Money And American Dream

You must gain control of your money or the lack of it will forever control you" Dave Ramsey. In today society's the idea of the 'American dream' has been replaced with the ideals of power and wealth. The idea that if you have an endless supply of money in this world you have then been successful. Which further more creates this false image of wealth and success that people search for to end up nowhere. The American dream is a largely fantasized dream which can supposedly be achieved by anyone through sacrifice, hard work and determination. But how can anyone reach that dream when the people at the top create an unreachable gap? At this point when you are born into poverty the lack of support, resources and honesty make that dream unachievable. In New York a simple bridge connecting a road is the difference between if you have high status compared to low status. The men at the top manipulate and exploit their money to gain power over the people sitting at the bottom. In the 1920s this idea was extremely relevant and first came into light after the war when everyone chased the idea of wealth and status and has continued to grow since then.

Cars have become such a symbol of wealth. Over time the growth of people owning high end cars has sky rocketed and in modern day the type of car you drive can tell a lot about the person you are. The more high end car you own symbolizes the more money you have. This is shown greatly in the Park Avenue in the clips of Manhattan it is clearly evident that there are limousines and expensive cars, the cars are always moving creating a metaphor for the forever moving economy. In Park Avenue showing high end cars help prove the point and symbolise that wealth in Manhattan. However soon after shots of the Bronx are shown and there is a distinct change. Shots of Bikes, police cars and old run down cars are shown. It quickly becomes evident to the viewer that it's a poor area. In the scene showing the Bronx a group of boys are shown playing basketball with an home made hoop. This particular scene shows a large fence wrapped around the children symbolizing they are trapped where they are. It's very evident that these people are in the low end of the ladder due to the lack of facility's and clear lack of basic resources. Even as simple as having a working car to drive to and from work is near impossible for people leaving in the lower class due to lack of money, help from the government and the people on top. Another great example of the use of symbolism is the use of cars in the great Gatsby. With cars becoming a major asset to have in the 1920s Jay Gatsby is known to be driving a Rolls Royce, a luxury car. The car pays a crucial roll in the novel because not only is a symbol of wealth it also is the reason for the death of Myrtle. Myrtle's character is portrayed with this unrealistic dream that Tom truly does love her. Myrtle is always searching for validation and she tries everything in order to live a more lavish life. A lot of people struggling with lack of money can relate to her in the sense that they are always trying and never getting anywhere. She is described as a women with a stocky figure, tied to her husbands lack of money. Myrtle is shown as a women trying to achieve a life like Daisy's. She dreams of wealth and living a life of luxury. Myrtle uses her body in order to attract wealthy men in hopes to escape her life of living in the Valley of Ashes. She ultimately wants to achieve the American Dream however not in the way that it was intended to be earned through hard work. She rather goes about things the wrong way by cheating on her husband and trying to mirror Daisy's life she goes after Tom. The car killing her is symbolic due to the idea is that the dream of wealth she was chasing was the one thing that caused her the most pain.

So many people in society today can see themselves in Gatsby. They can relate to his ambition and his false persona he portrays in order to obtain a dream. His constant optimism to turn a dream into reality becomes a major focus of the story which helps the reader sympathize with him. Many people today often fall into illegal things to obtain money and wealth such as things like embezzling money or cheating the tax system. Which leads to greed overcoming them causing them to do whatever it takes to get ahead. This is the same with Gatsby his ideals of making money are so dishonest and corrupt yet naïve Nick still paints the idea that Gatsby a loyal honest man. Although Gatsby has plenty of money to satisfy him, he isn't truly happy. He one true dream of being with Daisy is still unattainable. The gap between East Egg (old money) and West Egg (new money) divided by the gap in the bay. That one gap between the Bay makes a major difference regarding the people. For Gatsby the dream was lost before he could even achieve it. "[H]e stretched out his arms toward the dark water. . . . I . . . distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far way. . . . When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished. . . .". The green light represents Daisy, his one lost love and the one thing he searched for in his life. Even after obtaining the dream of money and wealth he still reached out to the green light, always reaching out for Daisy. The idea that Gatsby can never reached the green light is symbolic for the ideas that you are never truly satisfied with having money and wealth. So many people can relate to the loss of Gatsby because they are always searching and striving to achieve their dream, that in the end they spend there whole life chasing the idea but never truly get to the end. This 'amazing' dream in their head is just simply unachievable due to the gap fabricated by the people on top.

The people at the top of the social classes and at the top of obtaining wealth is the thinnest wedge of American life, such a small fraction of the population have actually achieved the 'American dream'. Another small fraction are people who are born into wealth and never have to work because of that.

In Park avenue the documentary highlights the corrupt white men in power and how they abuse their wealth to ensure they always stay on top " they have rigged the game in their favor". It calls attention to the idea that some of American highest billionaires all call home to a exclusive building in Manhattan and less then five miles away across the bridge is home to one of the poorest districts in America, South Bronx. The middle and lower class are endangered and the top 1% of Americans who are high in their penthouse couldn't care less. With lots of money comes power and these Americans in the 1% use their power to manipulate everything in the favor. The people in power control the politicians by lobbing and giving money to invest in projects to promote themselves. By doing this they only create more of gap between the middle class and themselves. In the documentary Park Avenue a world wide known game of Monopoly is played however the game is rigged and one player is given a huge advantage. One player receives more money and gets to roll both dice compared to the other player who is given significantly less money and only gets to roll one die. The person who is advantaged quickly becomes more overconfident and shows no concern for the disadvantaged player. The game shows the idea that everyone has an equal opportunity to play. Just like everyone has an equal opportunity to obtain the American dream. However most people witnessing that game would agree its unfair and the person who is disadvantage will never win. Exactly like the American dream people born into poverty stand no chance against the people who already have the advantage and are on top. When does it stop? How can there ever be equality when the people on top are selfishly trying to better themselves instead of evening out the gap?

The American dream has slipped away out of reach from so many people that it's merely a

fantasy and an overused phrase.