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Daisy Buchanan: breaking gender stereotypes
Griselda Tassa HOSIANA

ABSTRACT Negative portrayal of women characters in literary works cannot be separated from the patriarchal influence that has occurred since the society first begun. In a patriarchal society, a woman has to fulfill traditional gender roles to be categorized as an ideal woman. In contrast, without the unusual characteristics, she will be negatively judged. In this paper, I examine Daisy Buchanan character from the movie entitled The Great Gatsby. The movie was adapted from a novel with the same title written by Scott Fitzgerald in 1925. The story was about a young wealthy man named Jay Gatsby who pursues his true love, Daisy Buchanan. She is a challenging character to identify because her character is full of layers. There are many previous negative judgments against her character, yet those judgments mostly come from the male perspectives which are based on the false stereotypes of gender roles. Therefore, this work is aimed to analyze the false stereotype of female characters through the character of Daisy Buchanan. Her character is intriguing and consists of different layers. Even though many previous studies have portrayed Daisy Buchanan as a devilish figure, she is actually a victim of the patriarchal society.

KEYWORDS: The Great Gatsby, gender, Scott Fitzgerald, patriarchy, Daisy Buchanan

Introduction

Since the beginning of literary works, woman has often been portrayed as a friend of evil. Take a look at the story of Eve and Adam or Pandora and Epimetheus. The female characters became the tools of evil, the seductive ones who challenged and trapped the male characters. Later, we may infer that the female characters, Eve and Pandora, are portrayed as the guilty parties. Similarly, the leading female character in The Great Gatsby by Fitzgerald is also depicted as a devilish figure. She is blamed as the cause of the tragic death of a male character. To some observers, she is immoral, the converse model of an ideal woman. However, those judgments appeared as the effects of this patriarchal society, where women are usually placed in minor position. It is undeniable that throughout male-dominated literary history, women have been depicted as the embodiment of either virtue or evil. This interpretation cannot be separated from the traditional, somewhat misleading stereotypes of women’s figures in the society.

To the traditional view of women’s role, a good woman should play her role as a housewife who nurtures the family. The role is emphasized by the ideology of “natural
destiny”. According to this ideology, the role of women in the society is related to their biological state. In her article “Feminism”, Glasgow highlighted women’s unimportant roles in the past and the effect of that traditional view on women. Previously, it was widely believed that a woman exists not as an active agent of life but merely as a passive guardian of the life force. Their natural purposes were to bear and raise children, “sit and watch”, and let men take care of their businesses. Moreover, Glasgow stated that the dangerous effect after the long misconception of women’s roles is that women have already been accustomed to the traditional views, thus they never question whether those views are right or wrong.” (Glasgow cited in Wrenn, 2010). Glasgow’s statement is also supported by other philosophers like Cabell, Hegel, and Freud. All of them agree that, in the past, women were considered the second class citizens. It is a challenge for women as they are expected to shape their bodies and behaviors as the ideal woman models in the male-dominated culture.

In the process of this research, I observe earlier works on the same topic with different approaches and methods. In each of their articles, Štrba (2008) and Wrenn (2010) have a similar opinion that there is a rather confusing and hidden theme of women’s identity in The Great Gatsby novel. In his study, entitled Emancipated Women, Štrba concluded that though Fitzgerald, as the writer of The Great Gatsby, was conscious about the changing of women’s role in the 1920s; he was still influenced by the traditional women’s role. Fitzgerald’s often created his female characters as merely the supporting figures in the stories. These women are perceived as beautiful and loveable, yet they were all selfish, destructive, and even ruthless. Thus, all of them were dependent on the help from the male characters.

Similarly, Wrenn (2010) in his journal entitled Women in Modernism, agreed that some male writers in the 1920s, including Fitzgerald, were influenced by the women’s movement, yet they were still confused with women’s position and the stereotypes that had occurred for a long time. Those studies showed how stereotypes influenced the writing and the character of Daisy, whom my research mainly focused on.

