

Original Paper

The Nature of Love: Sydney Carton in Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* and Jay Gatsby in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

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Abstract

This article makes a comparative study of “A Tale of Two Cities” and “The Great Gatsby” and evaluates the genuine love of Sydney Carton and Jay Gatsby for their beloveds. Sydney Carton and Jay Gatsby are the two main characters in “A Tale of Two Cities” and “The Great Gatsby”. This paper examines their nature of love under certain contexts. In the final analysis, it will be cleared that the authentic love of Sydney Carton and Jay Gatsby to their heroines Lucie Manette and Daisy Buchanan are rare in this modern world. They present passion, responsibility, respect, understanding, desire, liability, love, concern, feelings, etc., to their heroines. Both of them lead a troublesome life as they struggle, survive, and sacrifice for Lucie and Daisy a lot. From this, we can understand that only desire cannot create love. Here, the real meaning and nature of love will be discussed in the view of the two texts. Examining these, we can understand the meaning of love that helps us to differentiate between real love and fake love and the significance of actual love. By this, it can instruct people to become honest in their love by having true feelings which we can call genuine love. The study tries to discover many similarities and dissimilarities between both the characters, Sydney Carton and Jay Gatsby. Indeed, their nature of love and deeds make them extraordinary.

Keywords

Comparisons, Greatness, Jay Gatsby, Nature of Love, Sacrifice, Sydney Carton

1. Introduction

Sydney is a young and brilliant lawyer. He leads his life lazily and worthlessly. For that reason, he cannot win the heart of Lucie. She marries Charles Darnay who has everything. Sydney plays the role of the second hero. But Sydney's nature of love makes him an actual hero and he becomes an important character of the novel. At last, his responsibility and actions for Lucie are proven. He wants to save Darnay for his beloved which attracts the readers towards Sydney a lot. He sacrifices his own life for Lucie as his love is pure. It is heart-touching for everyone.

In *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Jay Gatsby is a millionaire and has a large luxurious mansion. But he does not have everything when he joins the First World War at the age of twenty-seven. Then, his beloved Daisy marries a rich man named Tom Buchanan.

So, Gatsby wants to achieve the American Dream to gain Daisy. He fulfills the American Dream and everything but unfortunately, he cannot get Daisy as he has taken responsibility for Myrtle Wilson's death to save Daisy which leads to his tragic death. The readers love and sympathies with him after he dies; they make him a real hero.

In this sense, we can realise that their love is authentic. Nowadays, it is found that love is becoming fake. Nobody wants to do anything or sacrifice for his partner. It looks like a pleasant, sexual and lustful thing. Everyone is conscious of his or herself rather than his or her partner. Today's romantic relationships are, sometimes, deceitful and fake.

But, the actual happiness does not depend on showing off; it lies in understanding one another, sacrificing one's dear things for another, respecting one's feelings or opinions. In these texts, though their heroines are married, love from their heroes for them has not diminished which proves their unconditional love.

They do not take any revenge against them. Even they give their lives for them. At the same time, it is also proved that it is actually their excessive love for their beloveds that leads them to death and this great action helps them to win the hearts of the readers.

2. Literature Review

Certainly, many works are found on the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. The articles are published focusing on the resurrection, French Revolution, characters' personalities, etc. Similarly, *The Great Gatsby* is also a widely dealt with novel with thousands of articles published on it focusing on World War I, the American Dream, money, love, and materialistic society.

One research is prevalent that combines *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Great Gatsby* on the self-sacrificing spirits in romanticism. But, no articles, dissertations, or theses are there on the nature of the love of Sydney Carton and Jay Gatsby. So, the selection of the topic is unique. Justifying this, some of the current research works have been reviewed which are prominent.

Saravanan Sarpparaje, in his article "Background of French Revolution in Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*," has shown the influence of the French Revolution sharply and views national identity and

political legitimacy. It also offers a powerful melodramatic plot against political methods, tyranny, and oppression by private individuals.

The article “The Plot Structure and Theme in Charles Dickens’s Famous Novel *A Tale of Two Cities*” by Krishna Chaudhary has shown the development of the plot and theme of the novel which is set in London and Paris before and during the French Revolution. The supreme self-sacrifice of Sydney Carton reminds us of the history of the French Revolution. In the broadest sense, at the end of the novel, Dickens foresees a resurrected social rule in France.

