

Nikki Wright

Mrs. Fluker

Pre-AP English 11

September 6, 2007

F. Scott Fitzgerald published his career's most successful novel, The Great Gatsby, in the spring of 1925. The novel is set during the "Roaring Twenties" in and around the upper class communities of East Egg and West Egg in New York. Fitzgerald uses a number of different literary devices, such as symbolism, to enable the reader to have a better understanding of the moods, events, and characters throughout the novel. Color is used as the most prominent of the symbols displayed in, The Great Gatsby. Among the colors Fitzgerald uses are white, yellow, and green.

Just as a painter covers a coat of dark paint with a white primer to hide what lies beneath it, Fitzgerald uses the color white to put a false "coat" of purity and innocence on elements throughout his novel. White is most often associated with the first impressions of the wealthy characters, especially those with "old money", such as Daisy and Jordan. When first introduced at the beginning of the novel they are wearing white dresses, and at this encounter the reader is put under the impression that both Daisy and Jordan are honorable and innocent; however, this is later revealed to be a facade. Also, the name Daisy in itself is a use of white as symbolism. A daisy is beautiful with its unblemished white petals, but beneath lies a yellow center, which does not seem as pure as the outer appearance suggests. The same is true with Daisy. When Nick describes Gatsby's thoughts before the kiss with Daisy he

says, "His heart beat faster as Daisy's white face came upon his own" (107). That shows the effect of Daisy's false front of innocence on Gatsby. Fitzgerald's use of white is simply a covering up of reality to later show that things are often more than what they seem at first glance.

White is used in, The Great Gatsby, to cover reality, whereas yellow is used to reveal the truth. As previously mentioned, Daisy and Jordan are first seen in the novel wearing white dresses, but as the story progresses and Fitzgerald reveal more about their true motives, their clothes change from white to yellow. This transformation is significant because it allows the reader to see that Daisy is full of corruption. Just as the core of a daisy is not as unblemished as its striking petals, neither is the heart of Daisy as innocent as it may seem to others. Fitzgerald also repeatedly uses the color yellow to describe the car that causes Myrtle's death. He does this because it is Daisy who was driving the car, and the yellow reveals her true motives in the accident. Yellow is used to unveil corruption in events and characters throughout the novel.

Green is the most prominently used color in the novel, and Fitzgerald uses this color consistently with Jay Gatsby. His house is described as being surrounded by a green lawn, his car has green interior, and he is seen gazing across the bay and reaching toward a green light. The use of green stands for a number of different meanings, but mostly to represent hope. The light Gatsby is seen reaching toward is eventually discovered to be the light at the end of Daisy's dock. The color green shows Gatsby's unwillingness to let go of his hope of he and Daisy being together as they were years before, and the reaching toward to light can be interpreted as Gatsby's gullibility of Daisy. Green is also used in reference to hope through Nick with

his green train ticket showing Nicks hope to find a normal life back home. Envy is also a meaning of green in, The Great Gatsby. It is used through Gatsby to show that he is enormously jealous of Tom because he has the one thing, Daisy, which Gatsby can never attain. Green is a color of great importance to understand the mysteries of characters, especially Gatsby.

F. Scott Fitzgerald mastered the use of symbolism through color in his career's defining work, The Great Gatsby, to enhance the reader's image of characters and situations. Through colors, element can be defined in subtle ways to readers who pay close attention to detail. They also add emotion to events. In the novel Fitzgerald uses white as deception, yellow as corruption, and green as hope and envy. The colors allow a better understanding of the main characters and situations.