'FLÉD IS THAT MUSÉ':

THE ROMANTIC VISION OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

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The totality of a life may be different in quality from its segments...

F. Scott Fitzgerald,
_Tender Is the Night_
If Fitzgerald's romantic vision had to be summed up in a single image, it would be that of the persistent, paradoxical attempt to turn reality into the imagination, and at the same time to turn imagination into reality through the act of creation. Romantic themes pervade his works from the apprenticeship fiction to *The Last Tycoon*, but it is the artfulness with which he structured and then restructured these themes from work to work which has been neglected by his critics who, in highlighting one theme or another in passing, have failed to show how each fits into the complex pattern of romantic themes which exists throughout. Though often treated ironically, the themes themselves—the youthful dream of an imaginative paradise, the inability of reality to live up to the dreamer's imaginative conception of it, the beautiful lady without mercy, the permanence of great art set against the painfully swift mutability of actual existence, the sinister consequences of an overextension of the imagination, the thirst for sensation rather than thought—constitute the aesthetic core of Fitzgerald's romantic vision. For this reason, the emphasis in this study is focussed upon thematic interpretation and interrelation directly associated with the English Romantic poets (Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats) from whom Fitzgerald had derived his major romantic themes.

Thus, Section I ('A High Romance'), begins with a brief survey of the relevant aspects of romanticism in general, and then English Romanticism in particular, and the manner in which these aspects came down to Fitzgerald through his predecessors, before examining Fitzgerald's own conception of romanticism as expressed, directly or indirectly, in the various works. Section II ('Of Clocks and Calendars'), is concerned with the romantic elements of Fitzgerald's concept of time which relate directly back to the English Romantics. Section III ('The Romantic Egotist in Search of Paradise'), centers
upon the theme of an imaginative dream of paradise and the impossibility of its realization, as expressed in *This Side of Paradise* and other early works. Section IV ('The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy'), is a study of the 'belle dame' and 'femme fatale' qualities of women in the early novels and stories. Section V ('Beyond the Shadow of a Dream'), concentrates upon the multiplicity of romantic themes in *The Great Gatsby*, and the relation of these to similar thematic developments in other works. Finally, Section VI ('The Queen Moon'), is concerned with the theme of the imagination extended too far beyond reality, as it is expressed in *Tender Is the Night*, and with the implications of this and other themes to Fitzgerald's romantic vision as a whole.

The emphasis throughout is upon the novels, although individual stories are discussed where they throw additional light on the theme or themes being discussed at a given point. (For the reader's convenience, stories cited in the text are also cross-referenced to the original Scribners collections in Appendix III.) Similarly, the autobiographical writings and aspects of the author's life are discussed only when they are of particular relevance to the interpretation of fictional works. Also, Fitzgerald's poems quoted in the frontispieces for various sections can be located in the 'Notebooks' included in *The Crack-Up* collection edited by Edmund Wilson. The bibliography included at the end of this study is limited to those materials either directly cited in the text or of particular interest with regard to Fitzgerald's romantic vision. (Two book length bibliographies, one of the entire output of the author and the other of criticism in all forms, have been published.) For ease of reference, standard Scribners editions currently in print have been used wherever possible. Finally, footnotes indicated with an asterisk (*) are distinguished from ordinary text references because they provide additional information which may be of interest to the reader.
A HIGH ROMANCE

Romanticism is disease, Classicism is health.

GOETHE

A movement to honour whatever Classicism rejected. Classicism is the regularity of good sense,—perfection in moderation; Romanticism is disorder of the imagination,—the rage of incorrectness. A blind wave of literary egotism.

BRUNETIÈRE

Classic art portrays the finite, romantic art also suggests the infinite.

HEINE

The return to nature.

ROUSSEAU

The addition of strangeness to beauty.

PATER

Whereas in classical works the idea is represented directly and with as exact an adaptation of form as possible, in romantic the idea is left to the reader's faculty of divination assisted only by suggestion and symbol.

SAINTSBURY

When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face, Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance, And think that I will never live to trace Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance

KEATS
With his 'Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance', John Keats probably came closer to the core of romanticism than many of the critics of his or any other day. Since it was first used, the term romantic has borne such a wide range of definitions that it has now become virtually meaningless. Curiously, it is doubtful that Keats himself had heard the term used in its critical reference:

England alone was spared these arguments, for the time being at any rate, because the English simply avoided the word and so gracefully side-stepped the issue of its meaning. Wordsworth does not use it in the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads; although he is expounding a new type of poetry, he does not call it 'romantic'. Nor is the term to be found in either Shelley's Defence of Poetry or Coleridge's Biographia Literaria; and when Keats uses it in a letter of 28 June 1818 it is in a non-literary sense as he mentions seeing 'the names of romantic misses on the inn window panes'. The term was not in fact applied to the English Literature of the early nineteenth century until much later, so that Carlyle could write in 1831, in an article on Schiller: 'we are troubled with no controversies on Romanticism and Classicism'.

Continental critics were considerably troubled. When he first used the term near the end of the eighteenth century, Friedrich Schlegel aroused a storm of controversy which has still not abated. In his Kritische Schriften, Schlegel commented: 'ist eben das romantisch, was uns einen sentimentalen Stoff in einer phantastischen Form darstellt' ('that is romantic which depicts emotional matter in an imaginative form'). So simple, and yet so very complicated indeed.

As Lilian Furst points out with regard to Schlegel's contribution: "In spite of his boast in 1797 that he had written some 125 pages in explanation of the term, he does not appear ever to have arrived at any single, let alone definitive meaning, and there can be no doubt that his writings are a fertile source of muddle and misunderstanding". Since Schlegel's early efforts, many a critic has fallen into the same sort of muddle in an attempt to define the term, and of the few who have managed something like a defensible definition, most have faced contradiction from all sides as a reward for their efforts. In his study, Rousseau and Romanticism, Irving Babbitt remarks:

(2) ibid., p. 7.
(3) ibid., p. 6.
A fruitful source of false definition is to take as primary in a more or less allied group of facts what is actually secondary—for example, to fix upon the return to the Middle Ages as the central fact in romanticism, whereas this return is only symptomatic; it is very far from being the original phenomenon. Confused and incomplete definitions of romanticism have indeed just that origin—they seek to put at the centre something that though romantic is not central but peripheral, and so the whole subject is thrown out of perspective. 4

Having so succinctly come to terms with the failure of critics to produce a convincing definition, however, Babbitt only goes on to commit the same error:

In general a thing is romantic when, as Aristotle would say, it is wonderful rather than probable; in other words, when it violates the normal sequence of cause and effect in favor of adventure. The whole movement is filled with the praise of ignorance, and of those who still enjoy its inappreciable advantages,—the savage, the peasant, and above all the child.

The confusion which the term 'romantic' has aroused is as much the fault of the critics who have used it as it is that of the complexities of the various periods and works with which it is associated. Contradicting one another, and at times contradicting themselves, critics have associated the term with 'unreal' as well as with 'realistic', with 'futile' and with 'heroic', with conservative and with 'revolutionary', with 'bombastic' and with 'picturesque', with 'formless' and with 'formalistic'. 5 The chaos is not only apparently endless, but also at times absurd: "Typical manifestations of the spiritual essence of Romanticism have been variously conceived to be a passion for moonlight, for red waistcoats, for Gothic churches, for futurist paintings; for talking exclusively about oneself, for hero-worship, for losing oneself in an ecstatic contemplation of nature." 6

The "fertile source of muddle and misunderstanding" which Schlegel intimated at the end of the eighteenth century has seemingly been extended rather than elucidated:

The word 'romantic has come to mean so many things that, by itself, it means nothing. It has ceased to perform the function of a verbal sign. When a man is asked, as I have the honor of being asked, to discuss Romanticism, it is impossible to know what ideas or tendencies he is to talk about, when they are supposed to have flourished, or in whom they are supposed to be chiefly exemplified. 7

With Lovejoy's wariness with regard to choosing a definition for romanticism we are apparently returned to the "Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance" which

(5) Furst, Lilian, Romanticism, Methuen, p. 2.
(7) Ibid., p. 6.
Keats had described in his sonnet, "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be".

The symbols are most certainly both huge and cloudy, not to mention numerous.

In his definitive work, The Mirror and the Lamp, M. H. Abrams distinguishes romanticism from classicism symbolically, in that the romantics replaced the classical image of art as a 'mirror held up to nature' with the more 'expressive' image of a 'lamp' projecting rather than merely reflecting essential truths.

As A. W. Schlegel wrote in 1801, referring to the vocal signs of feeling, 'The word expression (Ausdruck) is very strikingly chosen for this: the inner is pressed out as though by a force alien to us.' 'Poetry', said John Stuart Mill, is 'the expression or uttering forth of feeling'; and 'utter' in its turn derives from the Old English word for 'out', and is cognate with the German 'Aussern.' 'Behold now the whole character of poetry', wrote an anonymous contemporary in Blackwood's Magazine: 'it is essentially the expression of emotion'. In his version of the doctrine, the Reverend John Keble focuses upon the pressure in 'expression', and develops a definition of poetry as personal catharsis which he opposes to Aristotle's mimesis, as this had been traditionally interpreted. 8

The romantics broke off directly from the tradition of Aristotle's mimesis, of art as 'imitation', to establish the primacy of 'expression', in words (though usually metrical), of feeling and emotion. Suddenly the poet's own feelings at the moment of creation took on a new importance in the critical interpretation of art. As early as 1800, Wordsworth stated that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", though moderated by long and deep thought. With Coleridge's crucial distinction between the 'fancy' and the 'imagination', the creative principle of art as a personal expression replaced the classical principle of faithfulness through 'imitation'. Sympathetic critics responded in kind. In 1818, William Hazlitt stated that "Poetry is the language of the imagination and the passions" and then went on to discriminate between imitation and expression through the imagination:

Poetry then is an imitation of nature, but the imagination and the passions are a part of man's nature. We shape things according to our wishes and fancies, without poetry; but poetry is the most emphatical language that can be found for those creations of the mind 'which ecstasy is very cunning in'. Neither a mere description of natural objects, nor a mere delineation of natural feelings, however distinct or forcible, constitutes the ultimate end and aim of poetry, without the heightenings of the imagination. The light of poetry is not only a direct but also a reflected light, that while it shows us the object, throws a sparkling radiance on all around it: the flame of the passions, communicated to the imagination, reveals to us, as with a flash of lightning, the inmost recesses of thought, and penetrates our whole

being. Poetry represents forms chiefly as they suggest other forms: feelings, as they suggest forms or other feelings. Poetry puts a spirit of life and motion into the universe. It describes the flowing, not the fixed. 10

Hazlitt relates the new ideas on poetry to the old idea of imitation and then rejects the latter because it is insufficient; for it fails to take into account the creative aspect of the imagination. Comparing the imagination to a lamp, he emphasizes the importance of feelings in imaginative poetry, both for the projector and for the receiver of that essential illumination. Hazlitt also includes another factor, though, namely the sense of flowing, of motion rather than fixity. This gives a further dimension to the creative aspect of imaginative poetry in that no limits are imposed upon the senses by mere actuality; rather it "signifies the excess of the imagination beyond the actual or ordinary impression of any object or feeling". 11 Excess has become a key word in the understanding of romanticism; a term its opponents use abusively and its admirers use in praise, given the ambiguities of intention in criticism. Keats, an admirer of Hazlitt and one of the central figures of English romanticism, maintained that the "excellence of every art is in its intensity", a subtle variation upon "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" expressed earlier by Wordsworth.

In connection with Hazlitt's emphasis upon the sense of motion in the universe, of flux rather than fixity, another key aspect of romanticism developed around the concept of 'organicism' which was introduced into English criticism by Coleridge with the comment: "The rules of the imagination are themselves the very powers of growth and production". 12 The sense of growth, of creation from within, altered the concept of the imagination from a merely passive, or associative faculty, to an active and creative one. Wordsworth anticipated this shift in his early poem, "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey", where he says of perception: "of all that we behold / From this green earth; of all the mighty world / Of eye and ear, both what they half create, and what perceive". 13 Rejecting the association theory of Hartley, Coleridge replaced it with the distinction between the passive perception of fancy, and the creative perception.


(11) Loc. cit.


of imagination.

There are evidently two powers at work, which relatively to each other are active and passive; and this is not possible without an intermediate faculty, which is at once both active and passive. (In philosophical language, we must denominate this intermediate faculty in all its degrees and determinations, the IMAGINATION.)

Later it becomes clear that in addition to the division between fancy and the imagination, the latter is itself divided into two aspects, differing only in degree. The "primary IMAGINATION" Coleridge describes as "the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM". The "secondary Imagination" operates in a similar manner, but in a more minor degree: "It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate" and finally "to idealize and unify". By comparison, the fancy is relegated to "no other than a mode of Memory", only capable of receiving "all its materials ready made from the law of association".

Although Coleridge implies a relation between imagination and thought ("An IDEA in the highest sense of the word cannot be conveyed but by a symbol."), it was not until Shelley's "A Defence Of Poetry" in 1821 that reason and the imagination became explicitly linked:

According to one mode of regarding those two classes of mental action, which are called reason and imagination, the former may be considered as mind contemplating the relations borne by one thought to another, however produced; and the latter, as mind acting upon those thoughts so as to colour them with its own light, and composing from them, as from elements, other thoughts, each containing within itself the principle of its own integrity.

The relation between reason and the imagination, which crops up throughout the works as well as the critical writings, is one often overlooked by critics eager to denounce the 'excesses' of the movement. Wordsworth's emphasis upon the "philosophic mind" developed along with the imagination, Coleridge's philosophical arguments and probing aesthetics, Shelley's blend of Platonic ideas and the imagination, and even Keats's reluctant admission upon the need for "a complex mind—one that is imaginative and at the same time careful of its fruits—who would exist partly on Sensation partly on thought" all of these suggest the sense of essential balance upon which the romantic revolution was based.

If we wish to distinguish a single characteristic which differentiates the English Romantics from the poets of the eighteenth century, it is to be found in the importance which they attached to the imagination and the special view which they held of it. On this, despite significant differences on points of detail, Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats agree, and for each it sustains a deeply considered 'theory of poetry.'

The imagination, with its visionary rather than merely associative aspect, thus replaces the mirror with the lamp, imitation with expression, to add a whole new dimension to English poetry of the early nineteenth century and then beyond.

In his probing essay, "Toward a Theory of Romanticism", Morse Peckham seeks to clarify the ambiguities associated with the term romanticism by establishing a temporal distinction which is useful, if not altogether accurate:

First, although the word 'romanticism' refers to any number of things, it has two primary referents: (1) a general and permanent characteristic of mind, art, and personality, found in all periods and in all cultures; (2) a specific historical movement in art and ideas which occurred in Europe and America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

In spite of his attempt to separate these two "primary referents" ("There may be a connection between the two, but I doubt it"), Peckham has betrayed his own intention by the end of the article:

In short, the history of ideas and the arts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is the history of the dramatic struggle among three opposing forces: static mechanism, negative romanticism, and positive romanticism. In this drama, to me the hero is dynamic and diversitarian organicism, and I think Goethe and Beethoven and Coleridge and the other founders of the still vital romantic tradition—a tradition often repudiated by those who are at the very heart of it, and understandably—have still much more to say to us, are not mere intellectual and aesthetic curiosities.

Echoing Hazlitt's emphasis upon "the flowing, not the fixed", Peckham quotes Arnold ("Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it") in defence of his claim for the continuity of romanticism, and then proceeds to cite such unlikely bedfellows as Picasso, Charles Raven and Ruth Benedict as examples of this still extant phenomenon in the twentieth century. In the process of evolving his theory of 'negative romanticism' (the uncertain and transitional state between the eighteenth century belief in a "static mechanism" and the nineteenth (and twentieth) century belief in a "dynamic and diversitarian organicism" (positive romanticism)) he has extended his historical romanticism and thereby linked it to the wider

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(20) Ibid., p. 20.
referent that he had previously dissociated it from—"a general and permanent characteristic of mind, art and personality, found in all periods and in all cultures".

Although negative and then positive romanticism developed by reaction out of the static-mechanistic-uniformitarian complex, with its cosmic Toryism, is sentimentalism, and its Deism, they were also superimposed upon it. At any point in nineteenth- or twentieth-century culture it is possible to take a cross section and find all three actively at work. The past one hundred and fifty years or so must be conceived as a dramatic struggle, sometimes directly between positive romanticism and static, mechanism thought, sometimes three-cornered. It is a struggle between minds and within minds. 21

Thus the radical alteration in the attitude to artistic expression initiated by the romantics is carried forward from "a specific historical movement in art and ideas which occurred in Europe and America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries" to stand as "the still vital romantic tradition". It is primarily because of its inherent organicism, its sense of "growing and becoming", that romanticism eludes definition even today, inasmuch as it is still going on, both in the works of art which are being created and between and within the critics who are examining those creations.

