

Party with Fitzgerald – Characterization in *The Great Gatsby*

PART I – Group work - Throughout *The Great Gatsby* the six main characters (Nick, Gatsby, Tom, Daisy, Jordan and Myrtle) attend, throw and “live” parties that Fitzgerald believed embodied the spirit of “the Jazz Age.” As an exercise in understanding character, you will create and plan a party for one of the six characters. You may choose if you are planning a party for a character or by a character (a party for Daisy or a party thrown by Daisy for Gatsby, for example). You must be as detailed as possible in your planning including location, time, occasion, attire, specific foods and drinks, entertainment, theme and guest list. Remember, other than Myrtle and to some extent Nick, these are all very wealthy people. You may choose any time period – including now – to set the party in. **Most importantly – and the hardest part of the assignment – make sure that the party accurately reflects the character!** No character is simple, and the best (and only) place to start is in the text with the characters themselves. You must understand who the character is before you can plan the party.

Your plans must be neatly written up with explanations and connections to the character. You must justify your decisions about the party with direct, specific connections to the text. For example, Daisy may plan a summer party with white as the predominant color since she almost always appears dressed in white or cream tones. Or Myrtle may throw a party for her lover and use his checkbook to do so, but because she has no real experience with money or people of “class” she would choose tacky decorations and food – cocktail weenies instead of oysters on the half-shell, or Hostess Twinkies instead of chocolate mousse.

Recap: 1. As a group, get to know your character. 2. Plan a detailed party for/by your character including location, time, occasion, specific foods and drinks, attire, entertainment, guest list, theme, decorations, time period, etc. You may use the library resources made available to you. 3. Neatly write or type up plans with explanations and connections between choices and characters, justifying your decisions with direct textual references. (make sure all members of the group have their names on the ONE paper you will turn in) 4. Due 12/2

Part II – Individual work -As an exercise in understanding Fitzgerald’s **style** of writing, you will write about a moment – a specific scene, image or action – from the party you have planned, and do it in a style as close to Fitzgerald’s as you can. In order to do this successfully you need to once again return to the text, looking closely at how Fitzgerald describes his characters, setting and events. Things to consider might be Fitzgerald’s diction and syntax, his use of color, sensory descriptions, repetition, dialogue, and use of figurative language (simile and metaphor). Once you feel secure about the style, envision and then write your scene. It should be about 1-2 pages double spaced.

Recap – 1. Figure out Fitzgerald’s style (we’ll discuss in class). 2. Imagine a scene from the party you have planned (part 1 above) and write about it in Fitzgerald’s style. Multiple examples of sensory description and figurative language should be used, as well as a first person narrator point of view and some dialogue. 3. Should be about 1-3 double spaced pages. 4. Due 12/6 period 2, 12/5 period 5