



Embracing Amor Fati: Exploring Themes of Fate, Spiritual Decay, and Death in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby and T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land

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Abstract

This study explores the thematic intersections of fate, spiritual decay, and the concept of amor fati in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby and T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land. Through a comparative analysis guided by the philosophical framework of amor fati, the study delves into how the characters in both works confront their destinies amidst societal disintegration and existential despair. By examining key passages and motifs, it elucidates the characters' quests for meaning and their struggle against the forces of fate. Furthermore, the study underscores the enduring relevance of these themes in contemporary society, highlighting the timeless resonance of literature to provoke introspection about the human condition. Ultimately, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of existential themes in early 20th-century literature and their philosophical implications for individuals grappling with questions of destiny and existential meaning in the modern era.

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1. Introduction

In the tapestry of literary classics, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* emerge as quintessential representations of the early 20th century. Despite their divergent narrative forms and settings, both works converge upon a thematic landscape woven with threads of existential disillusionment, societal decay, and a haunting exploration of the human condition. Embedded within the heart of these literary giants lies the profound philosophical concept of *amor fati* — the love of fate. This concept, often attributed to Friedrich Nietzsche, encapsulates the notion of embracing one's destiny, accepting the immutable course of events, and finding solace, strength, and meaning within the framework of one's fate. *Amor fati* beckons individuals to not only acknowledge their destinies but to ardently love and affirm them, regardless of their nature. Within the realms of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*, the exploration of fate, spiritual decay, and death converge, inviting a profound examination of the human struggle against a backdrop of societal disintegration.

This work seeks to illuminate how the thematic interplay of fate, spiritual decay, and death in both texts resonates with the concept of *amor fati*, delving into the characters' quests for meaning, their battles against fate, and the poignant relevance of embracing one's destiny amidst the chaos of existence. This study embarks on a comparative analysis of fate, acceptance, and existential themes in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. While both

works were published during the same era, they offer distinct perspectives on the human condition and the struggle to find meaning amidst the chaos of modernity. While existing scholarship extensively analyses each work individually, there remains a gap in comparative examination through the lens of *amor fati*. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how the thematic interplay of fate, spiritual decay, and death in both works resonates with the concept of *amor fati*. This study also aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the characters' quests for meaning and struggles against fate in both literary masterpieces. *Amor fati* will serve as the guiding framework for interpreting the characters' existential dilemmas and quests for meaning.

Accordingly, a comparative analysis will be employed to juxtapose the thematic elements of fate, spiritual decay, and death in both works. Therefore, this article will analyse fate and destiny in *The Great Gatsby*, second section will explore the spiritual desolation in *The Waste Land* and the quest for acceptance, then third section will offer a comparative analysis of fate, spiritual decay, and death in both works. Last, the fourth section will explore the influence of setting on acceptance amongst characters of both works. Eventually, the purpose of this article not only provides a comparative analysis of both works through the lens of *amor fati*, but also sets a clear understanding of how themes of fate, spiritual decay, and the concept of *amor fati* have an enduring relevance in today's world. In literature and life alike, individuals continue to grapple with questions of destiny, mortality, and the

search for meaning in a world filled with uncertainty and disillusionment. The enduring resonance of these themes serves as a testament to the enduring power of literature to illuminate the human condition and provoke introspection about the nature of existence.

2. *The Death of Gatsby: Fate and Tragedy*

In Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, the tragic downfall of Jay Gatsby stands as a testament to the interplay between fate and inexorable pull of tragic circumstances. The mysterious and ambitious character Gatsby meets his tragic end amid the sparkle and splendour of the Jazz Age. His death becomes symbolic of a destiny intertwined with the era's moral decay and the inevitable collapse of the American Dream.