The now current, though probably not widely accepted (this was in 1951), critical principle that a symbolic system is capable of an indefinite number of equally valid interpretations is itself a romantic idea, in the sense that the work of art has no fixed or static meaning but changes with the observer in a relationship between the two which is both dialectical, or dynamic, and organic. 22

As early as 1759, Young had advanced the 'organic' nature of artistic creation in his "Conjectures on Original Composition": "An Original may be said to be of a vegetable nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it grows, it is not made. Imitations are often a sort of manufacture, wrought up by those mechanics, art and labour, out of pre-existent materials not their own." 23

With regard to this assertion, Raymond Williams sees it as more than a merely literary theory limited to its own day:

But what Young is saying when he defines an 'original' is, if we look at his terms, very closely linked with a whole general movement of society. It is certainly literary theory, but as certainly it is not being formulated in isolation. When he says of an original that 'it grows, it is not made', he is using the exact terms on which Burke based his whole philosophical criticism of the new politics. The contrast between 'grows' and 'made' was to become the contrast between

(22) Ibid., p. 10.  
'organic' and 'mechanical' which lies at the very centre of a
tradition which has continued to our own day. 24

The sense of growth from within, of Keats's "That which is creative must create
itself", 25 radically altered the manner in which the work of art is to be
approached; for denying any "fixed or static meaning", it also denies any "fixed
or static" interpretation of that work. Imaginative truth, with all of its
inherent ambiguities, its subject to all of the variables of personality
which go into the romantic concept of creation, deprives the critic of any
sense of certainty when he comes to the question of interpretation or meaning.
Everything is "flowing"; nothing is "fixed".

The lack of a fixed or static meaning in artistic works of the last two
centuries has thoroughly confounded many critics, most especially perhaps the
avowedly 'anti-romantic' advocates of New Criticism. And yet, for all his insist-
ence upon tradition and the pre-romantics, what could be more romantic than T.
S. Eliot's description of an 'objective correlative' in art?

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an
'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation,
a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the exter­nal facts, which must terminate in sensory
experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. 26

Eliot is not all that far from Blake's emphasis upon the "doors of perception"
in "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell", those "five fold" senses through which
man attains both a sensual and imaginative awareness of his own existence, and
of an existing infinity. Even more revealing with regard to the inherent ro­
anticism of Eliot's concept is William Hazlitt's definition of poetry as "the
natural impression of any object or event, by its vividness exciting an invol­
untary movement of imagination and passion, and producing, by sympathy, a certain
modulation of the voice, or sounds expressing it". 27

The ramifications of romanticism evidenced in the twentieth century extend
far beyond Eliot's 'Objective Correlative', however, for as Northrop Frye
points out:

The tradition of symbolisme is present in imagism, where the primacy
of visual values is so strongly stated in theory and so cheerfully
ignored in practice, in Pound's emphasis on the spatial juxtaposing

(9/10/1913), p. 223.
(27) Hazlitt, W., "On Poetry in General", in English Literary Criticism, p. 122.
of metaphor, in Eliot's insistence on the superiority of poets who present the 'clear visual images' of Dante. T. E. Hulme's attack on the Romantic tradition is consistent in preferring fancy to the imagination and in stressing the objectivity of the nature to be imitated; less so in his primitivism and his use of Bergson.... What this anti-Romantic did not do was to create a third framework of imagery. Nor did it return to the older construct, though Eliot, by sticking closely to Dante and by depreciating the importance of the prophetic element in art, gives some illusion of doing so. The charge of subjectivity, brought against the Romantics by Arnold and often repeated later, assumes that objectivity is a higher attribute of poetry, but this is itself a Romantic conception, and came into English criticism with Coleridge. Anti-Romanticism, in short, had no resources for becoming anything more than a post-romantic movement.

Frye rests his argument here, suggesting that the first phase of the "reconsideration" of Romanticism "is to understand its continuity with modern literature" rather than to treat it as a past phenomenon. As Frye himself points out, this is precisely what has been done by Frank Kermode.

In his remarkable book, Romantic Image, Kermode extends the case for the inherent romanticism of the New Critics to the fundamental assumption of that movement:

The work of art considered as having 'a life of its own', supplying its own energy, and possessing no detachable meanings—yielding to no analysis, containing within itself all that is relevant to itself—the work of art so described invites an analogy with unconscious organic life, and resists, not only attempts to discuss it in terms of intention of the artist or detachable 'morals' or 'prose contents', but attempts to behave towards it as if it were a kind of machine.

The sense of self-containment in the work of art, the "analogy with unconscious organic life", suggests Young's insistence upon the fact that "it grows, it is not made" within "the vital root of genius". At the same time this 'vitality' in art ("The work of art considered as having 'a life of its own', supplying its own energy") goes back to Hazlitt's concept of flux: "Poetry puts a spirit of life and motion into the universe. It describes the flowing, not the fixed." The work of art offers no 'fixed' meanings, no absolutes of truth, but rather leaves the "idea" up to what Saintsbury referred to as "the reader's faculty of divination assisted only by suggestion and symbol". As Coleridge aptly stated in this regard, in art an "IDEA in the highest sense of the word cannot be conveyed but by a symbol".
Having thus suggested the link between the New Critics and Romanticism in a general sense, Kermode turns to a quotation from T. E. Hulme in order to make the same point more specifically:

I always think that the fundamental process at the back of all the arts might be represented by the following metaphor. You know what I call architect's curves—flat pieces of wood with all different kinds of curvature. By a suitable selection from these you can draw approximately any curve you like. The artist I take to be a man who simply can't get the idea of that 'approximately'. He will get the exact curve of what he sees whether it be an object or an idea in the mind. 34

For Hulme, then, art is not mechanistic (that is to say, not the 'imitative' mirror held up to nature by the pre-romantics) but rather organic, derived from within the artist's intuition of what is true. Mechanical devices, whether of form or thought, are of no avail to the artist at work. As a result, Kermode sees Hulme's theory of the "intensive manifold" as merely making "a show of being in opposition to Romantic imprecision":

This is the intensive manifold, by the very terms of the argument impossible to define; it is accessible only to intuition, belonging to a different order of reality. It is 'indescribable but not unknowable'. The artist knows it; it is his image. It is infinite, hence the need for precision. Its meaning is the same thing as its form, and the artist is absolved from participation with the discursive powers of the intellect. 35

Given the 'indefinability' of the concept, its intuitive aspect "belonging to a different order of reality", Hulme's 'intensive manifold', his 'idea in the mind', seems not all that far from Coleridge's idea conveyed by a symbol or Shelley's union of reason and the imagination, "containing within itself the principle of its own integrity". As in the case of Keats's theory of "Negative Capability" ("that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact or reason")36, while in the act of creation "the artist is absolved from participation with the discursive powers of the intellect".

Continuing his argument, Kermode finds in Vorticism "the images the Romantic poet has always sought", and that Pound's ideogram "is yet another variety of the Romantic image", before concluding:

(35) ibid., p. 143.
When the accounts come to be rendered, it may well appear to future historians that the greatest service done by early twentieth-century criticism to contemporary poetry has been this: it has shown poets a specially appropriate way of nourishing themselves from the past. It has shown them their isolation, and their necessary preoccupation with the Image, do not cut them off from all their predecessors, and that there are ways of looking at the past which provide valuable insights into essentially modern possibilities and predispositions.37

Thus the attitudes towards poetry and the principles of its composition that were first introduced into English literary criticism by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats (and others) not only did not die with the deaths of these poets, but have carried over into distinctions on the nature of art in the twentieth century.

This influence is not limited to poetry, however, for the romantic themes and symbols first expressed in metrical compositions have carried over into the development of the novel as well. In the first instance, this took the form of 'gothic' novels like Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Mrs. Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), but Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* in 1818 brought a new dimension to the gothic novel. In her preface to the novel, Mrs. Shelley describes her technique as affording "a point of view to the imagination for the delineating of human passions more comprehensive and commanding than any which the ordinary relations of existing events can yield" and then adds that "the most humble novelist, who seeks to confer or receive amusement from his labours, may, without presumption, apply to prose fiction a licence, or rather a rule, from the adoption of which so many exquisite combinations of human feeling have resulted in the highest specimens of poetry".38 Thus making direct the link between poetry and the novel, Mrs. Shelley emphasizes the importance of the "imagination" and the "passions", anticipating the work of greater novelists to come. Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* contrasts a realistic presentation with gothic and romantic themes of death and transfiguration and the apparent reality of dreams. Dickens's *Little Dorrit* draws directly upon the symbolism of Blake, and Hardy's novels are permeated with romantic themes as well as the gothic sense of fate. In her "Notes on Writing a Novel", Elizabeth Bowen states


(Preface written in 1817 to accompany the first edition of the novel in 31
that the object of the novel is "the non-poetic statement of a poetic truth".39

In American literature, there has been a similar sense of development. Ralph Waldo Emerson states that "in our fine arts, not imitation, but creation, is the aim",40 and this is borne out in Hawthorne's romances, in Melville's deeply imaginative symbolism, and in the blend of realism and imagination in the works of Twain. Both Hemingway and Faulkner tried their hands at the writing of verse before turning to the novel, and the effects of it remain visible in the novels themselves. But the writer who most directly dispensed with the Victorian reaction against the 'excesses' of imagination in romanticism was the deeply influential figure of Joseph Conrad:

The changing wisdom of successive generations discards ideas, questions facts, demolishes theories. But the artist appeals to that part of our being which is not dependent on wisdom: to that in us which is a gift and not an acquisition—and, therefore, more permanently enduring. He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives; to our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain; to the latent feeling of fellowship with all creation—to the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts, to the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn.41

Never was the case for romanticism in the novel more nobly stated; for the artist does not address himself to "wisdom" but rather "to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives", to the sort of ideas that Coleridge claimed could only be represented through symbols. The final phrases go further, however, to suggest the sense of a continuity in art beyond the convenience of critical labels for various periods, a continuity within the imagination binding together "all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn".

In light of these tendencies, it is hardly surprising that there should be romantic elements in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, but what is surprising is the degree of their importance in the full understanding of those works, especially since that importance has either been underestimated or even misunderstood by those critics who have attempted to study the influences.

Arthur Mizener, one of Fitzgerald's astutest critics, recognized this quality as early as 1946—"Fitzgerald's great accomplishment is to have realized in completely American terms the developed romantic attitude"—and yet he failed to establish any comprehensive support for the assertion. Lionel Trilling takes this a step further to state that Fitzgerald "put himself, in all modesty, in the line of greatness", both personally and artistically: "When he writes of his depression, of his 'dark night of the soul' where 'it is always three o'clock in the morning', he not only derives the phrase from St. John of the Cross but adduces the analogous black despairs of Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley". As Trilling states further, however:

It is hard to overestimate the benefit which came to Fitzgerald from his having consciously placed himself in the line of the great. He was a 'natural', but he did not have the contemporary American novelist's belief that if he compares himself with the past masters, or if he takes thought—which for a writer means really knowing what his predecessors have done—he will endanger the integrity of his natural gifts.

At Princeton and after, Fitzgerald immersed himself in the past masters of all three genres, and as John Kuehl points out in his article, "Scott Fitzgerald's Reading":

Because of the resurgence of lyricism in the work of the romantic poets, one is equally prepared to learn that the early nineteenth century was the first era, chronologically speaking, to influence Fitzgerald extensively. He had at least nodding acquaintance with Chatterton, Blake, Burns, Scott, Coleridge, Landor, and Hood; he was fond of Wordsworth's poems...and he recommended in one of the two surviving reading lists he composed for Miss Graham a number of Shelley pieces which she was to study in conjunction with André Maurois' 'Ariel'...but John Keats was Fitzgerald's favorite author. He provided Miss Graham with Sidney Colvin's Life and a Works in which he singled out several titles. "Ode to a Nightingale" was 'one of the greatest poems in our language' and "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "Ode on a Grecian Urn" were great English classics. Once he advised his daughter, who recalls that he went about the house reciting Keats from memory, to take the course "English Poetry: Blake to Keats", because 'a real grasp of Blake, Keats, etc. will bring you something you haven't dreamed of.'

Initially, these influences became expressed in Fitzgerald's attempts to write poetry, for as he said to his daughter only months before his death, "the talent that matures early is usually of the poetic type, which mine was in large part."
As Henry Dan Piper comments, Fitzgerald's early experiments with poetry were primarily important for their effect upon "the steadily improving texture of his prose", for "Through poetry—especially the poetry of Keats and his disciples, Wilde, Dowson, Rupert Brooke, with their emphasis on concrete sensuous imagery—Fitzgerald found a way of conveying depths of feeling for which his early realistic dialogue had been entirely inadequate".47 Much of Fitzgerald's apprenticeship was spent on poetry, both at Princeton and after. Later he criticized his daughter's writing for its "lack of distinction" and then added that "the only thing that will help you is poetry which is the most concentrated form of style".48 It was advice from the experience of his own apprenticeship. The same emphasis occurs again in an undated letter to Scottie during the same period: "I might say that I don't think anyone can write succinct prose unless they have tried and failed to write a good iambic pentameter sonnet, and read Browning's short dramatic poems, etc.—but that was my personal approach to prose."49 On another occasion, however, he was even more specific in his advice to his daughter on the lessons to be learned from poetry in the formulation of a prose style:

'About adjectives: all fine prose is based on the verbs carrying the sentences. They make the sentences move. Probably the finest technical poem in English is Keats' "Eve of St. Agnes". A line like 'the hare limped trembling through the frozen grass', is so alive that you race through it, scarcely noticing it, yet it has colored the whole poem with its movement—the limping, trembling and freezing is going on before your own eyes.'

With the publication of This Side of Paradise in 1920, Fitzgerald gave up any remaining ambitions with regard to the writing of poetry and turned all of his energies to prose. Ironically, he had first conceived of it as a novel in verse in the style of Byron's Childe Harold, but by the end he decided instead to merely 'sandwich' bits of poetry here and there throughout. With a sense of self-realization, Fitzgerald allowed Amory Blaine to comment reluctantly that "I'll never write anything but mediocre poetry"51, and yet it is not difficult to see

(48) The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Turnbull, Penguin, (to FSF, 29/7/1940)
(49) ibid., (to FSF, undated, pp. 117-13).
(50) ibid., (to FSF, Spring, 1938).
(51) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, (Scribners: 1970), p. 34.
just how extensively poetry influenced the development of his lyrical, lucid style.

If the poetry of the romantic poets and their disciples was of crucial importance in the development of his style, however, it was also of considerable significance with regard to the overall structuring of ideas and themes throughout the works. At Princeton, Amory Blaine reads "Belle Dame sans Merci" and finds that the world became pale and interesting.52 Later, he "declaims" "Ode to a Nightingale" to the bushes and makes the pronouncement "I'll never be a poet...I'm not enough of a sensualist really".53 This is Fitzgerald looking back upon his own youth at Princeton with a half ironic eye (and the worldly detachment that a couple of years distancing allows him); and yet the influence remains. The early reading of "La Belle Dame sans Merci" resurfaces in his second novel when Anthony Patch invokes the image of "la belle dame sans merci who lived in his heart". It is more than mere allusion, however, for the image becomes the dominant theme in the novel, so much so that Fitzgerald had originally intended to give it the title The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy. Similarly, Amory Blaine's early conflict between the sensual and the intellectual is picked up again in Tender Is the Night when Dick Diver recalls his student days in Zurich:

After the lectures at the university he used to argue this point with a young Romanian intellectual who reassured him: "There's no evidence that Goethe ever had a 'conflict' in the modern sense, or a man like Jung, for instance. You're not a romantic philosopher—you're a scientist. Memory, force, character—especially good sense. That's going to be your trouble—judgment about yourself..."54

Although he goes on to become a scientist, however, Dick's psychiatric knowledge and intellectual detachment are never quite sufficient to shut out this sense of personal conflict within and he remains a "romantic philosopher" underneath and in spite of all his training to the contrary. Ironically, Dick's final realization of the end of his dream within takes place on the Spanish Steps in Rome "where his spirit soared before the flower stalls and the house where Keats had died".55 The influence of the romantic poets, especially Keats, crops up again and again throughout the works with a deep and permeating significance.

(52) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 51.
(53) ibid., p. 84.
(55) ibid., p. 220.
Thus, at the end of *This Side of Paradise*, Amory Blaine discovers a deepening sense of awareness beyond the merely egotistical preoccupations with himself.

