The Great Gatsby: Realism Essay, Research Paper

The Great Gatsby: Realism

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby has been labelled a masterpiece, and

perhaps even one of the greatest novels of all time. In order to be revered as a

classic, a novel must have one or more qualities that place it above the rest.

One of The Great Gatsby’s best qualities is Fitzgerald’s incredible use of

realism. This realism is evident in the development of plot, setting, and

characters throughout the novel.

The Great Gatsby is well known for its deeply entangled plots and sub-plots. At

first Fitzgerald used realism to develop these plots by choosing plots that

would be beleivable to readers. For example, the main plot of “The American

Dream” (Jay Gatsby’s dream of becoming rich and succesfull in order to impress

Daisy) is easily believable and is still a quite common dream today. Smaller

plots, such as Tom Buchanans affair with Myrtle, are also very realistic and are

a common occurrence in every day life. From here Fitzerald deepened the story by

using realism to entangle these plots. Fitzgerald then grew apon these plots by

making them all have realistic outcomes (such as Gatsby’s demise), rather than

your typical story book endings. It is mostly thanks to Fitzgerald’s descriptive,

poetic style of writing that allows him to realistically portray the many plots

of The Great Gatsby. Fitzgerald’s realistic construction and development of plot

is extremely dependant apon the setting of the novel in which it take place.

F. Scott Fitzgerald uses realism to clearly depict the setting of the Great

Gatsby. This incredible use of realism could be mostly due to the fact that

Fitzgerald lived during the time of the novel, and by using great detail, he was

able to reproduce his interpretation of the 1920’s. At this time the Great War

(WW1) had just ended and the United States was becoming as dominant world power.

The novel takes place during the summer in New York as Nick Carraway has just

moved to persue a career in the bond business. This is a very realistic setting

because just after World War 1 the eastern United States were flourishing with

people and business. As depicted in The Great Gatsby, during the 1920’s jazz

music was all the rage. Large, fancy homes and big parties (such as Gatsby’s)

were also quite popular. Fitzgerald realistically demonstrates the inexistence

of the middle class at that time. For example the contrast between Tom Buchanan

and Mr. Wilson shows vast difference between the upper and lower classes. The

exact geographical location of the novel does not exist, but Fitzgerald does a

great job in using realism to convince the reader of the setting. No matter how

significant realism is to the setting of The Great Gatsby, perhaps the most

important use of realism comes through Fitzgerald’s development of characters

throughout the novel.

In the Great Gatsby, as in any novel, the characters are the basis of the novel

from which the plots revolve around. Fitzgerald uses realism to ensure that all

the characters in the novel are belivable in both their history and interactions

with each other. An prime example of this would be Daisy. Her history of having

a succesful family, and being the center of attention deeply influences her

character into being self-centered and dependant on wealth, making her character

belivable to readers. From here Fitzgerald was able to manipulate the characters

This convinces the the reader of genuinity of each individual and therefore

makes the whole story seem more realistic.

Throughout the novel plot was deepened through the entangling of many realistic

sub-plots, setting was clearly illustrated using plenty of detail, and the

characters were develloped to be as beleivable and genuine as possible. In the

end it is the realistic recognition of life’s imperfections that give The Great

Gatsby its continuing appeal.