The setting of the novel takes place in the post-World War I economic boom in the United States, where society was obsessed with material wealth. This sets the stage for Gatsby's tragic story as he pursues love in a society fixated with money. His goal is portrayed as a pursuit of pure love, which contrasts with the prevailing materialistic values. The tragedy lies in the clash between Gatsby's idealistic pursuit and the society's focus on material gain. It is suggested that Gatsby's tragic demise is influenced by societal beliefs, particularly the distorted American dream that shifted from individual achievement through hard work to a pursuit of wealth for its own sake (Jiang, 2019, pp. 471-472).

Gatsby's persistence in pursuing his goal of winning back Daisy is acknowledged as a reflection of the American dream. However, it is argued that his tragedy is inevitable due to the changing societal values that have rendered his dream obsolete. Furthermore, his failure is attributed to using the wrong methods and being influenced by the societal emphasis on wealth. His tragic flaw lies in his ignorance and blind belief in the power of money. (Jiang, 2019, pp. 471-472)

Gatsby's attitude toward money is seen as influenced by societal values, leading to his tragic downfall. It is pointed out how Gatsby believes that money can solve everything, including winning back Daisy. Gatsby's actions are examined in the context of the societal shift towards materialism, leading to a decline in morality. His attempt to win back Daisy, despite her being married, is seen as a reflection of distorted values in society.

Despite Gatsby's immorality, his methods of winning Daisy back, despite the fact that she is married to Tom Buchanan, and his inability to embrace *amor fati* and accept his fate, lead to his downfall.

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*, the protagonist, Jay Gatsby, meets a tragic end due to a confluence of societal constraints and personal choices. Gatsby's relentless pursuit of an unattainable love with Daisy Buchanan, set against the backdrop of the Jazz Age's

opulence, unfolds as a tale of unfulfilled dreams and moral compromise. The intricacies of Gatsby's character, the societal expectations of the time, and the complexities of human relationships create a narrative where his downfall becomes an inevitable consequence of his aspirations and the world in which he lives. This tragic tale exposes the fragility of the American Dream and the profound impact of societal norms on individual destinies, revealing a poignant commentary on the human condition in the Roaring Twenties.

Gatsby's belief in the possibility of recreating the past, highlighting his illusion and the tragic circumstance of clinging to an unattainable ideal could be witnessed in chapter VI when he sobbed with disbelief and told Nick: can't go back in time? The past couldn't be repeated? Naturally, of course you can! He cast a bewildered glance around him, as though the past were waiting for him here in the shadow of his home, just out of reach. Everything was going to be fixed just the way it was before; it was said with a determined nod. She would see. Much was said about the past, and it was inferred that something, perhaps an idea of himself that had been invested in loving Daisy, was desired to be recovered. His life had been confused and disordered since then, but if he could return to a certain starting point and review everything slowly, that thing could be discovered. (Fitzgerald, 1925, p. 111)

Furthermore, the narrative weaves a complex tapestry of dreams, desires, and their inevitable collisions with reality.

Central to this intricate exploration is Gatsby's relentless pursuit of wealth, an endeavour encapsulated in the haunting imagery of the "blue lawn." As he reaches for the American Dream with unwavering determination, the following passage illustrates the paradoxical nature of his journey—a fervent pursuit that simultaneously propels him towards his aspirations and distances him from the elusive fulfilment of his dreams. This juxtaposition paints Gatsby's pursuit of wealth as not only a resolute endeavour but also a tragic circumstance, inviting readers to delve into the nuances of his character and the broader commentary on the cost of aspiration in the Roaring Twenties. Fitzgerald captured Gatsby's elusive pursuit of his dreams when describing how he travelled far to reach this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed within arm's reach. Little did Gatsby know, it was already behind him, lost somewhere in the vast darkness beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic stretched out under the night sky (Fitzgerald, 1925, p. 182).

The passage describes how Gatsby's pursuit of wealth is symbolically represented by his arrival at the "blue lawn". The use of the colour blue may allude to both the illusion of the American Dream and the melancholy that accompanies Gatsby's journey. Though seemingly within reach, Gatsby realizes his dream is lost in the distant obscurity, emphasizing the tragic futility of his

relentless effort. The “dark fields of the republic” under the night hint at societal complexities. This passage captures Gatsby’s paradoxical journey: a determined pursuit tragically leading him farther from realizing his aspirations, highlighting disillusionment and the cost of the pursuit of wealth in the novel.