On the day that Amory started on his walk to Princeton the sky was a colorless vault, cool, high and barren of the threat of rain. It was a gray day, that least fleshly of all weather; a day of dreams and far hopes and clear visions. It was a day easily associated with those abstract truths and purities that dissolve in the sunshine or fade out in mocking laughter by the light of the moon. The trees and clouds were carved in classic severity; the sounds of the countryside had harmonized to a monotone, metallic as a trumpet, breathless as the Grecian urn. 56

The grayness of the day, "that least fleshly of all weather", calls up the gloomy images of Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty", which Fitzgerald had even more directly echoed in his early poems "The Way of Purgation" and "Princeton--the Last Day" (the latter he later 'translated' into prose and included in the text of the novel57). At the same time, however, it was a day "easily associated" with "abstract truths and purities that dissolve in the sunshine or fade out in mocking laughter by the light of the moon". At last Amory is beginning to detect the illusions which he has participated in throughout the novel, to see how they dissolve and fade in sunshine or by the light of the moon. The final phrase here parallels word for word the final line of Byron's "So We'll Go No More A Roving",* again suggesting Amory’s increasing awareness of the fatuousness of his earlier adventures. In direct contrast with the dissolving "abstract truths and purities", Amory sees the trees and clouds as "carved in classic severity", but classic in the romantic sense of a mood "breathless as the Grecian urn". On the one hand, breathless suggests excitement and expectation, while on the other it also suggests lifelessness in a static, still world like that of Keats’s Grecian Urn where love can only last through time because it remains unconsummated.

The same theme crops up again in *The Beautiful and Damned* when Anthony and Gloria Patch experience a "breathless idyl" immediately after their marriage. They soon discover that the "enraptured hours" of the realization of love cannot last, however, that the "magic must hurry on, and the lovers remain". 58

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57 ibid., p. 154.
harsh world which exists outside the romantic dream, the "breathless idyl"
assumes a delicate fragility of abstraction and its participants are subjected
quite literally to the harshest form of 'realization'. As Shelley said in "The Past":

Wilt thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heap'ing over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould?
Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
And with ghastly whispers tell
That joy, once lost, is pain. 59

Love, once consummated, loses its sense of idealization, its breathlessness,
and "knowing they had had the best of love, they clung to what remained".

The final stanza of Shelley's poem also suggests Gatsby's attempt to
recapture the past with Daisy, which, although he seems to manage momentarily,
is finally doomed to failure. Thus, at the moment of his death, Gatsby first
begins to realize "that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price
for living too long with a single dream";

He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves
and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw
the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material
without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted
fortuitously about...like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward
him through the amorphous trees. 60

The "romantic readiness" of Gatsby's dream renders him vulnerable in a world
"material without being real", suggesting an ambiguity of reality and dream
which occurs throughout Fitzgerald's works. The world is material, it has
essence, and yet it is not real. Is Gatsby's dream then the true reality? If
so, "There are ghosts that may take revenge for it" as they "glide through the
spirit's gloom" of merely "amorphous" trees, "breathing dreams like air" and
announcing, with existential emphasis, "That joy, once lost, is pain". Very
painful indeed. What does emerge, finally, is that Gatsby's dream cannot exist.

in its purity in an objective world of "frightening leaves" and "raw" sunlight where a rose—the actual, living, breathing kind as well as the poet's metaphor—becomes a "grotesque thing".

Traditionally, the rose has been used throughout literature as a symbol of corporeal love, subject to a variety of destructive forces through its very vulnerability:

O rose thou art sick.
The invisible worm,
That flies in the night
In the howling storm:

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy:
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

"The Sick Rose" was Blake's answer to the abject sentimentalism of his predecessors, Bunyon and Watts, in regard to natural defoliation (Bunyon had even eulogized the action of a snail devouring a flower as an expression of Christian piety). In Blake's poem, however, the worm becomes the destroyer of earthly love, invading the "bed / Of crimson joy" with his "dark secret love". Significantly, the worm is "invisible" and "flies in the night" (suggesting a maggot as well as a worm) aided, or at least unimpeded, by the "howling storm". For Blake, the howling storm symbolized materialism (compared with Gatsby's "new world, material without being real"), itself a destructive force set against the "crimson joy" of corporeal love. But when the rose itself becomes a "grotesque thing", the whole symbol is turned on its head with a new dimension of ambiguity. In The Great Gatsby, there is sickness in the rose all right, but it is a sickness from within as well as without.

Unlike the "classic severity" of the trees which Amory observes on his walk to Princeton, the trees around Gatsby's swimming pool remain merely "amorphous", even in the "raw sunlight" of the day of his death. Is it Gatsby's imposition of unreality upon the world, his boyhood belief in the "unreality of reality" mentioned earlier in the novel, or simply that reality itself lacks the cold objectivity attributed to it by the anti-romantic? The doubt

persists as long as it includes ghosts "breathing dreams like air" (whether real or imaginary the irony is profound), ghosts who have guns which shoot real bullets to produce a "breathlessness" beyond all imagining. Gatsby is dead, as is his ghostly murderer, and Daisy is allowed to retreat into the security of her material world with complete "carelessness"—but is that retreat a form of reality, or merely an escape from reality? Clearly, there are times in Fitzgerald's works when reality becomes a relative concept, when material presences are no guarantee of reality in the larger sense, even when they contain within themselves the source of a very real destruction.

Ironically, the first time Nick encounters Daisy in the novel she comments about him: "You remind me of a —of a rose, an absolute rose". Nick is bemused.

This was untrue. I am not even faintly like a rose. She was only extemporizing, but a stirring warmth flowed from her, as if her heart was trying to come out to you concealed in one of those breathless, thrilling words. 62

Nick realizes the illusion, the artificiality of the words themselves as she goes on "extemporizing", and yet he also senses the compelling quality of the voice behind the words and its "stirring warmth". The irony deepens with the fact that the words themselves are not only thrilling, but "breathless" as well, and yet not breathless in the same sense as the Grecian Urn or even that of the breathlessness of death, for the words themselves are meaningless—it is merely the quality associated with their utterance which is important. A moment later, Daisy seeks to break through the tension created by a telephone call from Tom's mistress with another allusion to traditional symbolism:

"I looked outdoors for a minute, and it's very romantic outdoors. There's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale come over on the Cunard or White Star Line. He's singing away—" Her voice sang: "It's romantic, isn't it, Tom?"
"Very romantic", he said... 63

Tom has no feeling for what the word romantic might mean, other than its most sentimental association perhaps, and he stands in the novel as the virtual epitome of materialism. A few pages earlier, Daisy describes him as "a brute of a man, a great, big, hulking physical specimen of a--"64 until she is finally cut off by his angry response. Just as ironic, however, is the very artificial nature of Daisy's imported nightingale, for she exists in a fabricated world

(63) ibid., p. 16.
(64) ibid., p. 12.
of protective artifice and false imagination. There is no nightingale on the lawn and neither is Nick "even faintly like a rose". Gatsby realizes something of this weakness in her and plays upon its very artificiality as a means of trying to win her back.

In Tender Is the Night, nightingales again appear symbolically (if with a greater sense of verisimilitude in the South of France) as Rosemary Hoyt finds herself unable to sleep:

A false dawn sent the sky pressing through the tall French windows, and getting up she walked out on the terrace, warm to her bare feet. There were secret noises in the air, an insistent bird achieved an ill-natured triumph with regularity in the trees above the tennis court... 65

At this point the bird is not specified, but when Abe North learns of her sleeplessness a moment later, he suggests that she was "Plagued by the nightingale... probably plagued by the nightingale". 66 An allusion to nightingales is hardly surprising considering the novel's title, and yet there is a deep sense of irony inherent in the reference, for in the early hours of the morning, even if it is a "false dawn", the bird in the trees is more likely to be a lark than it is a nightingale. Abe has apparently confused the issue in the same manner which Juliet hopes to do when she claims that "It was the nightingale, and not the lark, / That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear; / Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree".

Like the rose, the nightingale has been a traditional symbol in poetry, so much so that nearly a quarter-century before Keats's famous "Ode to a Nightingale", Coleridge could write of the symbol's overuse:

Sister of love-lorn Poets, Philomel!
How many Bards in city garret pent,
While at their window they with downward eye
Mark the faint lamp-beam on the kennelled mud,
And listen to the drowsy cry of Watchmen
(Those hoarse unfeathered Nightingales of Time!),
How many wretched Bards address thy name,
And hers, the full-orbed Queen that shines above. 67

In spite of his awareness of the overuse of the symbol, Coleridge justifies his use of it on the grounds that he actually was hearing a nightingale at the time of composition. In "The Nightingale", written three years later, Coleridge

65 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 40.
66 Ibid., p. 42.
again refers to the symbol’s overuse ("many a poet echoes the conceit"), before taking up the subject at length. In his "O Nightingale! thou surely art", Wordsworth sees the nightingale as a less melancholy "Creature of a fiery heart", with notes that "pierce, and pierce; / Tumultuous harmony and fierce! in order to sing "A song in mockery and despite / Of shades, and dews and silent Night". The latter seems more in keeping with the "insistent bird" and its "ill-natured triumph" which Rosemary hears outside her window in Tender Is the Night, and yet there is a pervasive sense of melancholy a moment later as she shifts her attention upward and beyond the immediate, material world:

Beyond the inky sea and far up that high, black shadow of a hill lived the Divers. She thought of them both together, heard them still singing faintly a song like rising smoke, like a hymn, very remote in time and far away. 69

Within this momentary sense of a transcendent reality, the Divers' world becomes linked with the nightingale, but with the nightingale in its most idealized form rather than the the material "insistent bird" which Rosemary hears (if indeed it was a nightingale). In its idealized state, the nightingale is associated with timelessness (Keats's "Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!"), as opposed to Coleridge's drowsy "watchmen" of the real, or at least the material world ("Those hoarse unfeathered Nightingales of Time"). The idealized nightingale exists beyond the material world, "very remote in time and far away", and yet there is a sense of "mockery", a "deceiving elf" quality behind the beautiful, transcendent presence when the observer is returned to the harsh world of reality.

Forlorn! The very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! The fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf. 70

The thematic duality of reality and illusion, of the material and immaterial worlds of everyday life and imaginative transcendence, fascinated Fitzgerald in much the same way as it did Keats and his contemporaries and yet, like them, he never lost sight of the illusions involved in such a dualistic conception.

To lose the balance between imagination and reality, between the subjective

(69) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 40.
and the objective outlook on life, was to render yourself vulnerable in a world material without being real. Gatsby lost this balance, and he paid for it with his life. Anthony Patch retreats into himself and away from his own sense of failure only to lose his sanity, his sense of balance. Dick Diver feels the need to balance his scientific, objective outlook with a more personal, subjective attitude, only to lose himself completely to the latter, and losing himself, he loses everything. In The Crack-Up, Fitzgerald chronicled his own failure to maintain the balance between objectivity and subjectivity, attributing "the morass in which I floundered" to the conviction "I felt—therefore I was", thus twisting Descartes's philosophical assertion with characteristic irony. At another point in the same context, he commented that "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function". It was balance that was crucial; the imaginative played off with irony, the actual diffused and recreated into a new reality with its own sense of meaning and purpose. As Fitzgerald himself commented in the year after The Great Gatsby was published:

The genius conceives a cosmos with such a transcendental force that it supersedes in certain sensitive minds, the cosmos of which they have been previously aware. The new cosmos instantly approximates ultimate reality as closely as did the last. As Hazlitt had said over a century before, "It describes the flowing, not the fixed"; for in describing reality, the artist recreates it, gives it new form and meaning beyond anything which had been attributed to it before.

Fitzgerald retained a deep admiration for the English Romantic poets throughout his life, but he also realized the dangers inherent in becoming too deeply entwined in a nineteenth century attitude to life while living in a twentieth century world. Within the artistic creation, beauty can be equated with truth, but outside that creation the two qualities become separate, at times even antagonistic. As if to emphasize the discrepancy between the two worlds, he later wrote out an 'updated' account of "Ode on a Grecian Urn".

(72) ibid., p. 69.
A Greek Cup Dug Up. 'Tas good as new! And think how long it was buried. We could learn a lot of history from it—about the rubes in ancient history, more than from any poetry about them. These pictures on it must tell a story about their Gods, maybe, or just ordinary people—something about life in the sticks at a place called Tempe. Or maybe it was in the Arcady Valley. These guys chasing the dames are in the sticks. The dames are trying to get away. Look—this guy's got a flute, or maybe it's an obo and they're going to town, etc. etc. 74

The apparent playfulness here, at the expense of one of his most treasured lyrics, is also an indictment of twentieth century philistinism, of the apathy to great art which he felt characterized the post-war world. Amory Blaine senses it in the "deadly Philistines" and "deadly grinds" he encounters at Princeton in This Side of Paradise, just as Anthony Patch comes to regret his abandonment of artistic potential in favor of social involvement in a facile world. Gatsby realizes the loss of "the old warm world" with the advent of a "new world, material without being real", and Dick Diver sees his dissipation reach a climax with "the end of his dream" in front of "the house where Keats had died", while Monroe Stahr wastes his talent in the unworthy world of Hollywood.

Whatever he had given away, however, in his ironic parody of "Ode On a Grecian Urn", Fitzgerald later recovered forever in a letter to his daughter only months before his death:

Poetry is either something that lives like fire inside you—like music to the musician or Marxism to the Communist—or else it is nothing, an empty, formalized bore around which pedants can endlessly drone their notes and explanations. 'The Grecian Urn' is unbearably beautiful with every syllable as inevitable as the notes in Beethoven's Ninth Symphony or it's just something you don't understand. It is what it is because an extraordinary genius paused at that point in history and touched it. I suppose that I've read it a hundred times. About the tenth time I began to know what it was all about, and caught the chime in it and the exquisite inner mechanics. Likewise with 'The Nightingale' which I can never read through without tears in my eyes; likewise with the 'Pot of Basil' with its great stanzas about the two brothers, 'Why were they proud', etc.; and 'The Eve of St. Agnes', which has the richest, most sensuous imagery in English, not excepting Shakespeare. And finally his three or four great sonnets, 'Bright Star' and the others.

Knowing those things very young and granted an ear, one could scarcely ever afterwards be unable to distinguish between gold and dross in what one read. In themselves those eight poems are a scale of workmanship for anybody who wants to know truly about words, their most utter value for evocation, persuasion or charm. For awhile after you quit reading Keats all other poetry seems to be only whistling or humming. 75

OF CLOCKS AND CALENDARS

O! call back yesterday, bid time return.

—RICHARD II

What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind,
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering.

—Wordsworth,
"Intimations of Immortality"

We rest.—A dream has power to poison sleep;
We rise.—One wandering thought pollutes the day;
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free:
Man's yesterday may never be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but Mutability.

—Shelley,
"Mutability"

An instant of time, without duration, is an imaginative logical construction. Also each duration of time mirrors in itself all temporal durations.

—A. N. Whitehead

Science and the Modern World
When Fitzgerald has Amory Blaine proclaim in *This Side of Paradise*: "I'm a romantic—a sentimental person thinks things will last—a romantic person hopes against hope that they won't," the result is at once a piece of adolescent fatuousness and a suggestion of something larger which will be developed more fully in later works. The distinction between the romantic and the sentimental is important to an understanding of Fitzgerald's fundamental romanticism. Immediately after the above remark Amory explains further that "Sentiment is emotional", implying a sharper, more positive aspect within the romantic point-of-view. If Keats was capable of bringing tears to his eyes, it was not because of any overt emotionalism, but rather because of the sheer "workmanship" of the words themselves, "their most utter value for evocation, persuasion or charm". The implied sense of the effects of time is also fundamental to Fitzgerald's romanticism, however, for it crops up thematically throughout the works to come.

Later in the same novel, Amory reaffirms his romanticism when it is challenged by Eleanor:

> "She leaned toward him, her burning eyes never leaving his own and whispered with a sort of romantic finality:  
> "I thought so, Juan, I feared so—you're sentimental. You're not like me. I'm a romantic little materialist."  
> "I'm not sentimental—I'm as romantic as you are. The idea, you know, is that the sentimental person thinks things will last—the romantic person has a desperate confidence that they won't." (This was an ancient distinction of Amory's.)"  

Once again Fitzgerald is flirting with an attitude which he would later develop with exacting thoroughness in the major works. Amory is hardly the Juan (whether it is the Don Juan of Byron or of Shaw is not established, but Fitzgerald was familiar with both) he tries so hard to emulate throughout the novel, but Eleanor's self-assessment as a "romantic little materialist" presages the long succession of Belle Dame heroines who will follow her in later works. The distinction between the romantic and the sentimental is emphasized again here, but with a more ironic implication when Eleanor joins the former with "materialist".