In the article, “Resurrection in *A Tale of Two Cities*” by Liu Ding Yuan and Hou Xiao Hua, both have focused on the plot of the story and the characters’ personalities as well as the relation between the characters; they also examine the specific embodiment of “resurrection” in three main characters with details and they are the resurrection of Doctor Manette, Lucie Manette, and Sydney Carton. By this, the author exhibits that resurrection is a powerful theme that is applicable outside of the novel’s setting but can be learned between the lines.

Another article of Na Li “A Comparative Study between *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Great Gatsby*—The Self-sacrifice Spirits in Romanticism” has exhibited that *A Tale of Two Cities* views the rationality of the French Revolution and the injustice of oppression and *The Great Gatsby* receives the First World War as its background when people are suspicious about the traditional notions and plan to break them out. Firstly, because of different social backgrounds, both texts appreciate the spirits of self-sacrifice. Secondly, the characters have some connections among them in the novels. Finally, by comparing the arguments of their self-sacrifice, different endings of them can be seen.

The article “The Disillusionment of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Dreams and Ideals in *The Great Gatsby*” by Fatimah Kashmiri has presented the chaos of World War I which presents the distressed state of America and also the materialistic tone of society. *The Great Gatsby* is both a romantic tragedy and a communal novel that presents the American Dream.

The article titled “Buying into Money Equals Happiness Fails for the Characters in Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*” by Lia Marie Snyder has focused on the affection for money and love and how they both affect the characters within the novel. Although Gatsby wants to buy the American Dream, it leads to unhappy death.

Ivana Nakie Lucie, in her article, “The American Dream by F.S. Fitzgerald” has shown Gatsby, the hero as an idealistic dreamer who is carried by delusion. It shows the essence of the American Dream according to which a distinct person can succeed in society regardless of his source and history.

Thus, the research gap has been shown that the nature of love of Sydney and Gatsby has never been compared and contrasted in any paper before.

3. Methodology

This paper maintains a qualitative approach where the texts *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Great Gatsby* have been used as the primary sources alongside the secondary ones.

4. Discussion and Analysis

4.1 Main Hero

Sydney Carton, from *A Tale of Two Cities*, and Jay Gatsby, from *The Great Gatsby*, are the heroes. We have found that both heroes make large contributions in taking the stories forward. Succinctly, they become the main heroes by acting as true heroes. In other words, they become heroes from zeroes.

Sydney Carton is ready to serve Lucie taking the risk of being guillotined which should be considered as an extraordinary deed. By doing this sacrifice, he proves his courage. Despite his dauntless nature and unconditional love for the wife of another guy, he maintains polite behaviour to Lucie.

The evidence of the features has been found from the willingness to sacrifice his life for the welfare of Lucie as he says: “For you, and for any dear to you, I would do anything. If my career were of that better kind that there was any opportunity or capacity of sacrifice in it, I would embrace any sacrifice for you and for those dear to you” (Dickens, 2012, p. 162).

These sentences have been found when Sydney Carton has decided to propose Lucie who respects the proposal and tells Sydney that he deserves better. At that time, Sydney tells her that he will keep this a secret and he will always try to help her. He will not be hesitant to sacrifice his life for her. He also assures Lucie that there is a person who always prepares himself to do anything for her; if it is the question of his life, he willingly accepts his own sacrifice for Lucie’s love. Later on, he will prove the justification of his statement by giving up his life for Lucie. In the end, this task makes him a brave and real hero.

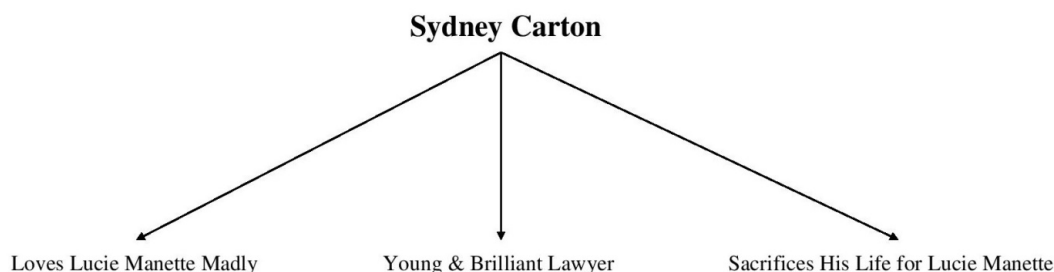


Figure 1. Sydney Carton’s Love for Lucie

Jay Gatsby is another hero. Though he is a bootlegger, he behaves politely. He proves his courageous nature by taking Daisy’s fault and prepares to face the situation. For serving Daisy, he takes the risk of his own life which demonstrates his self-sacrificing manner.