In the context of Gatsby’s pursuit of wealth and the tragic circumstances surrounding it, one might draw on Sartre’s concepts such as existence precedes essence, according to Sartre’s reformulation, “[m]an is nothing else but what he makes of himself” (Sartre, 1957, p. 10), plus the concept of bad faith. Exploring Gatsby’s narrative through Sartrean Existentialism entails delving into how Gatsby, driven by the pursuit of wealth and societal stature, forges his own essence and significance. However, this endeavour is fraught with tragic repercussions stemming from his denial of reality. Gatsby’s subjective aspirations and the objective constraints imposed by society resonates deeply with existentialist motifs.

On the other hand, Nietzsche’s concept of the will to power could be also applied to Gatsby’s pursuit of wealth and social status. Nietzsche’s will to power suggests that individuals are driven by a fundamental desire for self-overcoming, asserting their strength, and achieving their fullest potential (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 403). Gatsby’s pursuit of wealth and social status can be viewed through the lens of the will

to power, as he seeks to overcome his humble origins and create a new, elevated identity for himself. Gatsby’s tragedy could be interpreted as a consequence of the excesses and distortions that can occur when individuals become consumed by their desires for power and success. The inherent tension between Gatsby’s aspirations and the reality of the American Dream might align with Nietzsche’s critique of how societal values and norms can impact individual pursuits.

The Great Gatsby is often hailed for its profound exploration of nostalgia, serving as a poignant reminder of the human longing to revisit bygone days. One of the reasons the novel embodies nostalgia is its inclusion of innumerable flashbacks, which retraces the past more extensively than the present reality. In addition, among its myriad themes, one prominent motif it delves into is the inherent complexities and impossibilities associated with attempting to recapture the essence of the past (Salmoise, 2014, p. 67). The story of Jay Gatsby exemplifies this longing for the past, as he strives to recreate it in pursuit of his dreams, namely Daisy. Despite his outward success and wealth, Gatsby remains haunted by his love for Daisy Buchanan, driving him to attempt to recreate their past romance.

Gatsby exemplifies the archetype of a tragic figure. When he responds to Nick’s query “Can’t repeat the past? ...Why of

course you can!" (Fitzgerald, 1925, p. 111), he embodies the exact characteristics of a literary persona grappling with what Freud termed melancholic depression, a type of repetition compulsion where the individual remains emotionally trapped by a romanticized or idealized love interest from their past (Freud, 1917, p. 256). In this context, the individual seems to be unable to accept or integrate reality, and that is why Gatsby seems to be affixed to the idealization of Daisy. He remains ensnared in past trauma, unable to disengage from the lost connection with Daisy, which continues to exist vividly in his psychological landscape. Ultimately, Gatsby's failure to accept his fate without Daisy leads to his downfall. His inability to embrace his destiny, or *amor fati*, prompts him to futilely try to recreate the past, resulting in tragic consequences that culminate in his demise. Nietzsche's formula for greatness in human being is *amor fati*: accepting fate without desiring anything else, moving neither forward nor back indefinitely. According to him, it is not just about enduring what is necessary or concealing it—all idealism is deceitful when faced with necessity—but about embracing it with love. (Nietzsche, 2023, p. 51)

Therefore, Gatsby's relentless pursuit to change the past and recreate his romantic relationship with Daisy demonstrates a lack of acceptance of his current circumstances. His inability to embrace his fate without Daisy leads to a series of destructive actions and ultimately his tragic demise, as

he is unable to find contentment and meaning in his present reality.

