

Agnes Greloch

Ms. Smith

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The Great Gatsby Through the Eyes of Feminist Criticism

be specific as to what aspect you're analyzing

Feminist criticism focuses in on the ways women are oppressed in literature. The fight for women's rights have been a constant battle and this lens zooms in on and analyzes writing that specifically goes against women's equal rights. In *The Great Gatsby*, written by F. Scott Fitzgerald, feminist criticism is used throughout the novel. Women are often left aside when a novel is written by a man therefore their experiences and point of views are ignored, they are also viewed as objects to men but if women were to do the same actions, they would be shamed for it, and women must be graceful and submissive to be considered a "good-girl" otherwise they are a "bad-girl."

There are many extraordinary male writers in the literature world, but quite often they write as if their audience consists strictly of male readers and then women are excluded from the picture. When this occurs, the point of views of their experiences are also forgotten. *The Great Gatsby's* author is a male, and the book is read through the eyes of a man named Nick. Since the book is seen through a man's point of view, women are not mentioned often and only a man's opinion is placed on the occurring event. Daisy has a daughter that is mentioned only a few times (Fitzgerald 17 and 117) and as the story goes on, the audience forgets about this women's back story and family life too, due to the focus on the men's stories and affairs. In Jon Krakauer's novel, *Into Thin Air*, the book walks through the tragedy that happened on Mount Everest in 1996. The audience is addressed as male and it is implied that it was only an option for men to take this journey, "The highest point on earth...was there for many boys and grown men to aspire toward." (Krakauer 15). This proves that women are not considered in

events and are underestimated in their abilities. They are also ignored entirely in their abilities and special qualities but are used for their appearances. ✓

Women are viewed as objects in the eyes of men, and considering the actions they do, women would be shamed for the same things. In *The Great Gatsby*, there are many different affairs that go on, "Tom's got a woman in New York." (Fitzgerald 15). In that scene, it comes to a surprise that none of the characters seem to care or take action against this event. The statement is in fact said in a careless matter. On the other hand, when Tom finds out about Gatsby and Daisy's past relationship, he acts far from careless, "Sit down Daisy"... Tom turned to Daisy sharply. 'You've been seeing this fellow for five years?' " (Fitzgerald 131). No one bothered going against Tom's affair, but Daisy was bashed for similar events. Women must be at the hand of men for when they need them for their satisfaction, but vice versa would never be permitted. Women are not only shamed for things men do often, but they have restrictions of what they can be and how to act. ✓

Women must be graceful and submissive to be a "good-girl," or else they are considered a "bad-girl." There are two women in *The Great Gatsby* who portray both sides perfectly, Daisy and Jordan. Daisy's description often consists of charming laughs, a thrilling voice, and bright features of her face (Fitzgerald 8-9). All the listed features are factors being a "good-girl". Daisy also never spoke against anyone and chose to remain "innocent." Jordan too is gifted with lovely features but her character is quite diverse from Daisy's. Jordan's personality is bold and she carries herself instead of letting others do so. Furthermore, she is honest and direct, which would classify her as a "bad-girl." Women are judged and categorized simply by the way they choose to carry themselves ✓

In conclusion, women's point of views of their experiences are ignored by male writers, they are shamed for identical events that men get praised for, and to avoid the classification of a "bad-girl," women must be innocent and submissive. Feminist criticism oppresses women's abilities and rights in

literature when certain aspects are simply an individual's personality. Lenses such as this one should be used carefully because in many occasions it is a one-sided observation. In society, people take these observations to heart and it can eventually harm them and the writer who caused this issue too. Criticisms should be used in informative ways to help better the actions or ideas of individuals, writers, and readers.

Consider making a connection to women's rights today

Expert analysis,
Agnes —
well done!

Works Cited

- alphabetize
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. 2nd ed, Routledge, 2006. ✓
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Scribner, 2004. ✓
- Krakauer, Jon. *Into Thin Air*. Anchor Books, 1999. ✓

Top Ten List

1. Writers that are male often address the readers as if they were all male and ignoring women.
2. Men hyper masculinize themselves out of fear as being seen as feminine.
3. Womens point of views of experiences are ignored.
4. Women are viewed as objects in the eyes of patriarchy.
5. Feminist criticism oppresses women and that can become too much for individuals at times.
6. Men are praised for the same thing's women are shamed for.
7. Women are only accepted and respected based on good looks.
8. Women must be graceful and innocent otherwise they are considered a monster.
9. Women could only be seen drinking and smoking when with a man. (No freedom)
10. Women are supposed to remain submissive and quiet to be a "good-girl" or else they are a "bad-girl".

Applying Critical Literary Theory to *The Great Gatsby*

Using literary criticism helps us to view a particular text through a specific lens and this creates a more direct analysis. For your "final" Gatsby assignment, you need to complete the following:

1. Identify the Top Ten "Things" people need to know about applying your chosen criticism to a text. This can be done with a partner, but it a group mark will be given if you chose this option.
2. Write an extended response (think a mini essay, approximately 2 pages, double spaced) where you apply your chosen criticism to *The Great Gatsby*.
 - a. Focus on ANALYSIS not simply explaining "what happens"
 - b. Use textual evidence (direct or indirect but cite both!) to support your analysis
 - c. Provide a thesis-like statement at the end of your intro, so your intent is clear
 - d. Strive to connect your analysis to Gatsby and the world around you

Evaluation

	Above Level – 5	At Level – 3/4	Below Level – 1/2
Top Ten List	List of points is thorough and easy to understand without knowledge of criticism. All important points have been defined.	List is developed and clear to the reader. Important points are easy to understand.	List is unclear or vague to reader. Important points are not covered adequately.
Analysis – Ideas (x2)	Analysis of ideas are insightful/sophisticated and demonstrate thorough understanding of how to apply criticism to text.	Analysis is clear and developed. Student has understood how to apply criticism to text.	Student has reverted to explaining plot/character instead of analyzing text through chosen lens.
Organization of Ideas	Distinct overall organization structures are used with impact and achieve stated purpose; techniques and transitions artfully integrate ideas into a coherent, unified whole.	Distinct organizational structures are used to achieve stated purpose; techniques and transitions ensure a coherent, unified idea.	Organizational structures are awkward or not apparent; techniques and transitions are weak and distract from a coherent, unified idea.
Mechanics	Demonstrates skillful control of the conventions of the written language.	Demonstrates capable control of the conventions of written language.	Demonstrates limited or tentative control of the conventions of written language.

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