(2) ibid., p. 229.
Materialism and acquisition were Victorian qualities which Fitzgerald scorned, and yet he was obsessed with money and the effects which it could have upon individual lives. His resentment of the Victorians is expressed by Amory during a lecture on Tennyson at Princeton.

"And entitled A Song in the Time of Order", came the professor's voice, droning far away. "Time and Order"—Good Lord! Everything crammed in the box and the Victorians sitting on the lid smiling serenely...With Browning in his Italian villa crying bravely: "All's for the best".

Disillusioned by the advent of World War I, Amory scorns what the professor calls "idealized order against chaos, against waste" in both Tennyson and Swinburne (for, as the professor comments, "Swinburne's Song in the Time of Order might well have been Tennyson's title"). The Victorian attempt to hold the lid on by smiling serenely aggravates Amory in the same way in which it aggravated Fitzgerald, and he writes a poem which he gives to the professor at the end of the lecture. The first stanza reads:

Songs in the time of order
You left for us to sing,
Proofs with excluded middles,
Answers to life in rhyme,
Keys of the prison warder
And ancient bells to ring
Time was the end of riddles,
We were the end of time...

Announcing "coldly" that "Here's a poem to the Victorians, sir," as he hands it over, Amory blames the Victorians for their "Proofs with excluded middles" and "Answers to life in rhyme". It was not enough to last through "time", and time is one of the major aspects of Fitzgerald's romantic vision.

From the very beginning he showed facility and that minute awareness of the qualities of times and places and persons which is sharpened to a fine point in the romantic writer by his acute consciousness of the irrevocable passage of everything into the past. "He was haunted," as Malcolm Cowley has said, "by time, as if he wrote in a room full of clocks and calendars". A romantic writer of this kind is bound to take as his characteristic subject his own past, building out of the people and places of his own time fables of his own inner experience...

With his "desperate confidence" that things will not last, Amory rejects the Victorian assertion of "Time and Order" in favor of imagination and personal adventure, seeking self-awareness through immediate, but transitory relationships

(3) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 151.
(4) ibid., p. 152.
with a string of 'belle dame' heroines. "Amory was on fire to be an habitué of roof-gardens, to meet a girl who should look like that—better, that very girl; whose hair would be drenched with golden moonlight, while at his elbow sparkling wine was poured by an unintelligible waiter." As ever with the romantic, however, the reality of each relationship proves inadequate to the dream which has fostered it and Amory ends "Alone and palely loitering" in disillusionment and despair.

The delectability of the romantic moment is derived specifically from the "confidence" that things cannot last, that the moment will pass and leave the dreamer with nothing more than memory. Thus, when Rosalind has thrown him over, Amory finds the would-be permanence of a photograph "unreal":

Amory walked into his bedroom. The first thing that met his glance was a photograph of Rosalind that he had intended to have framed, propped up against a mirror on his dresser. He looked at it unmoved. After the vivid mental pictures of her that were his portion at present, the portrait was curiously unreal.

Amory implicitly mocks his own intention to have the photograph framed, to make it even more permanent when in fact its permanence is merely artificial, or "unreal". The camera delineates things as they are, mimetically rather than imaginatively, an imitation of life rather than having any life of its own (this is further emphasized by the fact that the photograph of Rosalind is "propped up against a mirror on the dresser"). Even in disillusionment, however, Amory still clings to to his dream of her, those "vivid mental pictures" which by implication remain very real indeed.

In The Beautiful and Damned, Fitzgerald returned to the theme of permanence and impermanence in his description of the relationship between Anthony Patch and Gloria Gilbert:

"Anthony for the moment wanted fiercely to paint her, to set her down now, as she was, as with each relentless second she could never be again. "What were you thinking?" she asked.

"Just that I'm not a realist," he said, and then: "No only the romanticist preserves the things worth preserving." 8

Anthony's "fierce" desire to "paint her, to set her down now, as she was, as with each relentless second she could never be again" would seem to contradict the views of Amory, especially with the remark that "only the romanticist

(6) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 30.
(7) Ibid., p. 207.
(8) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 73.
preserves the things worth preserving". Like Amory, Anthony realizes that everything as it exists is transitory in the "irrevocable passage of everything into the past", and yet he wants to preserve that moment, to hold it in suspension forever. There is an important difference between a photograph and a painting, however, in that the former is the product of a mechanistic device—the camera, and the latter is the personal expression of an individual artist. True, the photographer selects his subject and its treatment, but he is inevitably limited by the mirror-like reproductive capabilities of his instrument. The artist, on the other hand, seeks to capture his own perception of the subject in a particular or personal style, "to show its vibration, its color, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its color, reveal the substance of its truth—disclose its inspiring secret". Anthony wants more than a picture of Gloria, he wants to capture his own "vivid mental pictures" of her at that very moment, "as she was, as with each relentless second she could never be again". The same theme occurs again in Tender Is the Night, where the young Nicole, infatuated with Dick while he is treating her, tells him: "I'd like to draw you just the way you are now". The desire to circumvent the effects of time through art, to transform the transitory actual into a timeless work of art which is free from the mutability of its subject, is characteristically romantic in nature. The classic example of this view of art is of course found in Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn".

Although Keats describes the subjects depicted on the urn, he is not trying to reproduce its actuality, but rather to suggest the variety of imaginative responses it produces in the mind of the beholder. The scenes on the urn are frozen, the melodies "unheard", the love "For ever warm and still to be enjoyed". On the one hand, this is the highest sort of artistic accomplishment—to immortalize a particular moment in time—and yet on the other, it suggests a mood which is somehow inert, lifeless, and "Cold":

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! With brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed—
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity. Cold pastoral!

(10) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 142.
Although they have attained a sort of eternity through art, there is also a sinister undertone to the "happy, happy boughs, that cannot shed/Your leaves," just as there is in the love "For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,/For ever panting, and for ever young". The price of eternity is apparently lifelessness, for what is youth if it is not passing and what is love if it is not consummated? Any nature which is not regenerated becomes 'unnatural'. These ironic implications are inherent in the structural ambiguities of the poem, for the scenes depicted on the urn remain "All breathing human passion far above". The urn suggests a sort of immortality far above any merely breathing human passion, but it is a mode of existence which has been abstracted from life rather than being a part of life itself. Gatsby realizes this when he sacrifices "the incomparable milk of wonder" associated with his personal vision for the "perishable breath" of Daisy, just as Anthony's desire to "set her down now, as she was, as with each relentless second she could never be again" emphasizes his awareness of the mutability of beauty and of existence itself. He cannot immortalize Gloria or her beauty; he can at best preserve some abstraction of that beauty, of the way she was to him at that particular moment in time. Gatsby needs no painting, for the image of Daisy's "incarnation" five years before is imprinted within his imagination, to be "recollected in tranquillity" whenever necessary, a perception half created, half perceived, but alive as long as he is alive.

On the same subject of mutability, Amory Blaine is far more specific with his "desperate confidence" that things will not last, and his attitude on the idea of remaining "for ever young" is even more strongly stated:

Youth is like having a big plate of candy. Sentimentalists think they want to be in the pure, simple state they were in before they ate the candy. They don't. They just want the fun of eating it all over again. The matron doesn't want to repeat her girlhood--she wants to repeat her honeymoon. I don't want to repeat my innocence. I want the pleasure of losing it again. 13

This is a far cry from the love "For ever warm and still to be enjoyed" that the lovers on the urn share as they remain "for ever young", but then Keats is playing with the ironic implications within the poem and within the nature of the urn which it describes.

(13) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 258.
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know. 14

Taken on one level, Keats is positing the mutual dependence of beauty and truth, but taken on another, he is limiting this position to the static (or more appropriately "still") world of the urn, where mutability is no longer a factor and beauty is eternal, as opposed to the temporal world "Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,/ Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow". The urn is above "All breathing human passion", abstracted from life and its "other woe" just as it is abstracted from the effects of time. Thus the aphorism uttered by the urn, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty", is only logically consistent within the abstracted world of the urn itself.

Anthony's desire to paint Gloria, "to set her down now", is a desire to create an urn, a record of her beauty which will last through time because it is no longer a part of time. Ironically, Gloria doesn't want her beauty preserved, and she counters Anthony's insistence that "only the romanticist preserves the the things worth preserving" with a logic that is very close to that of Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise*:

"Don't you want to preserve old things?"
"But you can't, Anthony. Beautiful things grow to a certain height and then they fail and fade off, breathing out memories as they decay. And just as any period decays in our minds, the things of that period should decay too, and in that way they're preserved for a while in the few hearts like mine that react to them... There's no beauty without poignancy and there's no poignancy without the feeling that it's going, men, names, books--bound for dust--mortal..." 15

For Gloria, to hold a moment in suspended animation is to destroy its poignancy, whether it happens to be Anthony's desire to paint her or that ancient artist's attempt to preserve those scenes depicted on the urn beyond the reach of time. With telling accuracy, she includes in her argument the remark: "Would you value your Keats letter if the signature had been traced over to make it last longer?". 16

Unless it possesses a beauty of its own, art is nothing more than artifice, an artificial record of the past which she says "is like trying to keep a dying man alive by stimulants". That which is beautiful is beautiful because it

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(16) ibid., p. 167.
cannot last.

Earlier in the same novel, Fitzgerald suggests a similar sense of the Keatsian suspension from the effects of time with the retrospective summary of Anthony and Gloria's marriage after the breathless idyl which preceded it:

The breathless idyl of their engagement gave way, first, to the intense romance of the more passionate relationship. The breathless idyl left them, fled on to other lovers; they looked around one day and it was gone, how they scarcely knew. Had either of them lost the other in the days of the idyl, the love lost would have been ever to the loser the dim desire without fulfilment which stands back of all life. But magic must hurry on, and the lovers remain...

Once again, the moment outside of time is "breathless" ("All breathing human passion far above"!), and yet it only appears to be beyond the effects of time, as the two lovers realize when they come down to "the intense romance of the more passionate relationship!". Like the nightingale's song in Keats's other great ode, the breathless idyl moves on to other lovers, the fleeting moment is lost and they are left behind.

But, knowing they had had the best of love, they clung to what remained. Love lingered--by way of long conversations at night into those stark hours when the mind thins and sharpens and the borrowings from dreams become the stuff of all life, by way of deep and intimate kindnesses they developed toward each other, by way of their laughing at the same absurdities and thinking the same things noble and the same things sad.

Returned to reality, the lovers lose the "breathless idyl" but gain a sharper awareness of their own situation within the actual, temporal world. Unlike the lovers on the urn, who are poised forever on the brink of consummation,

Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal--yet do not grieve:
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Anthony and Gloria consummate their love at the end of the "breathless idyl", only to see it vanish with the inevitable return to reality. At the same time, however, they have transcended "the dim desire without fulfilment" which is precisely the situation of Keats's lovers, for whom the moment can remain idealized because it is never realized. Later, in direct contradiction of the urn's aphorism, Anthony comments: "I learned a little of beauty--enough to know that it had nothing to do with truth". The realization is repeated

(18) ibid., p. 253.
even more directly near the end of the novel when Anthony gets drunk as a means of forgetfulness:

There was a kindliness about intoxication—there was that indescribable gloss and glamour it gave, like the memories of ephemeral and faded evenings...the fruit of youth or of the grape, the transitory magic of the brief passage from darkness to darkness—the old illusion that truth and beauty were in some way entwined.  20

Beauty and truth can only remain combined in the static, idealized world of the urn, a world breathless but still.

Shortly before he completed his third novel, Fitzgerald wrote in a letter to Maxwell Perkins: "That's the whole burden of this novel—the loss of those illusions that give such color to the world that you don't care whether things are true or false as long as they partake of the magical glory".  21 After his early idealization of the romantic poets ("Shelley was a God to me once")  22, Fitzgerald began to detect the illusions involved in their view of art and life, illusions which are often rendered ironically by the poets themselves. Shelley's "Ozymandias" is an ironic indictment of man's desire for timelessness through attainment, the inscription "Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" taking on a new meaning amid the crumbled ruins of the statue. Keats renders the urn's assertion with an undertone of ambiguous irony, a mood which Fitzgerald catches in an allusion to the poem in The Great Gatsby: "There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy, and the tired".  23

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Nick makes the comment in a moment of deflation, adding to the "pursued, the pursuing" the more realistic figures of "the busy, and the tired". In Keats's ode, however, the "wild ecstasy" exists only in the imagination of the perceiver confronted by the images on the urn, for inevitably those "marble men and maidens overwrought" (and "overwrought itself ironic) are suspended in a world "All breathing human passion far above". Fitzgerald understands the ironies involved, and gives them new emphasis and a further dimension with his use of romantic themes within the context of twentieth century America.

(22) The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Turnbull, (to MP, 18/6/24), Penguin.
Thus, when Daisy finally comes to one of Gatsby's parties, she sees
"something awful in the very simplicity she failed to understand"\textsuperscript{24}, although
there is one aspect of it which she likes, namely "a gorgeous, scarcely human
orchid of a woman who sat in state under a white-plum tree".\textsuperscript{25}

Almost the last thing I remember was standing with Daisy and watching
the moving-picture director and his Star. They were still under the
white-plum tree and their faces were touching except for a pale, thin
ray of moonlight between. It occurred to me that he had been very
slowly bending toward her all evening to attain this proximity, and
even while I watched I saw him stoop one ultimate degree and kiss at
her cheek.

"I like her," said Daisy, "I think she's lovely." \textsuperscript{26}

In direct contrast to the "wild ecstasy" of the party going on about them, the
star and her director offer a twentieth century version of the lovers on the
urn. Whereas the lovers never kiss, however, the director does finally win
near enough to "kiss at her cheek" to suggest that they are "human" after all.
Ironically, moving-pictures were still silent in 1922, adding another aspect
to this wordless communication taking place almost imperceptibly "all evening".
The sense of timelessness suggested by the pair appeals to Daisy in the "soft
black morning", a blending of the senses not unlike that which Fitzgerald
borrowed from Keats for the title of his fourth novel, \textit{Tender Is the Night}.
The world in which this is taking place is not timeless, however, as the blunt
intrusion of Tom all too clearly demonstrates a moment later.

With his "extraordinary gift for hope", his "romantic readiness"\textsuperscript{27}, Gatsby
exists as a romantic dreamer in an unromantic world, believing "the old illusion
that beauty and truth were in some way entwined" and that time could not only
be stopped, but that it could be put back as well.

"I wouldn't ask too much of her," I ventured. "You can't repeat
the past."
"Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course
you can!"
He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in
the shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand. \textsuperscript{28}

Gatsby wants Daisy as she was, not as she is, and even more than that he
wants her to live up to the "incarnation" of her which he has half perceived,

\textsuperscript{(25)} ibid., p. 108.
\textsuperscript{(26)} ibid., p. 108.
\textsuperscript{(27)} ibid., p. 2.
\textsuperscript{(28)} ibid., p. 111.
half created since those early encounters five years before. His dream of Daisy, his attempt to repeat the past, his intrinsic belief in the "unreality of reality... that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing," all contribute to his downfall at the end of the novel. There is a further irony in the reference to "a fairy's wing", however, in that Daisy's maiden name is Fay, an alternative spelling of fairy (Keats uses it with the "starry fays" referred to in "Ode to a Nightingale"). Gatsby's "romantic readiness" renders him vulnerable when he tries to put it into practice in the non-abstracted, material world of twentieth century America where passions are not only consummated but also destroyed.

Gatsby is a romantic in the most unbounded sense of the word, the very sense which Wordsworth expressed in the final book of The Prelude:

By love, for here
Do we begin and end, all grandeur comes,
All truth and beauty, from pervading love,
That gone, we are but dust.

With his benign optimism, Wordsworth lacks the undertone of irony implicit in Keats's assertion on truth and beauty, and so subscribes to "the old illusion that beauty and truth were in some way entwined". For the unbounded romantic, love becomes a means of escape from the harsher realities of life and from the irrevocable passage of time. Ultimately, however, the realization of the transitory nature of love finally produces a return to reality, if unwilling, as well as a realization of the inevitable mutability of all life on earth. As Gloria Patch so aptly put it: "There's no beauty without poignancy and there's no poignancy without the feeling that it's going, men, names, books, houses--bound for dust--mortal--". For Gloria, the "grandeur" of love derives from the knowledge that it cannot last, that it is bound for the "dust" which Wordsworth mentions. In this she is closer to Blake's "Eternity":

He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses the joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunshine.

Gatsby kisses the joy, but when it flies he goes after it in a desperate attempt to bind it to himself forever.

The attempt to repeat the past is doomed from the beginning because time cannot be repeated or put back, and doomed as well because of the "perishable breath" of the very 'human' dream object herself:

He wanted nothing less of Daisy than that she should go to Tom and say: "I never loved you". After she had obliterated four years with that sentence they could decide upon the more practical measures to be taken. One of them was that, after she was free, they were to go back to Louisville and be married from her house—just as if it were five years ago.