3. *The Spiritual Desolation in The Waste Land and the Quest for Acceptance*

T. S. Eliot's magnum opus, *The Waste Land*, stands as a haunting portrayal of spiritual decay and existential desolation in the aftermath of World War I. Within this seminal work, Eliot weaves a tapestry of fragmented voices and cultural references to illustrate the profound sense of disillusionment and alienation that characterized the modern era. Central to this exploration is the theme of acceptance: or rather, the lack thereof; as characters grapple with their fates in a world devoid of meaning and coherence. This section delves into Eliot's depiction of spiritual desolation in *The Waste Land*, examining the pervasive absence of acceptance amidst the ruins of fractured society. Through an analysis of the characters' struggles and the potential implications of embracing concepts like *amor fati*, this work seeks to unravel the complex interplay between despair and the quest for acceptance in Eliot's seminal work.

In T. S. Eliot's masterpiece, *The Waste Land*, the spiritual desolation is palpable, permeating every line of the poem. Eliot paints a bleak picture of a world ravaged by war, cultural decay, and spiritual emptiness. The landscape he presents is one of fragmentation, where traditional values and beliefs have crumbled, leaving behind a barren wasteland devoid of

meaning or purpose. The spiritual decay is evident in the various vignettes and voices that populate the poem, each representing a different facet of the modern condition. Certainly, many critics interpret the poem as depicting the decline of values and erosion of morality in the twentieth century. For instance, Coote (1985) describes the poem as “a profound and very moving picture of modern man’s spiritual plight” (31). This interpretation aligns with the views of many critics who see *The Waste Land* as a reflection of the decline of traditional values and the moral disintegration of society in the 20th century. This is demonstrated in the poem’s first section, which underscores how human suffering and anguish are intricately inked to a pervasive sense of spiritual decay and moral desolation. *The Burial of the Dead* sets the tone for the entire poem by presenting a world characterized by spiritual emptiness, moral decay, and a lack of vitality. The opening lines, “April is the cruellest month, breeding/Lilacs out of the dead land,” (Eliot, 1922, lines 1-2) suggest a juxtaposition of life and death, renewal and decay, highlighting the theme of spiritual barrenness. Throughout the section, Eliot attempts to convey a sense of fragmentation and disillusionment, further emphasising the spiritual decay prevalent in the modern world.

Throughout *The Waste Land*, Eliot presents characters who are grappling with their inability to accept their fates. From

Tiresias, the blind seer who sees but cannot change the course of events, to the various lovers who are trapped in dysfunctional relationships, the poem is filled with individuals who are struggling to come to terms with their circumstances. Their attempts to find meaning and connection in a world that seems indifferent only serve to highlight their sense of alienation and despair. Since the poem is set in post-World War I, it delves into the alienation and fragmentation prevalent in modern society, symbolised by titular desolation. Eliot illustrates the disconnection among individuals, whose attempts at communication falter, reflecting the trauma of war survivors like the speaker and Stetson. Intimacy is reduced to physicality, devoid of genuine emotion, while cultural richness dwindles into superficiality. The inability to connect extends across societal strata, from the wealthy to the working class, exemplified by Lil’s plight and her friend’s heartlessness. Ultimately, the poem portrays the modern world as spiritual wasteland, barren and devoid of sustenance, where even relationship with divine is fraught, encapsulating the pervasive alienation and brokenness of contemporary existence. As the poem is filled with characters that are grappling to accept their fate, let’s consider the first section’s characters: Marie and Madame Sosostris. First, Marie is portrayed as nostalgic figure who is longing for her childhood, reminiscing about a time when

she felt fulfilled and connected to the world:

Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not

Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither

Living nor dead, and I knew nothing,

Looking into the heart of light, the silence.

Oed' und leer das Meer. (Eliot, 1922, lines 38-42)

Her sadness about her fate is reflected in the imagery of her 'arms full' and 'hair wet', suggesting a sense of loss or longing for a past that she can never reclaim. Marie's portrayal in this part contributes to the overarching theme of disillusionment and the inability to find meaning or fulfilment in the present. Her lamentation about her fate underscores the pervasive sense of existential angst and despair that permeates the poem.

