

Module 8: Voices of Courage During Modernism
Topic 4 Content: "Winter Dreams" Analysis



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Topics

- The American Dream
- Love or romance
- Materialism
- Lower versus upper social classes

"Winter Dreams"

In order to determine the theme of F. Scott Fitzgerald's "Winter Dreams," first identify the subject and then tie it together with the story's motifs. The story opens and ends with the most prominent topic: the American Dream, as seen through the eyes of the protagonist, Dexter Green. Most works, unless they are very brief, have more than one topic. Other topics found in "Winter Dreams" include love or romance, materialism, and lower versus upper social classes.

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Motifs


- Geographic locations
 - Golf courses
 - Mansions
 - Minnesota hometown
 - Peaceful lake
- Seasons
 - Warmer seasons
 - Winter

"Winter Dreams"

One of the motifs featured in "Winter Dreams" is the use of geographic locations to convey meaning. For example, golf courses and mansions where parties take place serve as settings that reflect the excessive, superficial lifestyles where relationships are hollow and meaningless. On the other hand, locations like Dexter's small Minnesota hometown and the peaceful lake where he relaxes and reflects alone represent hope for future happiness and fulfillment.

Another motif that Fitzgerald employs is the passage of time and a focus on the seasons to further the mood and tone of the narrative. During warmer seasons, Dexter longs for his winter dreams and throws away opportunities for a wholesome, happy life. The winter season itself embodies the dream of attaining status in the upper class, a dream which Dexter chases, only to find empty loneliness.

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Theme:
Material excess and relentless pursuit of wealth and pleasure in the 1920s caused the decline of Americans' moral fulfillment and the disintegration of the American Dream.

"Winter Dreams"

The theme of "Winter Dreams" is that material excess and relentless pursuit of wealth and pleasure in the 1920s directly caused the decline of Americans' moral fulfillment and the disintegration of the American Dream. For Dexter, it was not enough to settle with a successful laundry business, nor could he be satisfied with his decision to marry the kind-hearted yet ordinary Irene. It was his pursuit of an unattainable social status, material wealth, and an elusive relationship with Judy that leaves him at the end of his story in gloomy desolation, just like the barren winter season.