Another article to review is “Her Story” and Daisy Buchanan by Person (1978). The study criticized many previous researches that had seen Daisy as a negative character. In contrast, according to Person, Daisy’s characteristics are only seen though the male characters’ perspectives – Nick, Gatsby, and Tom. Daisy’s character was only described from the perspective of Nick. Daisy herself remained “silent” through the story. Furthermore, Person concluded that Daisy was a victim of the male tendency. At the one side, she was pleasing the male characters with her beauty and charm, yet on the other side her action was categorized as rude and inappropriate. In other words, she was dehumanizing the image of a woman.
Person’s article can help my research to support my argument about Daisy’s position as the patriarchal product, yet Person’s article has lack of evidence.

In contrast, Houck in *Daisy Buchanan Victim or Victimizer* (2008) opposed Person’s idea about Daisy’s characters. He concluded that Daisy was a materialistic woman whose main interest was money and wealth, so she would do anything to achieve her goal. Daisy was also a manipulative and selfish woman who would get rid of any obstacles in order to achieve her needs. The different arguments between Person and Houck were interesting because they showed how complex Daisy’s characters were. Moreover, it would help me to see the other side of Daisy’s character. Also, in contrast to Houck’s opinion about Daisy as a manipulator, I personally categorize her as a clever woman.

In her article *From Whore to Heroine*, Chatraporn (2008), concluded that *The Great Gatsby* subverted the theory of woman’s nature as binary, suggesting that women must not be judged in terms of their conformity to a patriarchal code of sexual behavior but rather in terms of more worthy signifiers such as ability, strength or compassion. This article will support my research because it raises the same issue of women in the patriarchal society.

During the analysis of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Sun Also Rises*, Phillips (2010) talked about the emerging of the New Woman in the 1920s. He concluded that although a change in clothing and appearance was the major characteristic of a New Woman, there are more specific characteristics to it than those. One of the characteristics that were discussed by Phillip was the independence of women, whether it was economical or sexual. In his work, he analyzed both of the writers of *The Great Gatsby* and *the Sun Also Rise*. Phillip concluded that both authors created characters that have traits that are associated with the New Woman, but it was only that they are sexually independence, yet they lack self-confidence to become economically independent as well.

Another article that talks about women subordination is *Patriarchy and Women’s Subordination* by Sultana (2011). In his article it is clear that women are under male domination. In Sultana’s opinion the subordination, violation, and exploitation of women are caused by the patriarchal ideology which assigns ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine. Therefore, the two groups have their different roles, rights and responsibilities that have to be obeyed.

Tavandhasti in her article titled *A Feminist Reading of the Great Gatsby* (2008) talked about *The Great Gatsby*’s writer’s discomfort with the emergence of the New Woman after the World War I era. According to her, the novel brings negative characterizations and punitive treatment of the modern women it portrays as an effect of the patriarchal ideology that is still operating in American culture today. Nonetheless, women are still often looked at
doubtfully for other violations of patriarchal gender roles.

This work is aimed at analyzing the false stereotype of women characters through the character of Daisy Buchanan. Her character is intriguing and consists of different layers. Even though many previous studies have portrayed Daisy Buchanan as a devilish figure, she is actually a victim of the patriarchal society. The corpus of this research is *The Great Gatsby* movie which is directed by Baz Luhrmann in 2013. The movie is the second adaptation of the most famous novel with the same title, written by F. Scott Fitzgerald in 1925. First, I will explain about gender images and the false stereotypes in the mass media. Second, I will narrow down the issue of gender stereotypes to the Great Gatsby movie. Third, my discussion is on Daisy character as the product of the patriarchal society. Last, I will discuss Daisy as the victim of the American Dream.

**Summary**

The film starts with a shot of a flashing green light while the narrator said how his father told him to always see the good in others. Nick Carraway was a young ambitious man who had just moved to New York City and lived in the West Egg, an area where the newly rich lived. He lived next to a mansion owned by a young wealthy businessman named Gatsby. The friendship between Gatsby and Nick began after Nick was invited to one of Gatsby’s extravagant parties. After the party, Gatsby asked Nick’s help to arrange a meeting between him and Nick’s cousin, Daisy Buchanan. At first, Nick had no idea why Gatsby was interested with his married cousin until Jordan Baker, Daisy’s best friend, told Nick that Gatsby was Daisy’s old lover. The hesitant Nick then arranged the meeting of the old lovers at his house. Later on, after the sweet reunion at Nick’s house, Gatsby and Daisy started their relationship again. The two lovers were very happy about their reunion. Besides, Daisy had just found out that her husband, Tom Buchanan, an heir to the wealthiest American at that era, had an affair with a social climber named Myrtle Wilson.