In the same section *The Burial of the Dead*, the character of Madame Sosostris is described as a fraudulent fortune-teller, who provides superficial predictions to her clients. Despite her charlatanism, her presence in the poem suggests a desire among individuals to seek guidance or reassurance about their destinies, even if it is illusory or unattainable. However, the fact that she is described as having a "wicked pack of cards" suggests a sense of scepticism or ambiguity surrounding her predictions. Her inclusion adds to the overall atmosphere of uncertainty and

disillusionment in the poem. The personas of Tiresias and Madame Sosostris likewise symbolize a community devoid of spiritual grounding, a society that has become spiritually disconnected and no longer upholds traditional beliefs (Gaur & Mudgil, 2023, p. 71). Furthermore, though not explicitly named in the poem, the Fisher King is a mythic figure associated with themes of infertility, waste, and the quest for redemption. His realm is depicted as desolate and barren, reflecting a sense of despair and resignation to a fate of decay and stagnation. Moreover, throughout the poem, there are references to individuals trapped. In dysfunctional or unfulfilling relationships, such as the typist and her lover, or the couple in the pub. These characters struggle with their inability to find genuine connection or meaning in their relationships, highlighting a sense of resignation or despair in the face of their circumstances.

These characters, among others, contribute to the overarching theme of existential angst and the struggle to find meaning and agency in a fragmented and desolate world depicted in *The Waste Land*. Their experiences reflect various manifestations of the human condition and the complexities of confronting one's fate in a seemingly indifferent universe.

As mentioned earlier, *amor fati* encourages individuals to accept their fate willingly, embracing the events of their lives as necessary and ultimately meaningful. In

The Waste Land, characters often struggle with feelings of alienation and despair, stemming from their inability to accept their circumstances. Embracing *amor fati* could help alleviate this despair by fostering a sense of peace and resignation in the face of life's trials. The desolation depicted in the poem reflects a world devoid of spiritual meaning and purpose. Embracing one's fate could empower characters to find meaning even in the midst of despair. By accepting their fate as an integral part of their journey, they may discover a deeper sense of purpose and significance in their experiences, transcending their immediate suffering. Eliot's work often grapples with themes of divine grace and redemption. Embracing *amor fati* could facilitate a reconciliation with the divine, allowing characters to see their fate as part of a larger divine plan. This acceptance could lead to a sense of spiritual fulfilment and connection, mitigating the spiritual desolation experience throughout the poem.

The poem is characterized by fragmentation and disintegration, both thematically and structurally. Embracing *amor fati* could help characters overcome this fragmentation by embracing the wholeness of their existence, including the darker aspects of their fate. *Amor fati* emphasises not only acceptance of fate but also love for it, suggesting an active embrace of one's destiny. Through this love, characters in Eliot's work may

undergo a process of transformation and renewal, turning suffering into opportunity for growth and self-discovery. This transformation could ultimately alleviate their spiritual desolation by imbuing their lives with purpose and meaning. "I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope/For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love, / For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith/ But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting." (Eliot, 1943, p. 11). Themes of acceptance, responsibility, and finding meaning in suffering are highlighted in Eliot's poem *East Coker* from *Four Quartets*, which are central to the idea of embracing *amor fati* to alleviate spiritual desolation.

4. Parallel Themes: Embracing Fate and Death

In both F. Scott Fitzgerald's, *The Great Gatsby* and T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*, themes of fate and death permeate the narratives, albeit in different ways. While *Gatsby* grapples with the notion of controlling his destiny, characters in *The Waste Land* often confront the inevitability of their fates amidst a desolate and fragmented world. This section examines how water symbolism serves as a motif in both works, symbolizing both acceptance and surrender to fate and death. Furthermore, the concept of *amor fati*, or love of fate, emerges as characters either embrace or resist their destinies.