"And she doesn't understand," he said. "She used to be able to understand. We'd sit for hours—"

Gatsby's desire to go back and begin again, to obliterate the intervening four years with a simple denial of love, reaffirms his belief in the "unreality of reality". A few pages later, however, he is confronted by a particular form of reality which cannot be conveniently "obliterated":

The child, relinquished by the nurse, rushed across the room and rooted shyly into her mother's dress.

"The bless-sed precious! Did mother get powder on your old yellowy hair? Stand up now, and say—How-de-do."

Gatsby and I in turn leaned down and took the small reluctant hand. Afterward he kept looking at the child with surprise. I don't think he had ever really believed in its existence before.

But the child does exist and she is a part of Daisy's life with Tom which cannot be cast aside or ignored. The irony of the situation is deepened a few sentences later when Daisy says to the child: "You dream, you. You absolute little dream." Gatsby is dumfounded by the sudden awareness of such an immovable obstacle blocking the realization of his dream, a dream which is already beginning to lose some of its brightness as he evidences "visible tension" a moment later. Ironically, Daisy declares the child a dream, but an "absolute little dream"—too absolute for Gatsby's purposes of recapturing the past.

The ambiguities of past and present extend further than the attempt to recapture the past, however, for they are inherent within the structure of the novel as Nick's narrative moves effortlessly back and forth through time, creating an illusion of timelessness so as to suggest the source of Gatsby's fundamental deceptions about the reality of reality. The novel begins at the chronological end (Nick's summing up after Gatsby's death) and then follows a

(34) ibid., p. 117.
carefully woven labyrinth of shifts backward and forward in time. Emphasizing the confusion with regard to time, Nick comments early in the novel: "And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow fast in the movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer". The very familiarity of the conviction casts some doubt upon the significance of the regenerative process, and Nick then underlines the perceptual illusion involved with the comment on the artificial effects of the movies. Throughout the novel the sense of time referred to is artificial, or at least involves some form of artificiality, if only in the perceptual illusions of the perceiver. Gatsby's house, seemingly old, is in fact a "factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanning now under a thin beard of raw ivy". Similarly, Gatsby insists upon moving Nick's lawn before Daisy arrives, partly to show his own "factual imitation" off in better light but also as an implicit denial of the passage of time evidenced by natural growth. At the reunion itself, Gatsby leans against the "defunct mantelpiece clock" almost tipping it over, an act which Nick dismisses with the "idiotic" comment: "It's an old clock". When Daisy says a moment later that "We haven't met for many years", Gatsby provides the exact figure of "Five years next November" with an "automatic quality" in his voice which "set us all back at least another minute". There are aspects of the confusion of time in the scenery as well, however, as when Nick comments on the "premature moon, produced like the supper, no doubt, out of a caterer's basket" which he witnesses at one of Gatsby's parties; an image which occurs again later in the novel with "the premature appearance of "A silver curve of the moon" that hovered already in the western sky in spite of the "broiling" sun of the warmest day of the summer. Earlier in the novel, Daisy points out that the longest day of the year is only two weeks away and then adds: "Do you always watch for the longest day of the year and then miss it? I always watch for the longest day in the year and then miss it." Similarly, in contrast with Nick's contention

(36) ibid., p. 5.
(37) ibid., p. 37.
(38) ibid., p. 38.
(39) ibid., p. 43.
(40) ibid., p. 120.
(41) ibid., p. 12.
that "life was beginning over again with the summer", Jordan Baker insists that "Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall". A moment later she goes on to say about the end of summer: "There's something very sensuous about it--overripe, as if all sorts of funny fruits were going to fall into your hands", carrying the emphasis back to the temporal associations of Keats's ode, "To Autumn".

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom friend of the maturing sun,
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run:
To bend with apples the tossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

Throughout the novel, time escapes the grasp which are made for it, whether forward or backward; a fact which Nick catches perfectly with his final metaphor of "boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past". For Gatsby himself, the price for attempting to circumvent the effects of time is, ironically, a premature death (or, more literally, pre-mature).

In direct contrast with Gatsby's illusions with regard to time, however, Nick maintains a steady, even ironic emphasis upon the deceptions of time and its manifestations. He resists the temptation to believe in the apparent regeneration implied by sudden summer growth, just as he resists the deception of the temporal prematurity of the moon or that of the apparent oldness of Gatsby's mansion. Furthermore, he isn't bothered by the natural growth of his lawn and the fact that he has a defunct mantelpiece clock is more an indication of his impeccable situation than it is of any attempt to circumvent the passage of time. Just after the climactic scene at the Plaza Hotel, Nick realizes that it is his thirtieth birthday and, in spite of the demoralizing aspects of that temporal landmark, resists the temptation to dream it away.

Thirty--the promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know, a thinning briefcase of enthusiasm, thinning hair. But there was Jordan beside me, who, unlike Daisy, was too

(44) op. cit., p. 152.
wise ever to carry well-forgotten dreams from age to age. As we
passed over the dark bridge her wan face fell lazily against my
coat's shoulder and the formidable stroke of thirty died away
with the reassuring pressure of her hand. 45

Nick exists in the present, aware of the inability to go back to the past
(except in art, as in the novel he comes to write) and also on guard against
any illusions with regard to the future. The final temptation to partake of the
illusory permanence of Long Island society passes away when he finally breaks
off with Jordan and decides to return home to the West. Unlike Gatsby, who
idealizes the past and ever visualizes the "orgastic future" 46 Nick remains
firmly planted in the present, aware of the realities of past and future, but
also vividly aware of the effects of time in a harsh world "Where Beauty cannot
keep her lustrous eyes, / Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow".

In direct contrast with The Great Gatsby and the stories which preceded it,
"Babylon Revisited" focuses upon an attempt to escape from the past, and moreover
to erase its influence on the present. The 'Babylon' referred to in the title
is that of Paris before the '29 crash, and the 'revisit' which forms the core
of the story is one which is made in an attempt to reconstruct a way of life
lost in the madcap gaiety of Babylon: "He believed in character; he wanted to
jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally
valuable element. Everything else wore out." 47 Specifically, Charlie Wales
is attempting to regain the custody of his child, Honoria, which he had lost, along
with nearly everything else, amid the illusory extravagance of the years just
before the 'crash':

So much for the effort and ingenuity of Montmartre. All the catering
to vice and waste was on an utterly childish scale, and he suddenly
realized the meaning of the word "dissipate"—to dissipate into thin
air; to make nothing out of something. In the little hours of the
night every move from place to place was an enormous human jump, an
increase of paying for the privilege of slower and slower motion.
He remembered thousand-franc notes given to an orchestra for playing
a single number, hundred-franc notes tossed to a doorman for calling
a cab.
But it hadn't been given for nothing.
It had been given, even the most wildly squandered sum, as an offering
to destiny that he might not remember the things most worth remem-
bering, the things that now he would always remember—his child taken
from his control, his wife escaped to a grave in Vermont. 48

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(46) see Appendix I for the use of 'orgastic' rather than the printed 'orgiastic'
in the Scribners editions published after Fitzgerald's death.
(47) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, "Babylon Revisited", in The Stories of F. Scott
(48) ibid., p. 401.
As in *The Great Gatsby*, the past impinges upon the present, reality upon illusion until awareness finally sets in with a jolt. The money "squandered" in order to find forgetfulness, the "privilege of slower and slower motion", implies an attempt at abstraction from the effects of time which ends disastrously with the eventual return to reality. Shut away in a sanitarium after an alcoholic breakdown, Charlie signed away the custody of his daughter to his sister-in-law after the death of his wife, and robbed of all those things "most worth remembering" as well as the illusions of Babylon, he was left in a situation of complete dissipation. As the story commences, however, he has slowly and painfully worked himself back into a position of respectability and self-control in order to reclaim the custody of his child. His world is now that of the present reality rather than hedonistic illusions, and yet it is his attempt to deny the dissipation of the past which brings about his failure in the present when Lorraine and Duncan, with whom he had drunk too often into the "little hours of the night", burst in to discredit his reformation in the eyes of his sister-in-law.

The roots of Charlie's failure reach far deeper than the chance intrusion by old friends, however, for throughout the story Charlie evidences a constant conflict within himself between the past and the present. The very first line ("And where's Mr. Campbell?" Charlie asked) suggests an obsession with the past directly contradicting his apparent attempt to shut it out of memory.

As they rolled on to the Left Bank and he felt its sudden provincialism, he thought, "I spoiled this city for myself. I didn't realize it, but the days came along one after another, and then two years were gone, and everything was gone; and I was gone." 49

On the surface, he is rejecting the dissipations of his past, and yet underneath that rejection is an almost nostalgic feeling that he could perhaps have made something more of that gilded period, a sense that like Amory, he wants not the repetition of his innocence, but "the pleasure of losing it again" with a deeper appreciation of the significance of that loss. When he first encounters Duncan and Lorraine at Le Grand Vatel (ironically chosen because it was "the only restaurant he could think of not reminiscent of champagne dinners and long

luncheons that began at two and ended in a blurred and vague twilight". Charlie sees them as "Sudden ghosts out of the past", apparently, and quite literally as it turns out, come back to haunt him in the present. He remembers Lorraine Quarries as "a lovely, pale blond of thirty", and although her loveliness has blurred with time and the dissipated life she has been living, Charlie cannot ignore the fact that "As always, he felt Lorraine's passionate, provocative attraction". Though he tries to cover his attraction to her with the remark—"but his own rhythm was different now"—there lingers a sense of his longing for the very past from which he is trying to escape. Later, after receiving a note from Lorraine, "He tried to picture how Lorraine had appeared to him then—very attractive; Helen was very unhappy about it, though she said nothing". Her presence awakens a deep sense of guilt with regard to his dead wife which haunts him throughout the story.

The image of Helen haunted him. Helen whom he had loved so until they had senselessly begun to abuse each other's love, tear it into shreds. On that terrible February night that Marion remembered so vividly, a slow quarrel had gone on for hours. There was a scene at the Florida, and then he attempted to take her home, and then kissed young Webb at a table; after that there was what she had hysterically said. When he arrived home alone he turned the key in the lock in wild anger. How could he know she would arrive an hour later alone, that there would be a snowstorm in which she wandered about in slippers, too confused to find a taxi? Then the aftermath, her escaping pneumonia by a miracle, and all the attendant horror. They were reconciled", but that was the beginning of the end, and Marion, who had seen it with her own eyes and who imagined it to be one of many scenes from her sister's martyrdom, never forgot. Much of Charlie's insistence that "The present was the thing—work to do and someone to love" seems to stem from guilt about his dead wife, and his denial of the past also suggests an attempt to escape the guilt associated with it.

Ironically, the story ends:

He would come back some day; they couldn't make him pay forever. But he wanted his child, and nothing was much good now, beside that fact. He wasn't young any more, with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have by himself. He was absolutely sure Helen wouldn't have wanted him to be alone.

But alone he is, tormented by the past which had brought him so much pleasure in its excesses and in the illusion that time could be made to slow down and even to stand still within a world where "We were a sort of royalty, almost...

(31) Ibid., p. 403.
(32) Ibid., p. 410.
(33) Ibid., p. 414.
(34) Ibid., p. 414.
infallible, with a sort of magic around us". Just as time can not be made to slow down, however, the intimation of infallibility can not last within the material world and as in The Beautiful and Damned, the "magic must hurry on", leaving the dreamer disillusioned and deserted with the return to reality.

The final image of Charlie—"He wasn't young any more, with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have by himself"—reoccurs with regard to Dick Diver at the end of Tender Is the Night: "He was not young any more with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have about himself". Like Charlie, Dick Diver is lured into a life of 'dissipation' by the promise of a gay, gaudy world of good times and the apparent privilege of "slower- and slower motion". In the novel, though, the scene of Babylon has been shifted to the "hot sweet South" of France, directly parallelling the "warm South" of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale": "The Diver's day was spaced like the day of older civilizations to yield the utmost from the materials at hand, and to give all transitions their full value".

The attempt to 'space' out time is as ill-fated as that of the attempt at "slower and slower motion" which marked Charlie's Babylon, and Dick's dissipation into a hedonistic life modelled after the older civilizations results in a personal decline and fall amid "the ruins of the aqueducts". As Gatsby discovered, the past cannot be recaptured, and a heavy price is paid for the illusions involved in any attempt at temporal distortion.

Finally realizing the artificiality of his life of "effortless immobility" made possible by Nicole's wealth, Dick also begins to see through the inherent illusion of escape from the effects of time as "He stayed in the big room for a long time listening to the buzz of the electric clock, listening to time". Unlike Nick's "defunct mantelpiece clock" at the time of Gatsby's reunion with Daisy, Dick's electric one buzzes the time away with a precise twentieth century accuracy, emphasizing the "irrevocable passage of everything into the past" even as Dick realizes how much he has already lost. Shortly afterwards, Dick sums up the romantic implications involved in the distortion of time as well as those of a more literal attitude to the same:

(56) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 311.
(57) ibid., p. 21.
(58) ibid., p. 15.
(59) ibid., pp. 170-71.
As he sat on the side of his bed, he felt the room, the house and
the night as empty. In the next room Nicole muttered something de­
solate and he felt sorry for whatever loneliness she was feeling in
her sleep. For him time stood still and then every few years accel­
erated in a rush, like the quick re-wind of a film, but for Nicole
the years slipped away by clock and calendar and birthday, with the
added poignance of her perishable beauty. 60

Dick's illusion with regard to time standing still costs him dearly at the
moment of final realization of just how much he has lost, how much he will
never have again. With her more chronological sense of time, Nicole espouses
much the same attitude as Gloria in The Beautiful and Damned, even down to
"the added poignance of her perishable beauty". In the real world, beauty is
all too 'perishable' with the passage of time, and in spite of Dick's assertion
that her "face would be handsome in middle life; it would be handsome in old
age", 61 Nicole is all too aware of the fact that "Beauty cannot keep her
lustrous eyes / Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow".

She looked microscopically at the lines of her flanks, wondering how
soon the fine, slim edifice would begin to sink squat and earthward.
In about six years, but no! I'll do--in fact I'll do as well as any­one I know.
She was not exaggerating. The only physical disparity between Nicole
at present and the Nicole of five years before was simply that she was
no longer a young girl. But she was enough ridden by the current youth
worship, the moving pictures with their myriad faces of girl-children,
blantly represented as carrying on the work and wisdom of the world,
to feel a jealousy of youth. 62

Even if she is able to hold on to her beauty a little longer, she has already
lost her youth in the irrevocable passage of time, a fact made even more explicit
in her confrontation with the movie starlet, Rosemary Hoyt, a few pages earlier:
"Rosemary was beautiful—her youth was a shock to Nicole". 63 If, as Amory
Elaine asserted in This Side of Paradise, "Youth is like having a big-plate
of candy", then Nicole mourns the loss of pleasure associated with it even as
she envys Rosemary who is in the very midst of that pleasure and flaunting
her youthfulness before Dick.

Just as Dick's sense of time standing still, then accelerating in a rush,
"like the quick re-wind of a film", parallels Nick's comment on the sudden
regeneration of summer being like the artificial effects of the movies, there
are references to an artificial sense of time throughout Tender Is the Night.

61 ibid., p. 141.
62 ibid., pp. 290-91.
63 ibid., p. 281.
In its original version, the novel begins in the middle chronologically and then moves back in time to give a deeper background to the characters involved in the more immediate but merely fashionable facade of the opening section. The apparent ease and social graces described through the point-of-view of Rosemary Hoyt—young and naive and impressionable as she is—screen the reader initially from the "leaden-eyed despairs" which lurk beneath the glittering surface. Although as yet unaware of these harsher aspects, Rosemary begins to see through the necessary deceptions with regard to time when "she remembered all the hours of the afternoon as happy—of those uneventful times that seem at the moment only a link between past and future pleasure but turn out to have been the pleasure itself". Her memory of past pleasures and anticipation of pleasures to come take the edge of happiness away from the present moment, dulling the edge of "the pleasure itself". In a similar situation, Wordsworth balances the memory of his first visit to Tintern Abbey with the "present pleasure" even as he looks forward to the "emotion recollected in tranquility" in later years: "While here I stand, not only with the sense / Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts / That in this moment there is life and food / For future years". At the beginning of the novel, Rosemary is not yet mature enough for such a balanced perspective, and shortly afterwards she goes to the other extreme with regard to the deceptions of time.

