

COLOR SYMBOLISM IN THE GREAT GATSBY

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Almost every chapter of Fitzgerald's novel uses colors in their purest shades to make readers get an insight into the different characters' lives. Naturally, to fully fathom these colors mentioned, readers must also first understand the situations within which they are used.

What Do Colors Mean?

COLORS USED BY FITZGERALD

White

Blue

Gold

Yellow

Red

Green

Grey

WHITE

Cleanliness Innocence Purity Freshness

White is commonly used throughout Fitzgerald story and appears in every character's description. White also represents the East Egg through the quote; "across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water." But the use of the color white emphasizes the innocence and purity is deceiving and hinders the truth of these wealthy people.

BLUE

Depression Moody Unhappy

The color blue is more closely related to the character of Gatsby than any other character. Blue resembles Gatsby's illusions; his deeply romantic dreams of unreality. His gardens are blue, his chauffeur wears blue, the water separating him from Daisy is his "blue lawn", Tom's car is blue, along with the blue coat that Cody buys for Gatsby. Also the eyes of T.J. Eckleburg are blue, making the eyes of God into a non-existing dream.

GOLD

Gold represents the authentic, traditional and real money.

Gold is represented by the old rich, such as Tom and Daisy's money. Gold is what separates the real rich from the others. Gold contrast greatly with green, with the concept and differences between old money and new money. Old money is gold, authentic and real, while new money is cheap with the flimsy green bills. Therefore, one can examine that Fitzgerald is using color symbolism to depict the differences between Gatsby and Tom and Daisy's money. Gatsby is the new money, green. While Tom and Daisy are considered old money, gold.

YELLOW

Yellow represents fake money.

Yellow is very different from gold. Yellow is fake gold, its veneer and is used for show rather than substance. Gatsby is considered to be yellow rather than gold, due to his newly acquired money and his inability to enter the high class society of New York City.

RED

Danger Passion Boldness Love

Red is associated with blood, so it is the symbol of violence, danger and rage. The inside of Buchanan's home is in red. "We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-colored space." "Inside, the crimson room bloomed with light."

GREEN

Hope Promise Envy Money Future

Green is most closely associated with both the green light of Daisy's dock and the "green breast of the new world." Both unite the hope and promise of Gatsby's dream with that of America itself. Fitzgerald uses green to symbolize money and its power in society. Money rules the lives of the people in the story.

GREY

Lifelessness Neutral Dull Lifeless
Unimportance

Gray is associated with the ash heaps in the Valley of Ashes, it can be described as a connection to a barren of lifelessness. The main character that can be related to grey is George Wilson. The gray represents his unimportance. Also Wilson's face is "ashen" and a "white ashen dust" covers his suit, and his eyes are described as "pale" and "glazed."