Jay Gatsby's resistance to fate is rooted in his relentless pursuit of the American Dream. He believes that through sheer willpower and material success, he can overcome the barriers of social class and rewrite his own destiny. As he expresses to Nick Carraway: "I'm going to fix everything just the way it was before, ...She'll see" (Fitzgerald, 1925, p. 111). This passage illustrates Gatsby's determination to reclaim the past and win back Daisy Buchanan, believing that he can undo the passage of time and restore their relationship to its former glory. His entire existence is centred around his aspiration to reclaim the past, particularly his romanticized vision of Daisy Buchanan. He throws extravagant parties, accumulates wealth, and orchestrates elaborate schemes all in an attempt to win Daisy back and recreate the idyllic past he imagines.

In contrast, the characters in *The Waste Land* confront a broader existential crisis. They inhabit a world characterised by spiritual desolation, cultural decay, and a sense of alienation. Their resistance to fate arises from a deeper sense of despair and disillusionment with the human condition. For instance, Tiresias, the blind seer, embodies a tragic awareness of the world's decay but is powerless to alter its course: "I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs/ Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest-/ I too awaited the expected guest" (Eliot, 1922, lines 218-220). Tiresias's acknowledgement of his foreknowledge and inability to alter the course of events

reflects a resigned acceptance of fate, despite his role as a seer. Other characters in the poem also grapple with a sense of fragmentation and loss, clinging to illusion of agency and control amidst the chaos of modern life.

The comparison between Gatsby's resistance and the character's struggles in *The Waste Land* underscores the complexity of human agency in the face of fate. While Gatsby's resistance is driven by personal ambition and a desire for individual fulfilment, the characters in Eliot's poem confront a more existential form of resistance—a futile struggle against the overwhelming forces of decay and despair that define their existence. Both works highlights the tension between human desire to shape one's destiny and the harsh realities of a world that often defies control.

Water symbolism permeates both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*, serving as a metaphor for the acceptance of fate and death. In Fitzgerald's novel, water imagery is richly woven into the narrative, often symbolizing both the allure of possibility and the inevitability of fate. For example, Gatsby's mansion is situated on West Egg, overlooking the "fresh, green breast of the new world" (Fitzgerald, 1925, p. 5), while across the bay lies the more established East Egg, symbolizing the old aristocracy and the unattainable past. The bay itself represents a barrier between Gatsby and

Daisy, embodying the vast expanse of time and space that separates them.

Similarly, in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, water imagery evokes themes of purification, renewal, and the cyclical nature of existence. The Thames River, which features prominently in the opening section of the poem, symbolizes both the continuity of life and the passage of time. Additionally, references to mythical rivers such as the Ganges and the Tigris-Euphrates further underscore the universal significance of water as a symbol of death and rebirth. (*'The Waste Land': Representation of Water as a Motif to Show the Decay of Modern Society*, 2022)

One of the most poignant examples of water symbolism in both works; first is the image of the green light at the end of Daisy's dock in *The Great Gatsby*. This green light represents Gatsby's aspirations and illusions, forever out of reach like the ever-flowing tide. Nick Carraway reflects that Gatsby believed in the green light, representing the ecstatic future that continuously recedes year after year (Fitzgerald, 1925, p. 180). Correspondingly, in *The Waste Land*, water imagery is often associated with themes of acceptance and renewal. The poem's closing lines, which reference the mythical river Lethe, suggest a form of spiritual purification and rebirth: "Shantih shantih shantih [The peace which passeth understanding]" (Eliot, 1922, line 433-

434). Here the repetition of 'shantih' evokes a sense of tranquillity and acceptance, signalling the possibility of finding peace amidst the chaos and desolation of the modern world. (Moody, 1974 p. 14).