After an all night "wild party", Rosemary lingers emotionally in the mood of "the warm darkness streaming down" even as she emerges into the "broad daylight" of Paris: "All of them began to laugh spontaneously because they knew it was still last night while the people in the streets had the delusion that it was bright hot morning". The delusion (and in a novel about sanity and madness Fitzgerald has chosen the word carefully) is not that of the people in the streets, but rather the self-deception of Rosemary and the others as they try to hang on to the imaginative mood of the night before against the literal fact of "broad daylight".

(64) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 59.
(66) op. cit., p. 79.
The apparent timelessness of the imaginative moment cannot last, dissolving with the return to reality and the material world of actual existence. After the horrors of the Negro's murder and Nicole's second severe breakdown in Paris, Dick becomes aware "of a hint in the air that the earth was hurrying on toward other weather; the lush midsummer moment outside of time was already over". The illusion of a "moment outside of time" is simply a perceptual distortion within the imagination, and yet that distortion of apparent escape from time also makes possible the deeper visionary experiences like those which Keats described in the great odes. The imaginative peak of the "lush midsummer moment outside of time" occurs at the dinner party which the Divers give at their villa "Beyond the inky sea and far up that high, black shadow of a hill".

There were fireflies riding on the dark air and a dog baying on some low and far-away ledge of the cliff. The table seemed to have risen a little toward the sky like a mechanical dancing platform, giving the people around it a sense of being alone with each other in the dark universe, nourished by its only food, warmed by its only lights. And, as if a curious hushed laugh from Mrs. McKisco were a signal that such a detachment from the world had been attained, the two Divers began suddenly to warm and glow and expand, as if to make up to their guests, already so subtly assured of their importance, so flattered with politeness, for anything they might still miss from that country well left behind.

Imaginatively transported from the actual world below, Rosemary and the other guests achieve a momentary escape, "alone with each other in the dark universe", a magical effect achieved by the warmth and charm of the Divers themselves.

The moment cannot last, however, and like the speaker of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale", the guests are "abruptly" returned to the real world once again: "Then abruptly the table broke up—the moment when the guests had been daringly lifted above conviviality into the rarer atmosphere of sentiment, was over before it could be irreverently breathed, before they had half realized it was there". Though gradual at first, the descent to reality assumes its full harshness with Nicole's first severe schizophrenic breakdown later the same evening, and the "lush midsummer moment outside of time" breaks up completely by the time Rosemary witnesses her second breakdown in Paris at the end of the opening section.

(67) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 163.
(68) ibid., p. 40.
(69) ibid., p. 34.
In Paris, when Nicole asks Abe North why he has "given up about everything" for a dissipated life of forgetfulness through drink, he answers sardonically that "it was such a long way to go back in order to get anywhere". Embarrassed by his pessimistic view of the escapist world which she and Dick have created, "Nicole tried to force the minute hand around the station clock", ironically attempting to speed up the passage of time in order to escape his depreciation of "the lush midsummer moment outside of time."

Abe's dissipation serves as a premonition of that which Dick undergoes later in the novel, having thrown away his early promise of an outstanding career in psychiatry in order to live with Nicole in the more immediate, sensual world of the "hot sweet south". Perhaps because of this, underneath her superficial responses, Nicole remains "frightened" of Abe, frightened of the consequences of the full drop from the imaginary illusions of a merely sensual way of life.

When Nicole and Dick first come to the South of France after their marriage, she conjures up a more symbolic temporal paradox: "I am motionless against the sky and the boat is made to carry my form onward into the blue obscurity of the future, I am Pallas Athene carved reverently on the front of a galley". Although the boat carries her "form" forward "into the blue obscurity of the future", she remains imaginatively in the past, carved on the front of a galley, ironically as the immortal Pallas Athene, goddess of wisdom and the arts. An acute schizophrenic, Nicole balances precariously on the dividing line between reality and illusion, between mere imagination and more sinister delusion. The boat metaphor also echoes the sense of paradox at the end of The Great Gatsby, however, where the longing for the future becomes inextricably tied up with the past.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther....And one fine morning—So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

(70) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 81.
(71) ibid., p. 82.
(72) ibid., p. 35.
(73) ibid., p. 160.
(Ñ) See Appendix I for an explanation of the spelling of 'orgastic'.

Gatsby's orgasmic future paradoxically "recedes before us", always tantalizingly just out of reach with its implications of infinite promise even as we are forever "borne back ceaselessly into the past" with the irrevocable passage of time. With a similar irony, Nicole's desire to be borne onward "into the blue obscurity of the future" becomes manifested in the life style which she and Dick establish at Villa Diana, with its old world charms and the sense of days spaced like the day of older civilizations". Like Pallas Athene, Diana also suggests a sense of immortality as the goddess of women and wild animals, an urn-like existence outside of time which becomes increasingly ironic as the novel goes on. The attempt to avoid the present with dreams of the future or with illusions of the past is one eventually doomed to failure, whatever momentary escapes seem to offer themselves.

The escape from the influences of time is not limited to the desires of Dick and Nicole, however, for even the hard, realist—materialist practicality of Baby Warren yields to the illusion of temporal deception as she abandons her sleep at four o'clock in the morning in order to get Dick out of jail.

As they rode, the darkness lifted and thinned outside and Baby's nerves, scarcely awake, cringed faintly at the unstable balance between night and day. She began to race against the day; sometimes on the broad avenues she gained but whenever the thing that was pushing up paused for a moment, gusts of wind blew here and there impatiently and the slow creep of light began once more. 75

Caught up in "the unstable balance between night and day", Baby tries to "race against the day" with the illusion of gaining against time, of maintaining the more imaginative mood of night against the insistent realities of daylight. The temporal distortion in no way affects the progression of time even as it allows a sense of self-deception in the way that the effects of time are perceived, a situation similar to that of Rosemary after the all night party in Paris earlier in the novel. Baby is not outracing the day, she is simply slowing down her own awareness of its inevitable arrival.

The intricate confusion with regard to time crops up again in a wider context as Dick leaves America after his father's funeral.

On the long-roofed steamship piers one is in a country that is no longer here and not yet there. The hazy yellow vault is full of echoing shouts. There are the rumble of trucks and the clump of trunks, the strident chatter of cranes, the first salt smell of the sea. One

(75) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 227.
hurries through, even though there's time; the past, the continent, is behind; the future is the glowing mouth in the side of the ship; the dim, turbulent alley is too confusedly the present. 76

Confusedly "no longer here and not yet there", Dick finds himself in a kind of temporal limbo, hurrying even though there's time—but time for what? The "past" lies behind him in America and yet, ironically, it also awaits him in Europe with the sense of "older civilizations" at Villa Diana. The ship itself (though it is not a galley) offers an illusion of the orgastic future with its "glowing mouth", a sense of expectation paralleling that of Anthony and Gloria's hopeful departure at the end of The Beautiful and Damned; but the voyage out is also a voyage back in time to the Old World with its illusions of temporal escape from the turbulence that is "too confusedly the present".

...as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of an old island here that had flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes—a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. 77

The sense of the future which Dick associates with the "glowing mouth" of the ship is an illusion, for as in the case of Anthony and Gloria and that of Tom and Daisy's escape at the end of The Great Gatsby, the journey eastward is a journey back from the "fresh, green breast of the new world" to a world of older civilizations from which those early Dutch sailors had sought to escape. Realizing this, Nick returns to the West after Gatsby's death in order to write the novel. For Anthony Patch, however, Italy becomes a "talisman", a dream "land where the intolerable anxieties of life would fall away like an old garment", where he could "forget the grey appendages of despair" with women "who were always beautiful and always young". 78 Calling up the escape from "leaden-eyed despairs" associated with the temporal world in "Ode to a Nightingale" ("Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes"), Fitzgerald also ironically suggests the timeless beauty of the figures on the urn, and the illusion involved in the attempt at such timelessness in the real world. For Dick, Italy becomes a scene of his own dissipation and degradation, with the final realization

(76) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 205.
of the "end of his dream" as "his spirit soared before the flower stalls and the house where Keats had died" just before the final drop into utter existential despair in a prison cell in Rome. Diverted from the work that earlier had held all the promise of a great future, he pays dearly for the style of life designed to space out time in the manner of older civilizations. Baby rescues him from jail and returns him to the "hot sweet South" of France in order to rejoin Nicole at Villa Diana, but by then, ironically, it is already too late, for "He was not young any more with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have about himself". 30

(80) ibid., p. 311.
THE ROMANTIC EGOIST IN SEARCH OF PARADISE

The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy; but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted: thence proceeds mawkishness, and all the thousand bitters which those men I speak of must necessarily taste in going over the following pages.

—John Keats,
"Preface" to Endymion

The last light wanes and drifts across the land,
The low long land, the sunny land of spires.
The ghosts of evening tune again their lyres
And wander singing, in a plaintive band
Down the long corridors of trees. Pale fires
Echo the night from tower top to tower.
Oh sleep that dreams and dream that never tires,
Press from the petals of the lotus-flower
Something of this to keep, the essence of an hour!

No more to wait the twilight of the moon
In this sequestered vale of star and spire;
For one, eternal morning of desire
Passes to time and earthy afternoon.
Here, Heraclitus, did you build your fire
And changing stuffs your prophecy far hurled
Down the dead years; this midnight I aspire
To see, mirrored among the embers, curled
In flame, the splendor and the sadness of the world.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald,
"Princeton—the Last Day"

The central paradox of American history, then, has been a belief in progress coupled with a dread of change; an urge toward the inevitable future combined with a longing for the irretrievable past; a deeply ingrained belief in America's unfolding destiny and a haunting conviction that the nation was in a state of decline.

—Lawrence W. Levine,
"Progress and Nostalgia"
When Fitzgerald decided to change his title from *The Romantic Egotist* to *This Side of Paradise*, the change was not one of meaning or intention, but rather one of emphasis: The romantic elements suggested by the earlier title remain in the final version in the themes of self-realization and in the romantic sense of time. Perhaps encouraged by the praise of Shane Leslie ("Leslie thinks of you as the Rupert Brooke of America"), Fitzgerald later drew on a quotation from Brooke for the final title: "Well this side of Paradise!...There's little comfort in the wise". The new title, itself romantic in emphasis, suggests a wider reference along with a thematic irony which extends throughout the rest of the works. Something of an exaggerated autobiography, *This Side of Paradise* describes a rather idealized version of Fitzgerald's own youth:

All through the summer months Amory and Frog Parker went each week to the Stock Company. Afterward they would stroll home in the balmy air of August night, dreaming along Hennepin and Nicollet Avenues, through the gay crowd. Amory wondered how people could fail to notice that he was a boy marked for glory, and when faces of the throng turned toward him and ambiguous eyes stared into his, he assumed the most romantic of expressions and walked on the air cushions that lie on the asphalts of fourteen.

Always, after he was in bed, there were voices—indistinct, fading, enchanting—just outside his window, and before he fell asleep he would dream one of his favorite waking dreams, the one about becoming a great halfback, or the one about the Japanese invasion, when he was rewarded by being made the youngest general in the world. It was always the becoming he dreamed of, never the being. 2

Foreshadowing the "ineffable gaudiness" of the "fantastic conceits" of Gatsby's youth, these adolescent visions and "waking dreams" become the foundation of Amory's romantic inclinations later in the novel. The final sentence is particularly significant, however, with its implication that the dream itself is more important than the realization, the becoming more important than the being.

Describing the earliest version of the novel to his friend, Edmund Wilson, Fitzgerald also touches upon his own romantic aspirations for early glory:

It rather dams much of Princeton but it's nothing to what it thinks of men and human nature in general. I can most nearly describe it by

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calling it a prose, modernistic Child Harold and really if Scribners takes it I know I'll wake some morning and find that the debutantes have made me famous overnight. I really believe that no one could have written so searchingly the story of the youth of our generation... 4

Scribners did not take it, however, nor did they take the second revision of The Romantic Egotist which he submitted in the Autumn of 1918. Changing the title as well as the name of the hero, and altering the point-of-view from the first person to the more objective third person, he submitted it once again to Scribners. It was accepted by Maxwell Perkins with the comment, "The book is so different that it is hard to prophesy how it will sell, but we are all for taking a chance and supporting it with vigor". 5 It was published in March, 1920, and to everyone's surprise the first printing sold out within twenty four hours. Fitzgerald's Byronic aspirations at last came true, and he awoke to find himself the exalted hero of the debutantes:

...it introduced to many of its more youthful feminine readers, especially in the East, a brand new kind of heroine—an emancipated American girl whose behavior was quite different from the code of manners to which they were expected to conform. Unlike her Western counterpart, who was a product of the more free-and-easy frontier, the Eastern girl was still subject to such old fashioned European customs as the chap-eron, an elaborate formal system of etiquette, and an educational philosophy which advocated the separation of the sexes and the incarceration of the girls into prison-like boarding schools. 6

But the immediate success of the novel extended beyond the debutantes, however, for as Glenway Wescott later pointed out: "This Side of Paradise haunted the decade like a song, popular but perfect". 7 The perfection was certainly not one of form (as critics were quick to point out), it was rather the way in which Fitzgerald caught the rhythm and the mood of his age.

A higher standard of living, increased educational opportunities, and the impulse of nineteenth-century romanticism (with its emphasis on the validity of youthful feeling and experience), all conspired to emancipate and glorify the idea of "youth". Youth, increasingly, began to be valued as possessing qualities distinctly different from either childhood or adulthood--qualities to be savored and enjoyed as long as possible. 8

Youth, with its excesses and its 'romantic' impulses, its new ideas and new visions of potential paradise, suddenly exploded forth and then dominated the social world of the twenties, and Fitzgerald soon became one of its leading

(6) ibid., pp. 60-61.
(8) op. cit., Piper, p. 60.
For Amory Elaine, this youthful idealism becomes manifested in the romantic visions of a musical comedy on Broadway where, in "the sensuous heavy fragrance of paint and powder, he moved in a sphere of epicurean delight". Overwhelmed by "one stunning young brunette who made him sit with brimming eyes in the ecstasy of watching her dance", Amory finds an outlet for his romantic fantasies in the nebulous world depicted on the stage—"Oh, to fall in love like that, to the languorous magic melody of such a tune!" The magic extends beyond the theater, however, spilling over into the streets outside as he walks home dreaming of the future.

They wandered on, mixing in the Broadway crowd, dreaming on the music that eddied out of the cafés. New faces flashed on and off like myriads lights, pale or rouged faces, tired, yet sustained by a weary excitement. Amory watched them in fascination. He was planning his life. He was going to live in New York, and be known at every restaurant and café, wearing a dress suit from early evening to early morning, sleeping away the dull hours of the forenoon. Ironically, it is just this sort of ambition for a luxurious, hedonistic life which brings about the dissipation of Fitzgerald's later heroes amongst the collapsing social facades of gaudy gaiety. Anthony Patch abandons his early desire "to one day accomplish some quiet subtle thing that the elect would deem worthy" for the more immediate imaginative and sensual charms of Gloria. A similar tension between accomplishment and self-indulgence brings about the downfall of Gatsby when he succumbs to a world which is "material without being real", of Dick Diver as he dissipates in the hedonistic world of the "hot sweet South", and finally of Monroe Stahr in the "warm darkness" of Hollywood. The would-be paradise offers immediate delights at a high cost to be exacted later.

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Later in his own life, Fitzgerald looked back upon the gaudiness of the 'Jazz Age' of the twenties from the deeper perspective of his own crack-up. Now once more the belt is tight and we summon the proper expression of horror as we look back at our wasted youth. Sometimes, though, there is a ghostly rumble among the drums, an asthmatic whisper in the trombones that swings us back into the early twenties when we drank wood alcohol and every day in every way grew better and better, and there was a first abortive shortening of the skirts, and girls all looked

(9) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 30.
(10) Ibid., cit.
(11) Ibid., p. 31.
(12) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 3.
alike in sweater dresses, and people you didn't want to know said "Yes, we have no bananas," and it seemed only a question of a few years before the older people would step aside and let the world be run by those who saw things as they were—and it all seems rosy and romantic to us who were young then, because we will never feel quite so intensely about our surroundings any more. 13

His own crack-Up coinciding with the financial crack-up of the Jazz Age itself, Fitzgerald looks back upon the twenties with a mixture of nostalgia and the ironic awareness of the "waste" of the youth which made it all possible. For all of those involved in that rosy and romantic world a high cost has been paid in terms of the 'crash' back down to reality again. Charlie Wales realizes the full implications of this at the end of "Babylon Revisited", an awareness which is echoed at the end of Tender Is the Night as Dick Diver realizes just how much he has lost as he says goodbye to his children for the last time: "I never was not young any more with a lot of nice thoughts and dreams to have about himself, so he wanted to remember them well". 14 Having lived the life Amory only dreams of (to"be known at every restaurant and café, wearing a dress suit from early evening to early morning, sleeping away the dull hours of the forenoon"), both Dick Diver and Charlie Wales come to realize how much they could have done but didn't, and finally just how much they have lost in real terms as they grasped out for apparent paradise.