The evidence of the characteristics is justified since Gatsby has hoped for Daisy that she will come one day and he can do anything for this. Though she is a married woman, Gatsby has believed in Daisy’s love as “Of course she might have loved him just for a minute when they were first married –and loved me more even then, do you see?” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 154).

When Daisy drives the car recklessly and kills Myrtle mistakenly, Gatsby wants to save Daisy and when she goes to Tom’s bed, Gatsby is worried about her thinking that Tom may hurt her. So, Gatsby

wants to wait for Daisy to sleep as he says “I want to wait here till Daisy goes to bed” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 148).

He not only stops here but also readies to carry her mistake in his own head for reducing Daisy’s stress which brings about his death and this helps the readers to consider Gatsby as a real hero.

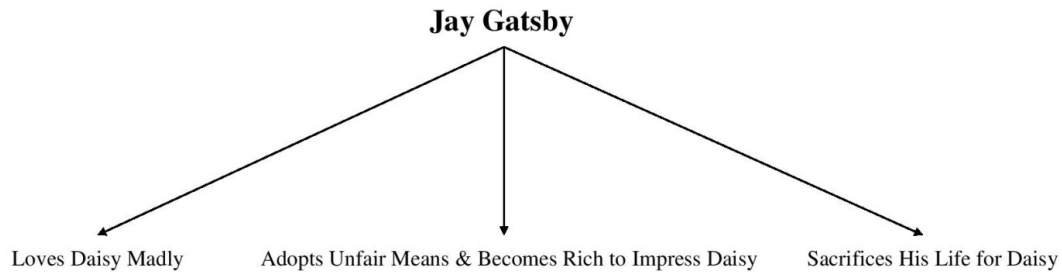


Figure 2. Jay Gatsby’s Love for Daisy

4.1.1 Authentic Love

In *A Tale of Two Cities*, Sydney Carton expresses the theme of pure love to Lucie: “...you have been the last dream of my soul” (Dickens, 2012, p. 160). Here, Sydney’s sentence reflects that she is the only dream and hope of his life. The transformation of Sydney Carton starts after he develops unpredicted feelings for Lucie Manette. His love for her is uncontaminated and selfless. He sacrifices his life only with the hope that she may become glad. During the French Revolution, the revolutionaries throw Charles Darnay into jail and Doctor Manette has no chance to free him. At that time, Sydney Carton also appears in Paris. Doctor Manette tells him about Charles Darnay’s detention. Sydney Carton bribes the jail guard and replaces Charles Darnay by moving inside the jail. Charles Darnay reunifies with his relatives. In the end, the rebels execute Sydney Carton. He loses his own life to bring back the joy in Lucie Manette’s family. His sacrifice is proof of his unselfish love for Lucie.

Correspondingly, the true love of Gatsby for Daisy Buchanan is found in *The Great Gatsby*. Gatsby’s all the splendid party, expensive house, car and living style are only for Daisy. His eagerness reveals the extreme love for Daisy; he wants her his whole life. Gatsby utters: “I want...Daisy to come over to my house” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 92). Only for Daisy, he wants to gain the American Dream but this process does not help him to gain any respect or love from others. But, he does not care about this:

His love is so powerful that it turns into an obsession rather than an infatuation. Gatsby’s love completely becomes blind and nothing else matters, not even time. Gatsby might be trying to transcend time here, or surmount it, ignore it. (Skulski, 2015)

Although Daisy is a married woman, it is Gatsby’s blind love for Daisy that her marriage cannot influence his love as he wants to hear from her—“You loved me too?” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 135). He does not even want to tell that Daisy has killed Myrtle. He does not think about his own career. He only thinks about Daisy’s interest, pleasure, and career. For this, Gatsby wants to tell that he has killed Myrtle as he says, “but of course I’ll say I was” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 146). This proves the authenticity

of Gatsby's love. He needs only Daisy's love; no one loves him due to his work which he does only for Daisy. Gatsby not only worries about Daisy but also takes her fault as it is a matter of great joy to him which brings about his death.