Nevertheless, the motif of the Wheel of Fortune in *The Waste Land* and its parallels to the circularity observed in *The Great Gatsby* adds depth to the interpretation of these literary texts. Phlebas the Phoenician's death by water symbolizes a transformative journey towards spiritual regeneration, highlighting the paradoxical purifying nature of water (Eliot, line 312-318). Similarly, Gatsby's demise in his pool signifies a metaphorical cleansing, with water representing both a barrier and a passage to renewal (Fitzgerald, p. 173). Both characters undergo a process of transformation, shedding their materialistic concerns and embracing a higher spiritual consciousness. Gatsby's refusal to use his pool until the first day of autumn symbolizes his reluctance to confront his fate, while his eventual plunge into the water signifies a symbolic surrender to the cycle of life and death (Fitzgerald, p. 164). In brief, the thematic conclusions of both works indicate that Eliot had a hopeful outlook towards human revival, and Fitzgerald portrayed redemption through Nick Carraway's return to his origins. This comparison highlights the divergent resolutions of the two texts, with *The Waste Land* offering a more universal message of

spiritual renewal and *The Great Gatsby* focusing on individual redemption within the context of the American Dream. Overall, the analysis effectively demonstrates how water symbolism and the motif of the Wheel of Fortune are utilized in both *The Waste Land* and *The Great Gatsby* to convey themes of fate, death, and regeneration, while also highlighting the difference in their respective conclusions and philosophical outlooks.

In both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*, characters grapple with the concept of *amor fati*, albeit in different contexts and with varying degrees of success. Jay Gatsby exemplifies a resistance to fate in his relentless pursuit of Daisy Buchanan and his unwavering belief in the possibility of rewriting the past. Gatsby's refusal to accept the irretrievable nature of time is evident in his pursuit of material wealth and status as he seeks to fulfil his idealized vision of the American Dream. This resistance ultimately leads to his downfall, as he is unable to reconcile his illusions with the reality of Daisy's inability to fully reciprocate his feelings.

Similarly, characters in *The Waste Land* confront their own struggles with acceptance and resignation in the face of fate. Tiresias, the blind seer, embodies a resigned acceptance of fate, recognizing the inevitability of the cycle of life and death. His detached perspective allows him

to see beyond the illusions of the modern world, yet he remains powerless to alter the course of events. Other characters in the poem, such as the Fisher King and Phlebas the Phoenician, also demonstrate varying degree of acceptance of their fates, albeit in different ways. The former represents a sense of resignation and acceptance of his role in the cycle of life and death. Despite being wounded and unable to fulfil his duties, he remains steadfast in his position, embodying a sort of passive acceptance of his fate. On the other hand, the latter represents a more active engagement with fate. As a sailor who perishes at sea, Phlebas undergoes a transformative journey through death, symbolizing a surrender to the natural order of life and death. His acceptance of his fate is marked by his willingness to embrace the unknown and undergo a spiritual metamorphosis.

Nonetheless, instances of characters failing to embrace *amor fati* are also evident in both texts. In *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's refusal to accept the passage of time and the irreversibility of his circumstances ultimately leads to his tragic demise. His relentless pursuit of an unattainable ideal blinds him to the realities of the present and prevents him from finding fulfilment in the here and now. Likewise, characters in *The Waste Land* struggle to come to terms with the meaninglessness and emptiness to their lives, clinging to illusions of control and agency in a world devoid of purpose.

Overall, both texts present a nuanced exploration of the concept of *amor fati*, highlighting the complexities of human nature and the struggle to find meaning and acceptance in the face of fate. While some characters demonstrate a stoic resignation to their circumstances, others grapple with feelings of resistance and defiance, ultimately leading to their downfall. Through these contrasting portrayals, both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* offer profound insights into the human condition and the quest for existential fulfilment.

5. Setting and its Influence on Acceptance

The societal contexts depicted in both *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* play a crucial role in shaping characters' attitudes towards fate and acceptance. In *The Great Gatsby*, set during the *Roaring Twenties*, characters are immersed in a culture defined by materialism, excess, and social stratification. The pursuit of wealth and status is paramount, leading characters like Jay Gatsby to believe that they can control their destinies through sheer determination and ambition. However, this hyper-focus on material success ultimately blinds characters to the deeper realities of human connection and fulfilment, contributing to their struggles with acceptance and resignation.

