

Student Essay on American Adam in Huck Finn and Great Gatsby

**American Adam in Huck Finn and Great Gatsby by F.
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Contents

Student Essay on American Adam in Huck Finn and Great Gatsby.....	1
Contents.....	2
Essay.....	3

Essay

Both novels display the archetype of the American Adam through the characters and other symbols. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the archetype of the American Adam would be Huck Finn. He displays many character traits of the American Adam. For example, the helplessness of "mere innocence has been a primary theme of novelists" (Prologue 9), and sometimes Huck is helpless in certain situations. Huck is also thoughtful, intelligent, and willing to come to his own conclusions. Although still only a boy, Huck is influenced by others, especially Tom. Throughout the novel Tom sometimes convinces Huck to change his plan. For example, when both boys are making up plans to help Jim escape, Tom says to Huck, "Huck, you don't ever seem to want to do anything regular; you want to be starting something fresh all the time" (231). Huck Finn also symbolizes the American Adam because he experiences many adventures to try and capture part of the American dream. Huck and Jim travel by the river and experience many events in order to gain freedom. Huck wants freedom from the limits of civilization, and Jim wants freedom from slavery. However, today's society "suggest that exposure to experience is certain to be fatal" (Lewis 196). Huck became a better person after experiencing many different events. In *The Great Gatsby*, the archetype of the American Adam would be Jay Gatsby. Throughout the novel, Gatsby's main goal was try to capture the American dream. He continued to pursue Daisy even though his relationship with her was in the past. Gatsby's dream was also symbolized by the green light on the dock. However, when he was killed Nick says, "Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever" (Green 52). Gatsby is also the archetype of the American Adam because of his rise from poverty to great wealth. During the time of the novel, "American bulged with money and trusted those who had it" (Green 56). Nick realizes Gatsby's mistake as well as other Americans' mistakes at the end when he says, "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (189). This quote shows that many Americans live in the present but constantly try to chase dreams in the past.