The twist of the story took place when Gatsby forced Daisy to tell Tom about their affair. Not only that, Gatsby also forced Daisy to abandon her marriage with Tom. At first, Daisy hesitated to do it, but finally she agreed to tell Tom about her affair with Gatsby. The encounter of Daisy, Tom, and Gatsby was arranged at the Buchanan’s mansion. Daisy was unsure and nervous to tell his violent husband, but Gatsby was there. Unfortunately, Tom recognized that there was something between his wife and Gatsby. Subsequently, he arranged something to reveal the true Gatsby in front of Daisy. The setting moved to the hotel in New York City, where Tom started to mock Gatsby’s background until Gatsby lost his control.
Seeing that, Daisy changed her mind and left the hotel. In order to apologize for his action, Gatsby followed her. On their way back to the Buchanan’s, Daisy accidentally hit Myrtle Wilson, Tom’s mistress. Myrtle died while Daisy escaped home. The conflict led to the climax of the story, which was Gatsby’s death. Gatsby was dead, but his lover, Daisy moved with her husband and did not attend the funeral.

**Gender images and the false stereotypes in the mass media**

Gender is commonly understood as the social distinction between men and women. Many people acquire gender as similar to sex. However, the two are basically different. According to Bradley (2007), gender represents and reproduces certain behaviors, expectations and roles of males and females based on cultural meanings in a specific society. On the other hand, sex is a biological state that differentiates male and female. Male bodies are mostly strongly built while female bodies’ are the opposite. According to Freud, women’s biological condition establishes their psychological condition, hence their abilities and roles (Freud 1977 cited in Sultana, 2011). Thus, the inferior women’s physical condition leads to the inferior women’s position in the society. The distinction between women’s and men’s role in the society cannot be separated from the patriarchal influence that occur since the society first begun.

Patriarchal system has been a dominant system in society. The word ‘patriarchy’ originated from the word “patriarch” which means the rule of the father, and originally it was used to describe a specific type of ‘male-dominated family’ (Sultana, 2011). In general, patriarchy refers to male domination. It is characterized as masculinity, domination, power, and hierarchy. Because of those characteristics, women, whose biological characteristics are the opposite of men, are put under the men’s control. The power relation between men and women influences the expectations of how men and women should and should not behave, which is also known as traditional gender expectations or roles.

The popularity of the traditional gender roles cannot be separated from the influence of patriarchal system. All agents of socialization process such as family, religion, the legal system, economic and political systems, educational institutions, and the media are the pillars of the patriarchal system and structure. Since the newspaper era until the era of Internet, mass media has educated and influenced culture in the society. As one of the most popular mass media, film has contributed to the spread of culture, values or norms, through text, sound, and motion picture. As said by Donnerstein and Smith (cited in Fischer, 2010), there is evidence that mass media has an influence on a wide range of behaviors and attitudes, including gender.
The traditional gender expectation sets women in passive roles and inferior statuses. This kind of argument is supported by Lippa’s argument that men are presented with variations of jobs, leaders or heroes, yet women are often identified with household chores and family life (Lippa, 2005). Mostly, Hollywood movies present heroes more than heroines. Children may know various popular hero names followed by the word “-man”, for example, Batman, Superman, or Ironman, but only small hero names followed by “-woman”, for instance, Wonder Woman and Catwoman. Unfortunately, the characters of those heroines are not as popular as the male heroes. Moreover, the existence of a female character in popular media is mostly as a supporting character. They are often identified as helpless and dependent victims. Ironically, women with male characteristics tend to be harshly judged and hated by their surroundings. For example, the female bosses in The Proposal and The Devil Wears Prada movies. Women with leadership qualities are repeatedly portrayed as evil, heartless, or lonely.

