

The choices that we make and the things that we do every day of our lives create experiences and memories for us to share in the future with friends and family. While we may create good and bad memories, we use them to learn from our mistakes, figure out which ones are the good and the bad, and try to make better decisions in our future. A quote from Nick Carraway describes one of the the main themes of the story which is memory and transcending as well as recreating the past: “So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.”. This quote properly describes the theme because it tells the reader that as you are continuing your journey on the boat (life), while going against the currents (events) you are being pushed forcefully back into the past. Also this is a known common fault of human beings.

Any reader can infer that Fitzgerald realized that this fault had related to his life, which may explain why this plays such a big role in *The Great Gatsby*. The past can be left alone without an author having to write about it because, plenty of authors have written amazing novels without revisiting the former events in a characters life. “Sure, there are writers who manage to tell knockout stories with virtually no backstory. Ernest Hemingway, Flannery O'Connor, and J. D. Salinger all wrote deeply involving stories without offering backstage access to their characters' histories.” Staying fixated on the past, has been said by Poets & Writers Magazine it gives the characters in the book a backstory and a better start of the book also, but that does not mean it must be done.

As was previously stated its unnecessary for the past to be bothered with for a story, because even if their is no previous history for a character their present or future in a novel can make up for the empty feeling from not digging into their past. Also the idea that the author does not go into detail about the characters past adventures will give it just enough mystery to leave

readers curious about their past and keep them reading and interested as well as it will either make a great story, a great story for what it truly is or break it for what it was never meant to be.

According to *Poets & Writers Magazine* “the past shapes the present” because there is “beauty” in a backstory. “Stories are built on the premise that the past shapes the present.” That quote is from the previous magazine too. A backstory is basically a flashback that provides old information for a character of a story and it is said to give a better insight of what the character is like as well as giving the readers of the novel a glimpse of the character's personality before the story actually begins itself. It also tells you what is hidden in the shadows that the character shows rather than what is shown to the reader by the author.

In the novel *The Great Gatsby* the main character Jay Gatsby is stuck hopelessly in the past with his wild attempt to gain back the love of his life Daisy Buchanan from five years ago. Holding on to those long five years full of faith and hope, help him gain the ability to see and develop a relationship with Daisy again until his tragic death. So in some cases it is acceptable for one to hold on to the good times from the past and cherish them.

After five years of not seeing or even speaking to someone you once loved you will eventually have to face reality and fall out of love with them. If there is no type of communication at all, how is a relationship expected to survive in harsh times like such if it was meant to be left in the past? That was Gatsby's issue for some strange reason he could not let go of Daisy or the history they had together. For example, in *The Great Gatsby* once Nick caught on to what Gatsby was attempting to do to get Daisy Buchanan back in his life, he told Gatsby

that he could not repeat the past and the reply Nick received was "Can't repeat the past? Why, of course you can!". Obviously the thought of not being able to recreate the past never occurred to Jay because his mind was too focused on money and materialistic things that he thought would win the heart of Daisy Buchanan again.

This well known human flaw got him into deep trouble with Tom Buchanan that resulted in his death caused by another character in the story, Wilson. Wilson is a man who owns a gas station half way between West Egg and New York. His wife; Myrtle, is the mistress of Tom Buchanan whom Daisy had suspicions of, but never really was 100 percent sure of her existence. It probably crossed Daisy's mind that Tom should leave her in the past along with the fling they had going on. If this inference is true Daisy can relate to the theme (memory and recreating the past) of the story just as much as any of the readers. From that first sentence it is pretty clear to come to the realization that thinking you are able to virtually touch the great parts of your past can blind you from reality and cause you to do very bizarre things for another chance at love.

From my own experience I remember I have held on to a huge amount of ignorant grudges for as long as a year or probably even longer. Gathering this information, readers now know that not being able to move on from the past is a huge fault of Jay Gatsby's and also F. Scott Fitzgerald, because the character Daisy Buchanan was supposed to represent a girl that he fell in love with while he was a young man but did not marry her because he did not have enough money to support them or a family yet. Therefore she moved on to the next person as did F. Scott. Seeing as how normal people can relate to Jay Gatsby and his himarsha proves that desperately stringing the past along in the present time is a common fault in all of human nature.

Social life is another big part of *The Great Gatsby* since they party so much. These extravagant parties were thrown by the illusive Jay Gatsby. He hosted these parties in hope that Daisy Buchanan would walk right in one night. With his attempts she never did but he ran into Jordan Baker who knew her and that's how the whole thing got started. Gatsby's social life and staying attached to the past brought him the love of his life. It can be a terrible thing sometimes to not be able to let go of what has long been finished, but in this situation I can see absolutely no bad. There is no way you can continue a social life while grudging about what happened way back when.

Holding on to the past doesn't keep your mind off track but it also keeps you as whole off track. It is not just you keeping ownership of your past, the past is keeping you and holding you back from your present life. The smart thing to do would be to just let go and give up on the past because whoever possesses the past is not moving forward with their life healthily. People are always so stressed over what they should have did instead of doing something else or regretting making a mistake. To conclude this essay, it should be noted that living your life is all about messing up and getting over your downfalls and being able to move on to the next big thing in your life, because a lifetime is too short and too amazing to be wasted on "should've-would've-could've"s.

Works Cited

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