The idea of love can also be called into question. Throughout the novel it becomes unclear whether Gatsby is really in love with Buchanan for who she is or for what she represents ("Love, Wealth and Recreation: Examining 'The Great Gatsby,'" 2013).

Though Daisy is married, Gatsby still believes that Daisy never loves Tom. That is why Gatsby says, "Your wife doesn't love you" (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 133). He cries as "She never loved you, do you hear?" (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 133). Furthermore, he clears his belief as "She only married you because I was poor and she was tired of waiting for me. It was a terrible mistake, but in her heart, she never loved anyone except me!" (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 133). Here, the readers also realise that

Gatsby's primary motivation is to get Daisy back, while Daisy is of course in the dark about all of this. This sets the stage for their affair being on unequal footing: while each has love and affection for the other, Gatsby has thought of little else but Daisy for five years while Daisy has created a whole other life for herself. (Wulick, 2020)

4.1.2 Characteristics of Sydney Carton and Jay Gatsby

Sydney Carton is a poor, lazy, and hard drinker. But he is an excellent man from the core of his heart. He leads life selflessly. Throughout his life, he cares for only Lucie. He thinks of himself as a useless man. Sydney decides to propose to Lucie and tells about his love. But, she ignores it. Though he is rejected by Lucie, he has exhibited a polite and decent manner to Lucie. Sydney has not forced her to love him. He gives Lucie freedom to reveal her expression in mind and admits her decision without forcing her. Furthermore, he declares that his life is only for Lucie and promises to stay with her in all her critical moments as "... there is a man who would give his life, to keep a life you love beside you!" (Dickens, 2012, p. 162). At last, Sydney sacrifices his life only for Lucie's happiness. Here, we can see the decent manner of Sydney which helps us to understand that he does not take any immoral things for Lucie. He does everything honestly. That is why, when he dies, he is remembered by Lucie, Darnay and remains in the heart of every single person. Moreover, Sydney dreams that Darnay and Lucie would have a baby boy and they would give his name to the newborn. Actually, it is a pleasure and honour which he feels in doing such a noble deed for Lucie; it will increase his respect in everyone's eyes.

On the other hand, Jay Gatsby is poor at the beginning. He and Daisy love each other. Then, he has gone to the First World War and, coming back from the war, he knows that Daisy has married another person named Tom who is a rich man. That is the reason why Gatsby wants to achieve the American Dream.

Even in chapter 1, it is obvious that Gatsby's love for Daisy is more passionate compared to her love for him. Daisy's remembrances of Gatsby are cloudier. By contrast, his obsession with her becomes clear in the fact that he knows the particular month they separated. Indeed, Gatsby says that he loves Daisy but he hardly feels her own state of mind or that she is a changed person now. Besides, Gatsby appears to love

Daisy more because of what she characterizes—money, prestige, attractiveness- than as a real, imperfect individual.

After meeting Daisy, Gatsby does everything for winning her. Money is the matter that bars their being together, and he ensures that he will earn plenty of money. His energy and determination in gaining his objective are admirable. For this, he chooses the rakish, immoral, corrupted, and unrighteous process. Then, he becomes a millionaire.

With time, Gatsby's love for Daisy grows. But, this development proves to be unreasonable. He has patience and drive and the reminiscences of Daisy work as the oxygen for him. It seems like he is in love with a recollection and not the actual individual any longer. For this, Gatsby's untainted and eros love becomes manic love. It is ungenerous and produces a harmful attitude.

For getting Daisy, Gatsby turns into a bootlegger which becomes his weak point and mistake. That is why Tom begins to prick Gatsby as "Who is this Gatsby anyhow?" (Fitzgerald, p. 110). Furthermore, he clears the idea by saying, "Some big bootlegger?" (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 110). For these immoral deeds, no one loves him even after he dies. As Nick states,

...I began to look involuntarily out the windows for other cars. So did Gatsby's father. And as the time passed and the servants came in and stood waiting in the hall, the minister glanced several times in his watch, so I took him aside and asked him to wait for half an hour. But it wasn't any use. Nobody came. (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 177)

If Gatsby remained honest as Sydney, then perhaps everyone might come to see him and attend his funeral. No one remembers him for his dishonesty when he dies. He cannot get respect and honour. But, his tragic death for Daisy is a pathetic one as eventually, he cannot attain anything but kindness from the readers as he sacrifices his own life for his beloved.