**Gender traditional roles in The Great Gatsby**

Gender traditional roles expect men or women to behave according the traditional set of qualities and characteristics, ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’. The masculine characteristics include aggressiveness, strength, bravery, fearlessness, dominance, competitiveness, etc. On the other hand, ‘feminine’ characteristics are caring, nurturing, loving, obedient, etc. In The Great Gatsby movie, such traditional, stereotypical representations occur in both male and female characters. The male characters, like Gatsby and Tom, are the masculine ideals. Both of them are physically strong-built and protective. Gatsby used to be a soldier in the U.S. military while Tom was an athlete in Yale University. Furthermore, they are also very rich and successful businessman. They become the leader of their companies and have good qualities as a leader. Furthermore, they are a protector of the female characters.

Interestingly, the female characters in The Great Gatsby movie are different from the traditional ‘feminine’ qualities. Some of them display traits that are often associated with ‘masculinity’. Jordan Baker, for instance, is known as a famous golf player, a profession which was not common for women in that era. She is independent, ambitious, and hard-working. The other female characters are more flawed, somewhat hinting the idea that women are ‘evil’. Myrtle Wilson was is a social climber who would do anything to support her extravagant lifestyle. She cheated with Tom because she was dissatisfied with the life her husband provided. The leading female character, Daisy Buchanan, was portrayed in line with the ‘feminine’ ideals. Instead of working, she spends most of her time creating opportunity to
secure a wealthy husband from a respectable social standing. To some previous researches, Daisy Buchanan was shallow, irresponsible, selfish, and, like Myrtle, very materialistic.

Daisy as a product of patriarchal society

Daisy Fay (Buchanan) in *The Great Gatsby* movie was a challenging character to identify because she was a combination of the good and bad woman in the patriarchal society. In the patriarchal society, a woman has to fulfill traditional gender roles. Nevertheless, though Daisy was somehow an ideal type of a good woman, she had some aspects that made her the enemy of the patriarchal society. First, Daisy was corrupted by money. Married to a wealthy man, Daisy was portrayed as a stereotypical housewife with good looks and upper-class lifestyle. Her reason to get married is only for money and the luxury of life. Through the voice of Nick, Fitzgerald offered a suggestion about the materialistic Daisy, "She's got an indiscreet voice. It's full of-" (hesitated) "Her voice is full of money." Moreover, at the very final scene of the movie, Nick categorized Daisy as a shallow woman. “*She did not know the meaning of a true relationship in the sense that she thought the only way to attract a man or a man of wealth is to have good looks and a shallow personality, just like she had perfectly.*” Nick’s opinion was based on his personal point of view as Gatsby’s only best friend, and also his disappointment towards Daisy.

As the story continued, more of Daisy’s personalities were revealed, and gradually she became less ideal. After the quarrel at a hotel in New York City, Daisy drove Gatsby’s car and accidentally hit Myrtle Wilson. The accident killed Myrtle, but Daisy fled from her responsibility and returned home. From the scene, Daisy could be considered as an irresponsible and a selfish character. She let Gatsby to take the responsibility of her recklessness and indirectly caused Gatsby’s death. Instead of attending Gatsby’s funeral, she moved with her husband and daughter to another city. As a result, in some studies, Daisy’s character had been harshly judged. To Robert Ornstein, she is "criminally amoral," while Alfred Kazin judges her as "vulgar and inhuman." Finally, Leslie Fiedler sees Daisy as a "Dark Destroyer," a purveyor of "corruption and death," and the "first notable anti-virgin of our fiction, the prototype of the blasphemous portraits of the Fair Goddess as bitch in which our twentieth-century fiction abound" (Person, 1978). Those critics, I assume, came because Daisy’s character was seen from Nick’s perspective as the narrator.

Despite many negative judgments towards her, Daisy actually has some positive characteristics that could be categorized her as a good product of patriarchal society. Fitzgerald, as the writer of the story, created Daisy’s character as an innocent, pure, helpless
and dependent which represent the ‘feminine’ qualities. All of these characteristics could be Daisy’s positive characteristics that appeared since the first visit of Nick Carraway, the narrator of the story. Not only in Nick’s narration, but also in the setting of the film, Daisy was glorified as an ideal woman by the patriarchal society standards. She was dubbed as “Daisy Fay Buchanan, the golden girl”. The term “golden girl” that Nick’s chose to describe Daisy represent how women are viewed in the patriarchal society. A woman is like a “precious thing”.