Correspondingly, in *The Waste Land*, the societal context reflects a world reeling from the aftermath of World War I and

grappling with the disillusionment and fragmentation of modernity. The poem captures the disintegration of traditional values and beliefs, leaving characters wandering in a wasteland of spiritual desolation. Against the backdrop of societal decay and cultural crisis, characters like Tiresias confront the futility of resisting fate, recognizing the inevitability of their circumstances and the transient nature of human existence. The societal context thus serves to underscore characters' struggle with acceptance and resignation in the face of an uncertain and chaotic world.

Both settings in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* contribute to the thematic exploration of embracing one's fate, albeit in different ways. In *The Great Gatsby*, the luxurious and extravagant backdrop of the Jazz Age serves as a stark contrast to the characters' inner turmoil and existential angst. The superficiality and materialism of the setting highlight the characters' futile attempts to control their destinies through external means, ultimately leading to their downfall. The setting thus reinforces the theme of embracing one's fate by emphasizing the importance of inner fulfilment and authenticity over external appearances.

On the other hand, in *The Waste Land*, the desolate and fragmented landscape reflects the characters' sense of alienation and spiritual emptiness. Against the backdrop

of societal collapse and cultural disintegration, characters are forced to confront the harsh realities of existence and the inevitability of their fates. The setting serves as a metaphor for the characters' inner turmoil and existential crisis, highlighting the necessity of embracing one's fate in order to find meaning and redemption amidst the chaos and despair.

In both literary works, societal pressures exert a significant influence on characters' attitudes towards fate and acceptance. In *The Great Gatsby* characters are driven by the relentless pursuit of wealth, status, and social acceptance, leading them to prioritize external validation over internal fulfilment. The pressure to conform to societal norms and expectations leaves characters like Jay Gatsby feeling disillusioned and disconnected from their true selves, making it difficult for them to accept their fates.

Likewise, in *The Waste Land*, characters are trapped in a web of societal expectations and cultural conventions that dictate their behaviour and beliefs. The fragmentation and disintegration of society exacerbate characters' feelings of alienation and despair, leaving them struggling to find meaning and purpose in a world devoid of stability and coherence. The oppressive weight of societal pressures contributes to characters' inability to accept their fate, trapping them in a cycle of existential despair and spiritual desolation.

Overall, the societal contexts depicted in both works play a significant role in shaping characters' attitudes towards fate and acceptance, highlighting the complexities of human nature and the enduring struggle to find meaning and redemption in a world fraught with uncertainty and disillusionment.

CONCLUSION

Throughout *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land*, themes of fate, spiritual decay, and the concept of *amor fati* are explored in depth. In *The Great Gatsby*, characters like Jay Gatsby struggle with accepting the inevitability of their circumstances, clinging to illusions of control and agency in a world defined by materialism and excess. Similarly, in *The Waste Land*, T. S. Eliot portrays a desolate and fragmented world where characters confront the futility of resisting fate and the transient nature of human existence. Both texts delve into the complexities of human nature and the enduring struggle to find meaning and redemption amidst the chaos and uncertainty of life.

The significance of embracing fate and accepting the inevitability of death is underscored in both texts as characters grapple with the consequences of their actions and the limitations of their control over their destinies. In *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby's tragic demise serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of clinging to illusions of the past and refusing to accept the passage of time. Similarly, in *The Waste Land*, characters like Tiresias embody a stoic resignation to their fates, recognizing the futility of resisting the natural order of life and death. Nonetheless, both texts emphasize the importance of embracing

the inherent uncertainties of existence and finding solace in the acceptance of one's fate.

Eventually, the themes of fate, spiritual decay, and the concept of *amor fati* explored in *The Great Gatsby* and *The Waste Land* remain as relevant today as they were when these works were first published. In literature and life alike, individuals continue to grapple with questions of destiny, mortality, and the search for meaning in a world filled with uncertainty and disillusionment. The enduring resonance of these themes serves as a testament to the enduring power of literature to illuminate the human condition and provoke introspection about the nature of existence. As one navigates the complexities of life, may one find inspiration in the wisdom of embracing fate and accepting the inevitability of death, finding solace in the recognition that true liberation lies in surrendering to the natural rhythms of the universe.

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