Even before his own 'realization' at the time of the crack-up, Fitzgerald maintained a sense of artistic balance in even the earliest works through an ironic awareness of the fallibility of glamorous social worlds and the elusive paradises they seemed to promise. In the opening story of his first collection, Flappers and Philosophers(1920), he proclaims that "There was a rough stone age and a smooth stone age and a bronze age, and many years after a cut-glass age." 15 Still in his early twenties at the time of the story's creation, Fitzgerald adopts a sense of nostalgia for an earlier glamorous age which he himself had never known: "for though cut-glass was nothing new in the nineties, it was then especially busy reflecting the dazzling light of fashion from the Back Bay to the fastnesses of the Middle West". 16 The cut-glass bowl from which

(14) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 311.
(16) loc. cit.
the story takes its title functions as a symbol of lost innocence in the sense which Amory elaborated in *This Side of Paradise*, and yet the use of fastnesses for vastnesses ironically implies both the less formal, 'faster' social manners of the midwest and the sense of 'fortification' from the frontiers beyond. The retrospective symbolism of the cut-glass bowl suggests an irony that overrides the nostalgia as the aging heroine recalls the rejected suitor who had given it to her as a wedding present, intending for it to represent the hardness of its recipient, as well as to be "as beautiful and as empty and as easy to see through." Evylyn functions as a pre-figuration of the flapper mentioned in the collection's title, the 'femme fatale' who would eventually be "destined after a few years to be inexpressibly lovely and bring no end of misery to a great number of men". Similarly, anticipating the vague background of Jay Gatsby as well as the fade-out ending of *Tender Is the Night*, Evylyn recalls that the rejected suitor had vanished shortly after the making of the gift of the *bowl*, "West—or South—or somewhere", even as she herself is described as "radiating that divine vagueness that helps to lift beauty out of time". But beauty cannot be lifted out of time in any real sense, whatever sense of divinity is invoked: "If Evylyn's beauty had hesitated in her early thirties it came to an abrupt decision just afterward and completely left her"; a realization made near the end of the story as a moment of romantic moonlight serves to remind her of the irretrievability of the past:

There was a bright glamour of moonlight diffusing on the sidewalks and lambs, and with a little half yawn, half laugh, she remembered one long moonlight affair of her youth. It was astonishing to think that life had once been the sum of her current love-affairs. It was now the sum of her current problems.

The innocence and self-indulgent optimism of youth is lost with the passage of time in a world "Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, / Or new love pine at them beyond tommorrow".

It is Fitzgerald's ability to depict, in the personal terms of his own romantic vision, the historical perspective which Levine terms the central

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(20) ibid., p. 24.
(21) ibid., p. 25.
paradox of American life, the "urge towards the inevitable future combined with a longing for the irretrievable past," which elevates his works above the particular period in which they were written. Legend making commonplaces like the title—"Laureate of the Jazz-Age"—are perhaps most dangerously deceptive because of their partial truth. Both in his life and in his works Fitzgerald was very much a part of his age and of its eccentricities, and it can also be said that his particular genius was imaginative, even poetic; but to link these essential qualities into a single title is as over-simplistic and as easily deceptive as a single definition of 'romanticism' itself. If Fitzgerald was part of his age, he was also capable of realizing both its weaknesses and its strengths, and, even more importantly, the deep-rooted psychic forces which compelled it. Taking the latter aspect as central to Fitzgerald's "creative gift", Malcolm Bradbury comments: "Fitzgerald said that all his stories had a 'touch of disaster' in them—a sense of the high emotional cost of involvement in the times, a sense of the general spirit of psychic over-extension involved in the commitment to youth and glamour, wealth and amusement". Even as he depicts the immediate excesses of his age, however, Fitzgerald is reaching deeper into a subjective understanding of the psychic forces behind them with the romantic themes which occur and reoccur throughout the body of his works.

At a time when other writers had begun to disparage romanticism in favor of realism or naturalism, Fitzgerald was discovering in it a renewed vitality perfectly suited to the events and attitudes of postwar America:

The source of Fitzgerald's excellence is an uncanny ability to juxtapose the sensibilities implied by the phrase "romantic wonder" with the most conspicuous, as well as the most deeply significant, phenomena of American civilization, and to derive from that juxtaposition a moral critique of human nature. None of our major writers is more romantically empathetic than this avatar of Keats in the age of Harding; none draws a steadier bead on the characteristic shortcomings, not to say disasters, of the most grandiose social experiments of modern times. Hence the implacable moralist with stars (Martinis) in his eyes: worshipper, analyst, judge, and poet. But it is not very illuminating to say that Fitzgerald wrote the story of his own representative life, unless we are prepared to read his confessions—and then his evaluation of those confessions—as American history; and unless we reciprocally learn to read American history as the tale of the romantic imagination in the United States. 24

Fitzgerald was all of these—"worshipper, analyst, judge, and poet", an "avatar of Keats in the era of Harding" who, as Lionel Trilling points out: "consciously placed himself in the line of the great".25 "Romantically empathetic", Fitzgerald, like Keats, had an abiding ambition to find a place amid the great figures of English literature.

Although he had no doubt encountered the romantic poets at school, it was not until he reached Princeton that their works began to exert a predominant influence on his own artistic visions. Looking back upon those early years at Princeton in a letter to his wife shortly before his death, Fitzgerald said of his academic training: "I got nothing out of my first two years—in the last I got my passionate love for poetry and historical perspective and ideas in general (however superficially); it carried me full swing into my career."26 If Fitzgerald developed a passionate love for poetry at Princeton, however, it was hardly due to any instruction he received there, but rather the result of the personal tutelage of his classmate, John Peale Bishop:

It isn't something easy to get started on by yourself. You need, at the beginning, some enthusiast who also knows his way around—John Peale Bishop performed that office for me at Princeton. I had always dabbed in 'verse' but he made me see, in the course of a couple of months, the difference between poetry and non-poetry. After that one of my first discoveries was that some of the professors who were teaching poetry really hated it and didn't know what it was about. I got in a series of scraps with them so I finally dropped English altogether.27

Fitzgerald's scraps with English professors are described in This Side of Paradise in scenes like that of Amory Blaine's rejection of the lecture on Victorian poets already described, just as the more personal relationship with John Peale Bishop is transposed into the novel with the character Thomas Parke D'Invilliers, whose impressions of Princeton and then of Amory are related with a humorous irony. "In a good-natured way he had almost decided that Princeton was one part deadly Philistines and one part deadly grinds, and to find a person who could mention Keats without stammering, yet evidently washed his hands, was rather a treat."28 Under the tutelage

(27) ibid., (to ZSF, August 3, 1940).
(28) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 51.
of D'Invilliers, Amory discovers "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", and with this poem and other readings his "world became pale and interesting". Looking back upon his own decision to "give up poetry and turn to prose", Fitzgerald reveals, or rather allows Amory to reveal, his own conclusions about the making of poetry:

"Oh, for a hot, languorous summer and Isabelle!"
"Oh, you and your Isabelle! I'll bet she's a simple one... let's say some poetry."
So Amory declaimed "The Ode to a Nightingale" to the bushes as they passed.
"I'll never be a poet," said Amory as he finished. "I'm not enough of a sensualist really; there are only a few obvious things that I notice as primarily beautiful: women, spring evenings, music at night, the sea; I don't catch the subtle things like 'silver-snarling trumpets'. I may turn out to be an intellectual, but I'll never write anything but mediocre poetry." 29

Amory's opening exclamation is a paraphrase from the poem he then recites from memory, just the "subtle" phrase he so admires comes from Keats's "Eve of St. Agnes" (though it is printed as "silver, snarling trumpets" in the Longman edition of Keats's poems). Fitzgerald's admiration of the sensual is something that he shared with Keats ("for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts") 30, and he later attributed to "Eve of St. Agnes" the "richest, most sensuous imagery in English, not excepting Shakespeare". 31 The sensual and the exotic held the same attraction for Fitzgerald as it had for Keats, and just as Yeats compared Keats's thirst for beauty to that of a small boy at a sweet shop, his nose pressed against the glass; Malcolm Cowley later said of Fitzgerald's thirst for the sensual luxuries of life: "It was as if all his novels described a big dance to which he had been taken... and as if at the same time he stood outside the ballroom, a little Midwestern boy with his nose pressed to the glass, wondering how much the tickets cost and who paid for the music". 32 The similarity is more than merely coincidental, for the sense of a sort of double vision is crucial to the artistic vision of both writers. Again, returning to Yeats on Keats: "I imagine Keats to have

(29) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 84.
(* ) Fitzgerald himself was capable of the same feat, and once recorded his own recitation from memory while walking in town with Sheilah Graham.
been born with that thirst for luxury common to many at the outset of the
Romantic Movement, and not able, like wealthy Beckford, to slake it with
beautiful and strange objects. It drove him to imaginary delights. In This
Side of Paradise, Amory's thirst for luxury finds an outlet in his early boy-
hood dreams, in his dream of being "an habitue of roof-gardens" with a golden
girl "whose hair would be drenched with golden moonlight, while at his elbow
sparkling wine was poured by an unintelligible waiter", and finally in a
vague impulse to "deteriorate pleasantly" into a sensual escape from the real
world to one of ultimate self-indulgence:

Suddenly he felt an overwhelming desire to let himself go to the
devil—not to go violently as a gentleman should, but to sink safely
and sensually out of sight. He pictured himself in an adobe house
in Mexico, half-reclining on a rug covered couch, his slender, art-
istic fingers closed on a cigarette while he listened to guitars
strumming melancholy undertones to an age-old dirge of Castille
and an olive-skinned, carmine lipped girl caressed his hair. Here he
might live a strange litany, delivered from sight and wrong and
from the hound of heaven and from every God (except the exotic Mex-
ican one who was pretty slack himself and rather addicted to oriental
scents)—delivered from success and hope and poverty into that long
chute of indulgence which led, after all, only to the artificial lake
of death.

There were so many places where one might deteriorate pleasantly:
Port Said, Shanghai, parts of Turkestan, Constantinople, the South
Seas—all lands of sad, haunting music and many odors, where lust
could be a mode and expression of life, where the shades of night
sides and sunsets would seem to reflect only moods of passion: the
colors of lips and poppies. 35

Anticipating Lawrence's themes of escape to the primitive and the 'deteriorated'
spoiled priests of Greene's novels, Amory fantasizes about sensual self-
indulgence without fear of the actual consequences it entails. Fitzgerald's
later protagonists are not so lucky. Obsessed with a craving for money in
order to continue his 'dissipated' life style, Anthony Patch ends up insane
at the end of The Beautiful and Damned, with only a rather hopeful vision
of escape to the warm south of Italy to sustain him: "Italy...where the
intolerable anxieties of life would fall away like an old garment" so that
he could "forget the gray appendages of despair" and be "marvellously renewed"
and "that drifting flotsam of dark women and ragged beggars, of austere,
barefooted friars" and "the romance of the blue canals in Venice" where

(33) Yeats, W. B., "Anima Hominis"(1917), in Yeats: Selected Criticism,
(34) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 30.
(35) ibid., p. 262.
the women "were always beautiful and always young".36 Only they aren't.

Whether Anthony ever finds anything of what he is looking for in Italy is left to implication at the end of the novel, but for Dick Diver, the "warm south" of Keats's Ode offers luxurious self-indulgence in garden villas, though the process of personal 'deterioration' is something less than 'pleasant'.

...he considered the world of pleasure—the incorruptible Mediterranean with sweet old dirt caked in the olive trees, the peasant girl near Savona with a face as green and rose as the color of an illuminated missal. He would take her in his hands and snatch her across the border...

...but there he deserted her—he must press on toward the Isles of Greece, the cloudy waters of unfamiliar ports, the lost girl on shore, the moon of popular songs. A part of Dick's mind was made up of the tawdry souvenirs of his boyhood. Yet in that somewhat littered Five-and-Ten, he had managed to keep alive the low painful fire of intelligence. 37

But the rot has set in. Nicole has just suffered another severe schizophrenic breakdown and the actuality of the world outside his dreams begins to close in on him. Gradually, his psychiatric work falls into neglect as he slips into the self-indulgent world of ease and social graces. "It seemed to him that when a man with his energy was pursued for a year by increasing doubts, it indicated some fault in the plan."38 The fault is not so much in the plan for his work as it is within himself and his romantic attitude towards life. While still studying psychiatry, Dick is warned by a fellow student that a psychiatrist cannot afford to be a romantic philosopher as well, and yet this is precisely the source of the inner tension which eventually destroys both him and his career. The inner flaw lies in the "tawdry souvenirs of his boyhood" which chafe against "the low painful fire of intelligence", in the boyhood fantasies which emerge again as he lets himself go into self-indulgence. These early fantasies are similar to those of Amory Blaine and Anthony Patch, as well as the "Winter Dreams" of Dexter Green and the 'alter ego' fantasies of Rudolph Miller in "Absolution", but of course the most significant manifestation of theme of youthful visions affecting adult life is found in The Great Gatsby.

Quite literally, Gatsby creates himself, or rather James Gatz creates Jay Gatsby in the same sense in which Rudolph Miller creates his idealized

36) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, pp. 443-44.
(38) Ibid., p. 166.
alter ego Nick; the difference lies in the fact that James
Gatz tries to become his idealized self in real life.

The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from
his platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase
which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about
His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious
beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a sev­
enteen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this concep­	ion he was faithful to the end. 39

The ironic ambiguities of the religious implications (as one critic points out,
the name Gatsby is simply a reversal of the biblical begat) suggests an inner
tension within Fitzgerald himself which becomes reflected in the 'spoiled
priest' theme throughout the works. Having imaginatively created himself,
however, or at least his sense of self, Gatsby clings to his created identity
"to the end". Even as the years pass, the world changes, he goes to war and
comes back, he becomes a bootlegger or whatever else, Gatsby's sense of self
remains unalterable, whatever exterior modifications he must make in order
to 'realize' his dream in a world "material without being real":

But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque
and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at nights. A universe
of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock
ticked on the washstand and the moon soaled with wet light his tangled
clothes on the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his
fancies until drowsiness closed upon some vivid scene with an obli­
gious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his
imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of real­
ity, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a
fairy's wing. 40

Gatsby's dream stems from an adolescent desire like that of Amory's ambition
to "be an habitué of roof-gardens", and yet he is still dreaming the same
fundamental dream when he is past thirty. His imaginative commitment to these
"reveries", with their inherent "satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality",
becomes the source of his own downfall eventually within a vast, vulgar, and
meretriciously unromantic world. Translated into his dream of Daisy and the
attempt to repeat the past, this proclivity to idealize a less than ideal
world ends in his own destruction finally when, as Nick points out, he has
"paid a high price for living too long with a single dream". 41

(40) ibid., pp. 99-100.
(41) ibid., p. 162.
For the central characters throughout Fitzgerald's works then, any attempt at 'realization' of imaginative or sensual paradise in the actual world is doomed from the beginning, and a high price is exacted for any such romantic beliefs. In a story like "The Cut-glass Bowl", for example, Evylyn pays dearly for her early self-indulgent belief that life was nothing more than "the sum of her current love-affairs". Upon learning of the death of her son in the war, she shifts her sense of horror and suffering to the bowl given to her by the former admirer, finally perceiving it with hysterical fantasy:

The bowl seemed suddenly to turn itself over and then to distend and swell until it became a great canopy that glittered and trembled over the room, over the house, and, as the walls melted slowly into mist, Evylyn saw that it was still moving out, out and far away from her, shutting off far horizons and suns and moons and stars except as inky blots seen faintly through it. And under it walked all the people, and the light that came through to them was refracted and twisted until shadow seemed light and light seemed shadow—until the whole panorama of the world became changed and distorted under the twinkling heaven of the bowl.

Even if the reader is prepared to suspend disbelief through an acceptance of Evylyn's hysterical fantasy, however, the bowl becomes a crude controlling symbol which fails, finally, to sustain the weight of themes which have been thrust upon it. (The influence, perhaps, of James's symbolic use of the 'golden bowl' without as yet the artistic maturity to realize it with such subtlety). Nevertheless, the treatment here remains important in a more abstract sense related to the inversion of Coleridge's "dome of pleasure" in "Kubla Khan":

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice.

The implications of a "dome of pleasure" become more sinister within the poem itself, however, suggesting the dangers inherent in the attempt to construct an actual 'Paradise' out of the elusive fragments of an imaginative vision.