The name “Daisy” is taken from the name of the flower. The flower represents purity, loyal love, and innocence. It can also be a symbol of new beginnings. The daisy is a symbol of fertility and it was revered by the Church as the Virgin Mary’s flower. Therefore, it is often used to decorate the pictures of Virgin Mary. In the movie, Daisy’s innocence appeared in her opinion of men’s affection towards her. When she was a young girl, she was the most desirable girl, the golden girl of Louisville. Many wealthy young men fell for her. She thinks every man adored her, even Nick. In her first visit to Nick’s house, she was flattered by the flowers in the living room and she thinks that Nick was in love with her. “He must be in love with me. Are you in love with me?” This assumption shows her lack of knowledge of real relationship.

Daisy’s innocence and purity were also associated with the color of white. The setting in which Nick visited her for the first time supported the character of Daisy. Nick visited Daisy at her house and found her and Jordan Baker sitting on an enormous couch. The white curtains were all rippling and fluttering as if it had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. From this moment, Daisy became like an angel on earth.

Furthermore, Daisy was an ideal patriarchal woman because she was helpless and dependent on everyone around her. Contrary to feminist theory, that opposes the dependency of women, in the patriarchal society women have to be dependent especially to men. Daisy could not do anything on her own. As a housewife and a mother, she needed assistants to do all of her duty. At the dinner scene at the arrival of Nick in her house, the assistants served everything for her. Also, there was only one scene of her helping Pammy, her daughter. Daisy was also very dependent on her husband, Tom. After the hit-and-run scene, Daisy returned to her house and hid. She asked Tom to help and protect her from the problem. It is proven that Daisy cannot solve her problem herself.

If patriarchal society only defines her good qualities as innocence, pure, and dependent, Daisy, as a modern female figure, was really smart. Daisy was not blinded by her love to Gatsby. It was true that Daisy fell in love with Gatsby when she had already been
married with Tom for five years. From her dialog, “What Gatsby?” on the dinner scene at her
dining room, Daisy’s facial expression showed that she recognized the name. Next, was in the
afternoon tea scene at Nick’s house. She officially reunited again with Gatsby and really
enjoyed her time with him. It was very different from Daisy’s scene with Tom, in which
Daisy’s facial expression was sad and depressed. Daisy was also a bit sentimental after
Gatsby showed her his pile of shirts. When Daisy bowed her head and sobbed into the shirts,
she displayed her regret in marrying her husband. At the scene she also did not want to go
home. She wanted to stay at Gatsby’s place.

Although Daisy seemed to enjoy her reunion with Gatsby, love was not enough for
her. Of course she loved the attention and affection that Gatsby gave to her, but what she
really needed were stability and security. Thus, Daisy chose to return to her husband, Tom.
Daisy knew that she could not rely on Gatsby because Gatsby was too mysterious for her.
Another reason is Gatsby’s aggressive character. Probably this characteristic of Gatsby was
unobvious at first, but in some other scenes, we could see that Gatsby was similar with Tom:
aggressive and dominant. One scene which shows Gatsby’s brutality is when he talked to
Meyer Wolfsheim about their business. He shouted at the phone when he was talking about
their business. Another was in the quarrel scene at the hotel. Gatsby was yelling at Tom,
choking him, and throwing away the things on the table, which shocked Nick, Jordan, and
Daisy.

By choosing to be with her husband, she is smart enough to decide what is important
in her life: her family and daughter, Pammy. Daisy probably finally realized that Gatsby’s
love is not as the same as the love they had when they were teenagers. It was true that Gatsby
built up his wealth only for his love to Daisy, but after five years, Gatsby’s personalities had
changed. He was not only a man who loved Daisy but also a man who loved money. Gatsby
was born as a poor boy. His obsession was to live as a wealthy man. In order to achieve his
goal, Gatsby left his parents’ house. He wanted everything to be perfect. One example of this
is in the scene of his first reunion with Daisy. He redecorated Nick’s garden and living room
to impress Daisy. He did not like to be underestimated by others like when he was being
underestimated by Tom in the New York Plaza Hotel. He wanted to be worshipped as a
successful man.

