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Great Gatsby

In the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, the author uses the color yellow to symbolize flaws and moral decay in society. Usually in life people make many mistakes trying to find themselves and seek to be what other people expect them to be. People are often looking for the acceptance by society and to fit in and be like everyone else. This often leads to the destruction of people and a moral decay in society. There is always a reason as to why things are the way they are and why people need to look to others for approval of themselves. Fitzgerald uses the character of Gatsby and the color yellow to show emptiness and moral decay in society.

The color yellow is used in many different ways in this book and is used many times to depict sickness and emptiness in

society. The author uses yellow in parts of the novel where there is a lot of partying in Gatsby's house where everyone is drinking and "having a good time." These parties symbolize the attitude that this "upper class" has on their way of living. These people feel they are above everyone else and that they deserve the best because they have the money to prove they do. The parties that Gatsby throws are good examples of how hard people try to get their name out and how difficult it is to use money in order to get a certain group of people to like you. At these parties many people show up even if they don't know the host. This is a great example of natural flaws that many human beings have which is the idea that they have to live up to other people's standards and please people who may not even be of importance to them or their future. Being that this time period was a time of partying and "experimenting" many people didn't know what to do with themselves and

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just went with the flow. As the narrator describes one of the nights “keep your hands off the Lever” and this shows how it was possible for anything to happen and that these times were times of uncertainty, which could ultimately lead to decay in society and the way that a group of people may value themselves.

The color yellow is very descriptive in this novel in the sense that it can mean a variety of things. It can represent being abandoned, sadness, sickness, loneliness and a number of many other things. “The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sittlever”(37) said a man hinged on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it, and contiguous to absolutely nothing.”(24) This depicts the idea of a lonely abandoned street that seems to stand out because of the color of the bricks being a bright color that stands out in a place so abandoned. This image of an abandoned street, where the building that

most stands out, is meaningful because it symbolizes hope for this society, which seems to be going down the drain in the wrong direction. Seeing that all these people are partying their lives away and drinking and getting drunk is what the do, the yellow building shows potential in these people and how each of these people attending Gatsby's party have the potential to do better in the moral decay of their own society. “You don't know who we are,” said one of the girls in yellow, ‘but we met you here about a month ago.’” This quote really emphasizes the idea that people did really care about what happen and never really seemed to understand or really know what was going on around them. They let the drinks take over and that was it.

The idea of drinking and getting drunk during this time period was the fad and what everybody did in order to have fun. A lot of the time this “fad” led people to exclude themselves from groups of people

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or just overall be a very antisocial type of person. "I wondered if the fact that he was not drinking helped to set him off from his guest, for it seemed to me that he grew more correct as the fraternal hilarity increased."(51) Describing Gatsby as the host of these incredible parties he seemed to always be distant from the party itself. The fact that he wasn't drinking stands out to the reader because that shows that his distance from his guest was on purpose. He was purposely becoming distant from the people at the party which made some sense considering that he didn't know half the people that had shown up for most of them. "I have forgotten their names- Jacqueline, I think, or else Consuela, or Gloria or Judy or June, and their last names were either the melodious names of flowers and months or the sterner ones of the great American capitalist..."(63) This is an example of how people don't even really know each other or respect each other in the sense that they

don't even remember each other, being that they probably spent the night before together. They allowed the liquor to take over and forget about everything else that matters. This in a society leads to destruction and moral decay where there is no respect among the people when they don't respect themselves. Therefore the color yellow symbolizes flaws and moral decay in society through sickness of drunkenness and partying.

In conclusion the people from the book *The Great Gatsby* are people who search or live to party and be destructive to them, as well as to society. This book emphasizes the idea that people search for acceptance from other people and that is how people become "known". Society plays a big role in this novel by setting the standard of living and of the way that life must be lived. This standard set by society leads to it's own destruction and moral decay.

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