich, his grand mansion and large parties feel empty without her. Money can't cure his loneliness. It only keeps him stuck in the past, chasing a dream that keeps slipping away. In the end, Gatsby's tragedy isn't just about not getting rich. It's about giving up real relationships for a dream that was never real. His story serves as a warning for those who getting obsessed with illusions, whether it's love or status, can leave you feeling alone when those illusions disappear.

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