Another positive quality of Daisy was her mental toughness. She knew about her
husband’s affair for so long. This is shown in the changing of her facial expression at the
dinner table. During the dinner time scene, Daisy was happy and excited because she met her
cousin, Nick. Nevertheless, her facial expression was changing into unhappiness when the
telephone was ringing.

Daisy realized that Tom was having affair with another woman, and Jordan, her best friend also knew that.

Nick : Well, I don’t
Jordan : Tom’s got some woman in New York?
Nick : Got some woman?
Jordan : She might have the decency not to telephone at dinnertime. Don’t you think?

From the conversation of Jordan and Nick it was clear that Tom’s affair was not a secret anymore. Daisy also personally told Nick about Tom’s affair when they were talking at her terrace.

Daisy: “Listen, Nick, when my daughter was born Tom was God knows where with God knows whom.”

A more positive quality of Daisy is she could play the role of a traditional woman in order to survive in the man’s world. Marsden (cited in Wrenn 2010) suggests that some women see themselves as inferior and have accepted this inferiority to seek comfort and protection. Daisy was one of these women. She deliberately placed herself under male control. The most interesting of Daisy’s character is when she told Nick about her opinion of how women should be viewed.

Daisy: “All right… I’m glad it’s a girl. I hope she’ll be a fool, that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool…”

To some feminist’s opinion, Daisy’s statement did not support the women good qualities, indeed. It instead reflected submissiveness. However, the story would be much harder if Daisy did not take the role. Daisy was not meant to represent the best of women, but she represents what happens when women feel they have no other means of survival than to become a beautiful little fool. In order to survive in a man’s world, a woman either has to ignore gender roles entirely or will be alienated. It is hard to break the conservative society.

To some feminists, probably the best way to survive in the man’s world for women who fight for gender equality is by fighting to death. In fact, many women cannot have such opportunities, yet they still can play ‘safe’. These women would let the world perceive them as weak, submissive, or an underdog, but who knows, these women can also control the ‘world’. The most lethal instrument was the weakness itself.
Daisy was also a bit misunderstood. Daisy’s life actually is more miserable than Gatsby’s death. There are some evidences that show Daisy’s unhappiness after marrying Tom. As a woman, she wanted to marry a man whom she loved, yet she needed a security and stability. Daisy’s decision to marry Tom Buchanan was not a betrayal; it was a demand from her society. In that era, social status was one of the most important values. Once you have it, you must keep and inherit it to the next generations. For a woman, the demand is to marry in an early age with a man with the same social status. Daisy did not have any choice because Gatsby did not give her any news and clarity about their relationship. Daisy did not even have any idea of whether Gatsby survived or was killed in the war. However, she was not happy in her marriage life, and neither did she forget about her love to Gatsby. At one point, she even wanted to cancel her marriage with Tom. One day before her wedding day, Daisy received a letter from Gatsby. The letter told the reason why Gatsby did not return after the war. The letter gave Daisy a slight hope of her lover, so she wanted to cancel the wedding. Unfortunately, her parents insisted her to marry Tom Buchanan, and on the next day she became Tom’s wife. The facial expression of Daisy in her wedding scene was sad, unlike the usual wedding scene in which the bride mostly shows a happy face. Moreover, there are many evidences in the movie that show Daisy’s dissatisfaction of life, including in her conversation with Nick.

“I’m paralyzed with happiness.”
“Your life is adorable.”
“It’s just, well, you see, I think everything’s terrible anyhow. I’ve had a very bad time, Nicky. I’m pretty cynical about everything.”
“All the bright, precious things fade so fast, and they don’t come back.”

Daisy as a victim of the American Dream

The Great Gatsby was published in 1925 when the American Dream issue was at its height in the United States. The American Dream itself was an idea that could motivate Americans to achieve successful lives with hard work and determination. The male characters in The Great Gatsby movie managed to reach the dream. However, the same dream victimized the protagonist female character. Both Tom and Gatsby were trying to achieve the glorious life. Jay Gatsby, the protagonist character, can be classified as the image of the struggling American in that era. He was born as a poor boy, yet he determined to be a wealthy man, and he did. On the other side, Tom Buchanan, one of the wealthiest men in the United State at
that time, was trying to bring back his family’s past glory. He was not a sporting star like he used to be. After marrying to Daisy and became an heir to one of America’s wealthiest family, he was too busy keeping his inherited wealth and business. He did not get the trophies or medallions like he used to be when he was a champion in the university. Therefore, Daisy, as “the golden girl” became his “precious trophy”. Indeed, Gatsby also viewed Daisy as a complement to his successful life.

