

**Women's Status in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and F. Scott Fitzgerald
*The Great Gatsby***

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Abstract

This thesis explores the portrayal of the female characters in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925). Each of these two works addresses the role of women in society through the ideas and views of a central narrator whose narrative includes reflections on the status of women in society. The research focuses on the similarities as well as the differences between the two novels in their treatment of women's role in society. As *Heart of Darkness* presents its main female characters as sentimental and out of touch with reality, *The Great Gatsby* portrays its female characters as interested in the pursuit of money and personal freedom. *Heart of Darkness* depicts women's status in the late nineteenth century in accordance with the theory of separate spheres which views women's role as being restricted to the private sphere of the home and the family and sees men's role in the political, social and cultural activities. By contrast, *The Great Gatsby* portrays the role of women during the 1920s (the Jazz Age) which witnessed the emergence of the New Woman and the liberation movement of women which tried to achieve a greater degree of freedom and individuality for women. Though the characters in this novel achieve some degree of freedom, they cannot completely free themselves from the constraints of patriarchal culture.