In evaluating Gatsby, one needs to observe his blind chase of Daisy. All he does, each buying he makes, each party he throws, is all portion of his impressive arrangement to get Daisy back forever. Certainly, this is a charming romantic sign, but it also maintains a childlike delusion. Gatsby moves more and more into an imaginary world by being extremely absorbed in his dream of Daisy. He is unable to cope with realism and his way of continuously grasping the dream brings his death.

4.1.3 Tragic Death

In *A Tale of Two Cities*, in the beginning, Darnay is the main hero observing the total points of view to whom the heroine Lucie has been married. Sydney is also a hero but he is not considered the main hero. But, it is no less than a wonder that Sydney becomes the real hero with time. At first, he is seen as an alternative hero expressing honour to Lucie's rejected proposal. Moreover, having true feelings and thinking that his existence remains only in Lucie, he promises to stay beside her in all the critical situations and sacrifices his life for her.

In the end, he attempts to do something for Lucie according to his promise. The sorrowful condition of Lucie regarding her husband makes Sydney think about protecting Darnay. For saving him, Sydney has replaced him to be guillotined as he has a striking resemblance with Darnay. Thus, he voluntarily ends

his life: “It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known” (Dickens, 2012, p. 402).

These sentences carry some beauty which reflects that he has been trying to do the best things of his life and he feels redemption in his sacrifice. Due to the resemblance with Darnay, the authority cannot understand this riddle and punishes him by completing Sydney’s pathetic, tormenting, and tragic execution which draws him to the central point. Thus, he becomes the real hero.

In *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy has been married to Tom Buchanan who is wealthy and considered as an intelligent man and also appreciable for his method of overcoming the critical situation. Though he is a characterless man, he legally earns his livelihood. For all these, he is considered a hero. But, at last, Gatsby wants Daisy dishonestly by fulfilling all her materialistic demands and entraps himself into a critical situation only for her. After the dispute, Daisy drives Gatsby’s yellow car with him in anger and runs over Myrtle Wilson, the mistress of Tom. The accident is caused by Gatsby’s car and everybody blames him as Myrtle’s killer. He does not want to clear the confusion either because he wants to save Daisy from all these. He has already made a plan to tell that he is the killer of Myrtle. Gatsby wants to take all this on his own shoulders which reflects his great mentality.

At last, he is waiting for Daisy’s phone call but “No telephone message arrived...” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 164). It draws the readers’ sympathy for Gatsby. Then, he is killed by Myrtle’s husband George Wilson who thinks Gatsby is the real killer and he has taken revenge by shooting Gatsby at the pool. His funeral is also pathetic. No one comes to his funeral, not even Daisy whom Gatsby loves more than his life- “Nobody came” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 177). One day, he had abundant friends but now he has none to come to attend his funeral which creates a tragic scenery. Nick expresses, “one gentleman to whom I telephoned implied that he had got what he deserved” (Fitzgerald, 1988, p. 172); that is pitiful. Though he is a dishonest man, the tragedy makes him the great Gatsby:

Love

From above

Touches us all

Gatsby’s crazy for Daisy

Without Lucie, Sydney’s life’s hazy (Ziaul Haque, 2021)

5. Conclusion

Both Sydney Carton and Jay Gatsby have proved their unconditional love for their beloveds. They challenge all the people that true happiness lies in making others happy. Their acts have won the hearts of the readers permanently. Some people criticise them also for their excessive love because this type of love is rare now. Only the people with a pure heart can love like them. For the hopeless people who do not have any belief in love, Sydney Carton and Jay Gatsby are like inspirations for them to begin a new life, to be able to handle any matter positively and to be able to remain loyal to the relationship and to achieve the genuine love that helps them to lead a better life with their beloveds by respecting and

understanding one another. This also helps to bring peace to the society and reduce breaking of the relationship or breaking of a family which has become a major problem in the society. Thus, by teaching the meanings of true love, both Sydney and Gatsby have turned into role models.

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