Gatsby loved Daisy because he was a man who wanted to have and to be the best. He believed that he was the son of god, and he would do anything to achieve the American Dream. Gatsby, who grew up as a poor boy, worked as a bootlegger. During that era, when liquor was banned, he smuggled liquor and sold it through the black market. From this business, he successfully earned a fortune and became wealthy. He wanted to collect the most interesting people to fraternize at his parties. He wanted his orchestra to play the latest and most popular music. He liked to collect rare things, such as imported silk shirts and ruby rings. Therefore, for the past five years, Daisy has been his obsession. In Gatsby’s mind, Daisy was still the “golden girl”. To have Daisy can complete his success in life. Moreover, Gatsby was a man who believed in the past. He wanted to repeat the past. For example, when he told Nick about his future with Daisy, instead of running away with Daisy, Gatsby wanted to get married in Daisy parents’ house in Louisville.

“Daisy, in fact, is more a victim than victimizer: she is victim first of Tom Buchanan's "cruel" power, but then of Gatsby's increasingly depersonalized vision of her. She becomes the unwitting "grail" (p. 149) in Gatsby's adolescent quest to remain ever-faithful to his seventeen-year-old conception of self (p. 99), and even Nick admits that Daisy "tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything" (p.97) Person, Jr. (1978)

Money and social status were the most important matters at that time. People seemed to assume that money leads to happiness; therefore they were willing to discount their morality in order to achieve their dreams. To portray a woman as a trophy may be the worst thing that men can do.

**Conclusion**

Throughout time, mass media have separated men and women into gender stereotypes. People are expected to behave according to the ideals passed from one generation to another. These ideals are often untrue, but people are very used to them that they no longer question the truth behind the ideals. People easily scowl, judge, and label those who fail to perform according to those ideals as “abnormal”. In *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald twisted these
stereotypes using his unique, intriguing female character, Daisy Buchanan. She is an embodiment of the “ideal” woman of her time – beautiful, delicate, dependant, and possessing a very traditional view – yet she can be very ambitious, manipulative, and very determined to get what she wants to the point that she does not mind ruining anything or anyway that stands in her way. She seems like a villain, yet she is actually a victim of the patriarchal society. Daisy Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* shows that it is impossible to break people into stereotypes. After all, humans are a complex being with many different layers.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the complex character of Daisy Buchanan. There are many previous researches which judge her as an immoral character, yet her characteristic was only seen from the patriarchal perspective. In this paper I have given a brief explanation about the false gender stereotype in this patriarchal society and described Daisy’s characteristics. Based on many previous researches, I conclude that society plays major roles in deciding what is good and bad for people. I have explained how the traditional role affects the writer of *The Great Gatsby* while he was constructing the female characters. I also have examined the complex character of Daisy. At first, she was probably a good portrayal of traditional woman, yet she twisted the story of Gatsby’s life. Indeed, it opposed the stereotypes of women in the patriarchal society, where women should not take control but obey the rules.

The corpus of my paper is the second adaptation movie of *The Great Gatsby* novel by Scott Fitzgerald by the same title. The movie was released in February 2013, near the Valentine Day. It was supposed to be a romantic movie, but the ending was not very satisfying to some viewers. Therefore, the movie is interesting to discuss because there are several controversies. My paper mainly focuses on the gender false stereotype related to the patriarchal influence in the story. Also, I emphasize Daisy Buchanan’s characters, how she is actually breaking the gender stereotypes. Human being cannot be categorized as strict as the traditional roles had suggested because we have layers.

My paper only focuses on the character of Daisy Buchanan as the leading female character, yet there are actually two other women characters that may have also the same issue, Jordan and Myrtle. Both of them were also considered as non-ideal figures of patriarchal women. Next, the issue that can appear in *The Great Gatsby* movie is about the American Dream. In this paper, I only partially discussed the American Dream without digging deeper into it. It is best if the following works raise and dig deeper into this issue.
References


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