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### Color Symbolism in The Great Gatsby

What comes to mind when you think of your favorite color? Does it make you feel a certain emotion? Does it make you picture a specific scene in your head? Colors are very powerful when used in books to make the readers feel and picture what is happening. One of these books is *The Great Gatsby* written by F. Scott Fitzgerald, which takes place during the 1920s. It is a tragic love story between two people from the rich class. This story shows the importance of class and the amount of money you own during the 20s time period. Color symbolism is used throughout the whole book and is an excellent way to get people visualizing and really thinking about why Fitzgerald would use this color or that color. The use of colors allow the readers to think of the emotions and feelings that are often associated with certain colors. F. Scott Fitzgerald writer of *The Great Gatsby* used color symbolism in his story to enhance the story such as with the repetition of blue, red used to symbolize a certain character, and lastly the green light at the end of the Buchanans dock.

Fitzgerald used many colors throughout his book but not as much as the color blue. “A damp streak of hair lay like a dash of blue paint across her cheek”(85). This quote sticks out to most people due to the color used. This gets readers thinking about why he compared a damp streak of hair to paint and specifically blue paint. Although others would say he just chose a

random color; however, it is obvious he did not. "He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it"(180). This is one out of many quotes throughout the book using the color blue. It is obvious now that he did not just choose a random color, but that he chose blue to symbolize and show deeper meaning.

Repetition is also an easy and useful way to show importance. What does blue mean? A lot of it is based on one's own opinion but some examples could be melancholy, tranquility and also loneliness. The repetition of this color allows us to draw the conclusion that these are common themes throughout the whole book. The color blue is a very important color for *The Great Gatsby* but it's not the only one.

The color red was used in the movie adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* to describe a certain character, Myrtle. Myrtle is known for being the wife of George Wilson and the woman who Tom Buchanan is having an affair with. When you think of red what comes to mind? Love, hate, blood but it also can mean fire and bright and the color draws attention to it. This color perfectly describes Myrtle as a person. "No facet or gleam of beauty, but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smoldering"(25). Myrtle is not very pretty as described in the quote; however, she has this confident and bold aura to her that stands out and they use the color red in the movie to show this. "And without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse voice: 'Get some chairs, why don't you, so somebody can sit down.'"(26). This also shows how she has a more dominant personality compared to Daisy who would never boss Tom around and he would never listen. Her personality is perfectly symbolized by the color red and it was more effective for Fitzgerald to use a color to describe than outright saying it. As stated before, this almost forces

the readers to really think about the book and the color choice and what the colors could symbolize or mean. Blue and red are both very important colors; however, the green light is the most obvious and important.

F. Scott Fitzgerald's narrator, Nick, and Gatsby describe a green light at the end of Buchanan's' dock across the bay from Gatsby on East Egg. "I glanced seaward-and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock"(21). The importance of this greenlight is to symbolize Gatsby's dream of his future more specifically his future with Daisy Buchanan. The green light is mentioned multiple times throughout the story. "Possibly it had now occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever"(93). The green light in this story is very important because it shows how Gatsby's dream becomes more and more unrealistic and it becomes further away for him to accomplish. The green light is just another example of how Fitzgerald uses color symbolism to show ideas or emotions hidden throughout the novel.

As stated before color symbolism is a great and very effective way for authors to really get the readers to think deeply on the reason for using colors in a situation where color is not of importance. F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of *The Great Gatsby*, uses color symbolism throughout with the color blue to symbolize certain themes throughout, the color red to symbolize specific characters, and finally the green light to symbolize dreams that will never become reality. Now when you think of a color what really comes to mind?