(43) ibid., pp. 22-9.
(*) Fitzgerald might also have been thinking of Stanza 52 of Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám which begins: "And that inverted bowl we call The Sky..."
with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

To imagine visions of paradise is one thing, but to try to actualize, even
"build" them in the real world is quite another thing altogether. Gatsby's
vision, just before it is diverted to the human form of Daisy, is described
as "the incomparable milk of wonder", an imaginative paradise to which he
could climb "if he climbed alone". But he doesn't. Instead he settles for the
"perishable breath" of Daisy, or rather the "incarnation" of her which he
creates within his own imagination. His failure, then, is not one of the
original vision itself, but rather that of trying to translate it into human
terms in the actual world. The same theme is realized more crudely in "The
Cut-glass Bowl" when the bowl declares itself as "fate" and therefore "different
from your little dreams, and I am the flight of time and the end of beauty
and unfulfilled desire". As crude as the device is, it serves as an early
expression of the romantic themes which would dominate the later works; the
fragility of dreams, the "flight of time", and "the end of beauty and unful-
filled desire".

"The Ice Palace", another story from the first collection, is also
structured around the symbolism of "Kubla Khan", as the title would suggest.
Leaving no doubt about the allusion, however, Fitzgerald has his heroine
repeat "over and over two lines from "Kubla Khan": "It was a miracle of rare
device, / A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice". Thematically, the
story is centered around the geographical dichotomy of north and south (in
the same sense in which The Great Gatsby is centered around the dichotomy of
east and west). Sally Carrol Happer, a southern girl with a deeply rooted
affection for the South, its climate, and its tradition, has a vague feeling

(47) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, "The Ice Palace" (1920), in The Stories of F. Scott
that "the sleepy old side" of herself associated with the South isn't enough, that "there's a sort of energy--the feeling that makes me do wild things" which she associates with the North because "That's the part of me that may be useful somewhere, that'll last when I'm not beautiful any more.". The South is portrayed as a "languid paradise of dreamy skies and firefly evenings and noisy niggery street fairs--and especially of gracious, soft-voiced girls, who were brought up on memories instead of money," while the North is a 'useful' place where people go to "go into business.". Torn between the two, Sally Carrol becomes engaged to a Northener, Harry Bellamy, who brings her north for the Winter Carnival. In direct contrast to the tradition oriented South, Harry's home town is described as a "three-generation town" where "Everybody has a father, and about half of us have grandfathers" and, as Harry sharply points out, "Back of that we don't go.". Sally Carrol finds the cold of the North alien, almost threatening: "I'm used to havin' everythin' quiet outside, an' sometimes I look out an' see a flurry of snow, an' it's just as if somethin' dead was movin'.". At a party, she meets a college professor from the East who explains to her his theory that Northerners have become "Ibsenesque", very "gradually getting gloomy and melancholy" because of a "brooding rigidity" associated with "these long winters" and, as he sums up: "They're righteous, narrow, and cheerless, without infinite possibilities for great sorrow or joy.". Sally Carrol is impressed and even goes so far as to begin reading Peer Gynt. In spite of the fact that the professor later disparages his own theory, she begins to feel increasingly alienated by the coldness of the North and of its inhabitants, even Harry himself.

The contrast of north and south culminates in the Winter Carnival; its stark, ritualistic formality offering a strange contrast to the "noisy, niggery street fairs" (Fitzgerald was not without his prejudices) which she was used to amid the "languid paradise of dreamy skies and firefly evenings" in the South. The central feature of the Winter Carnival, however, is the

(49) ibid., p. 63.
(50) ibid., p. 71.
(51) ibid., p. 73. (* Note also the similarity with the end of Joyce's "The Dead".
(52) ibid., p. 74.
ice palace itself:

On a tall hill outlined in vivid glaring green against the wintry sky stood the ice palace. It was three stories in the air, with battlements and embrasures and narrow icicle-d windows, and the innumerable electric lights inside made a gorgeous transparence of the great central hall. 53

Sally Carroll's response is at first negative; the fact that there hadn't been such an edifice since eighty-five evoking a certain uneasiness in her:

"Ice was a ghost, and this mansion of it was surely peopled by those shades of the eighties, with pale faces and blurred snow-filled hair". Gradually, she begins to warm to the beauty of it, inspired in part by the lines from Coleridge's "Kubla Khan":

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{They found their way inside, and dazed by the magic of the great crystal walls Sally Carroll found herself repeating over and over two lines from "Kubla Khan":} \\
\quad "\text{It was a miracle of rare device,} \\
\quad \text{A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!}"
\end{align*}
\]

In the glittering cavern with the dark shut out she took a seat on a wooden bench, and the evening's oppression lifted. Harry was right—it was beautiful; and her gaze travelled the smooth surface of the walls, the blocks for which had been selected for their purity and clearness to obtain this opalescent, translucent effect. 54

A moment later the "phantasmagoria of torches" and the thunderous shouting of "thousands of voices" fills her with awe—"It was magnificent, it was tremendous!"—as well as with a sense of dread: "To Sally Carroll it was the North offering sacrifice on some mighty altar to the gray pagan God of Snow". Her initial, abstract sense of dread turns to "icy terror" shortly afterwards as she becomes separated from the others in the "labyrinths" of ice below the great hall. "She was alone with this presence that came out of the North, the dreary loneliness that rose from ice-bound whalers in the Arctic seas, from smokeless, trackless wastes where were strewn the whitened bones of adventure. It was an icy breath of death; it was rolling down low across the land to clutch at her." 55 Increasingly hysterical, she fantasizes about being rescued by one of her friends from the 'warm' South, then about the ghost of a woman whose name she remembers from a gravestone at home. When she is finally rescued, she hysterically cries out: "Oh, I want to get out of here! I'm

(54) ibid., p. 80.
(55) ibid., p. 82.
going back home. Take me home." She does go home, leaving Harry and the cold
North behind in favor of the "warmth and summer and Dixie", where the "wealth
of golden sunlight poured a quite enervating yet oddly comforting heat over
the house where day long it faced the dusty stretch of road". Retreating
back into "the sleepy old side" of herself portrayed at the beginning of the
story, Sally Carrol abandons the "energy—the feeling that makes me do wild
things"—"the part of me that may be useful somewhere", in order to deteriorate
pleasantly in the "enervating" but "comforting heat of the 'warm' South.

"What you doin'?"
"Eatin' green peach, 'Spect to die any minute."
Clark twisted himself a last impossible notch to get a view of her
face.
"Water's warm as a kettle steam, Sally Carrol. Wanta go swimmin'?
"Hate to move," sighed Sally Carrol lazily, "but I reckon so." 53

In a later story, "The Diamond As Big As the Ritz", Fitzgerald abandons
the "languid paradise of dreamy skies and firefly evenings" associated with
the South in favor of a fantasy paradise in the West. Instead of injecting
fantasy into a fundamentally realistic story, however, (as in "The Cut-glass
Bowl") he allows the narrative to drift gradually from the realistic train ride
west to an elaborate fantasy paradise hidden high up in the Rockies:

Full in the light of the stars, an exquisite château rose from the
borders of the lake, climbed in marble radiance half the height of an
adjoining mountain, then melted in grace, in perfect symmetry, in tran-
slucent feminine languor, into the tossed darkness of a forest of pine.
The many towers, the slender tracery of the sloping parapets, the chis-
elled wonder of a thousand yellow windows with their obtuse and hex-
tagons and triangles of golden light, the shattered softness of the in-
tersecting planes of star-shine and blue shade, all trembled on John's
spirit like a chord of music. On one of the towers, the tallest, the
blackest at its base, an arrangement of exterior lights at the top
made a sort of floating fairland—and as John gazed up in warm en-
chantment the faint acciacare sound of violins drifted down in a
rococo harmony that was like nothing he had ever heard before. Then
in a moment the car stopped before wide, high marble steps around
which the night air was fragrant with a host of flowers. At the top
of the steps two great doors swung silently open and amber light
flooded out upon the darkness, silhouetting the figure of an exquisite
lady with black, high-piled hair, who held out her arms toward them. 59

Fitzgerald plays upon the impressionability of his young hero in order to
give full rein to his own luxuriant imagination, maintaining a sense of
realism even as he begins to edge into the world of fantasy. The woman is

(57) loc. cit.
(58) ibid., p. 84.
(59) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, "The Diamond As Big As the Ritz", op. cit., Scribners, p. 11.
the mother of John's friend from school, Percy, and those of Percy's family whom John meets shortly afterward are apparently real enough, and yet each is
is embued with an extended sense of reality within John's imagination. Blending
the visionary imagery of Coleridge with the sensual imagery of Keats's "Eve of
St. Agnes" and "Endymion", Fitzgerald renders this apparent paradise with a
thoroughness that makes it almost believable. Later, John T. Unger (another
example of Fitzgerald's satirical use of names) is to remember that night as a
"daze of many colors, of quick sensory impressions, of music soft as a voice
in love, and of the beauty of things, lights and shadows, and motions and faces". 60
Among the latter are those of an elegant "white-haired man", who turns out to be
Braddock Washington, Percy's father; "a girl with a flowery face, dressed like
Titania with braided sapphires in her hair", Percy's sister; and of course the
black-haired figure of Percy's beckoning mother. More lasting even than these,
however, is the impression of apparently infinite luxury built into the chateau
itself:

There was a room where the solid, soft gold of the walls yielded to
the pressure of his hand, and a room that was like a platonic con­
ception of the ultimate prison--ceiling, floor, and all, it was lined
with an unbroken mass of diamonds, diamonds of every size and shape,
until, lit with tall violet lamps in the corners, it dazzled the eyes
with a whiteness that could be compared only with itself, beyond
human wish or dream. 61

John is overwhelmed by the apparently unlimited luxury within, and the presence
of so many jewels at once has an uplifting effect not unlike that Keats's
Endymion experiences on his descent into the underworld:

'Twas far too strange and wonderful for sadness,
Sharpening, by degrees, his appetite
To dive into the deepest. Dark, nor 'light,
The region; nor bright, nor sombre wholly,
But mingled up; a gleaming melancholy;
A dusky empire and its diadems;
One faint eternal eventide of gems.
Aye, millions sparkled on a vein of gold,
Along whose track the prince quick footstaps told 62

Like Keats, Fitzgerald was fascinated by jewels and images of infinite wealth,
and yet in both writers there seems to be another edge to this apparent paradise.

(60) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, "The Diamond As Big As the Ritz", op. cit.,
Scribners, pp. 11-12.
(61) ibid., p. 12.
Keats hints of this with the phrase "gleaning melancholy", then reinforces the impression with the description of "angry lightning" a moment later as Endymion's awe turns "chilly and numb" in the face of "fiercer things". His whole vision of paradise collapsing finally, he finds himself despondent in the midst of "misery" and "grief". Similarly, Fitzgerald's hero soon discovers serious flaws in the apparent paradise he has just entered. Once inside, he is not allowed to leave, for the presence of infinite wealth in the form of a huge diamond (as big as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel) has altered life within the luxurious château into an absurd mockery of human existence. Run by slaves, with those who have happened to stumble upon it held prisoner underground, the would-be paradise turns out to be a luxurious purgatory for those who have entered into it. As Paul Rosenfield points out, by the end of the story the apparently elegant and refined Braddock Washington, "the richest and most profoundly unsympathetic man in the world, looks dangerously like a jazz-age portrait of the father of the country". The comparison is apt, particularly when with promethean audacity ("Prometheus Enriched") Washington attempts to bribe God into preventing the destruction of his empire: "God was made in man's image, so it had been said; He must have His price". Braddock Washington stands for the final corruption of wealth taken at its extreme, the ego-centric 'carelessness' of the rich which will occur and reoccur throughout Fitzgerald's works.

Compared with "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" and the works which were to follow, This Side of Paradise seems incompletely realized, suffering from structural failures not unlike those which Keats attributes to his own early work in the prologue to Endymion: "Before I began I had no inward feel of being able to finish; and as I proceeded my steps were all uncertain. So this Poem must rather be considered as an endeavour than as a thing accomplish'd; a poor prologue to what, if I live, I humbly hope to do". Looking back on his own first novel after eighteen years, Fitzgerald commented to Maxwell Perkins: "I think it is now one of the funniest books since Dorian Gray in its utter spuriousness--and then, here and there, I find a page that is very real and living".

Rosenfield, P., "Fitzgerald Before The Great Gatsby", in Kazin, p. 76.
(64) The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Scribners, p. 36.
"utter spuriousness" is only part of the problem, however, for as Edmund Wilson was to point out a few years later: "Fitzgerald has been left with a jewel which he doesn't quite know what to do with. For he has been given imagination without intellectual control of it; he has been given a desire for beauty without an aesthetic ideal; and he has been given a gift for expression without many ideas to express". Structurally, the novel certainly is weak, deserving Wilson's contention that it "has almost every fault and deficiency that a novel can possibly have", but Wilson is closer to the core of the problem when he criticizes the inferiority of its most obvious model:

Fitzgerald, when he wrote it, was drunk with Compton MacKenzie, and the book sounds like an American attempt to rewrite Sinister Street. Now MacKenzie, despite his extraordinary gift for picturesque and comic invention and the capacity for pretty writing which he says that he learned from Keats, lacks both the intellectual force and the emotional imagination to give body and outline to the material which he secretes in such enormous abundance. With the seeds he took from Keats's garden (one of the best kept gardens in the world) he explored so profusely that he blotted out the path of his own. Michael Fane, the hero of Sinister Street, was swamped in the forest of description, he was smothered by cumbines.

Just a year after the book was published (and before Wilson's article), Fitzgerald was already willing to admit the "lack of perspective" in a letter to Frances Newman, adding: "I was also hindered by a series of resemblances between my life and that of Michael Fane which, had I been a more conscientious man, might have precluded my ever attempting an autobiographical novel". It is significant, though, that whereas the influence of MacKenzie fades out after This Side of Paradise, that of Keats and the other English Romantic poets continues to grow in the works that follow. Like the romantics, Fitzgerald did value the genius of the creative imagination over that of the intellect and therefore avoided the unilateral limitations of a specific "aesthetic ideal" or any fixed philosophical system, balancing his imaginative visions with a permeating sense of irony which allowed him to develop a personal range and depth consistent with the magnitude of artistic genius he had come to associate with the poets he so admired.

(68) ibid., pp. 78-79.
In spite of the many structural weaknesses of *This Side of Paradise*, however, the novel seems to gain strength as it progresses, the prose assuming an identity of its own by the final pages. Amory becomes increasingly disillusioned with life, his early ambition "to live in New York, and be known at every restaurant and café, wearing a dress suit from early evening to early morning, sleeping away the dull hours of the forenoon" becomes washed away with the rain that falls on the city itself:

The rain gave Amory a feeling of detachment, and the numerous unpleasant aspects of city life without money occurred to him in threatening procession. There was the ghastly, stinking crush of the subway—the card cars thrusting themselves at one, leering out like dull bores who grab your arm with another story; the querulous worry as to whether some one isn't leaning on you; a man deciding not to give his seat to a woman, hating her for it; the woman hating him for not doing it; at worst a squalid phantasmagoria of breath, and old cloth on human bodies and smells of the food men ate—at best just people—too hot or too cold, tired, worried. 70

Just as the priest in "Absolution" warns Rudolph to stand back from the glittering lights of the amusement park, lest he feel only "the heat and the sweat and the life", Amory finds the reality of his would-be paradise literally disillusioning. Living "without money", he must walk through the streets with ordinary people wearing ordinary clothes, seeing everyday problems and "squalid" tensions of push and shove—"too hot or too cold, tired, worried". In spite of pretensions to the contrary, however, Amory does not cast off all his illusions about life. Admitting that he detests "poor people" a moment later, he adds:

"I hate them for being poor. Poverty may have been beautiful once, but it's rotten now. It's the ugliest thing in the world. It's essentially cleaner to be corrupt and rich than it is to be innocent and poor." 72

Anthony Patch clings to the same contention at the end of *The Beautiful and Damned*, and it is not until *The Great Gatsby* that the theme is followed through to its full consequences. Glittering surfaces and beautifully dressed people can offer images of paradise, but reality is always creeping up to shatter the illusion with a reverberating finality.

Amory's claim at the end of the novel—"I know myself...but that is all" 73 is difficult to credit on the evidence of his growth within the novel, and yet

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(72) op. cit., p. 255.
(73) ibid., p. 292.
there is a certain sureness revealed in the prose style of the final pages.

On the day that Amory started on his walk to Princeton the sky was a colorless vault, cool, high and barren of the threat of rain. It was a gray day, that least fleshly of all weathers; a day of dreams and far hopes and clear visions. It was a day easily associated with those abstract truths and purities that dissolve in the sunshine or fade out by the light of the moon. The trees and clouds were carved in classical severity; the sounds of the countryside had harmonized to a monotone, metallic as a trumpet, breathless as the Grecian urn. 74

At the end of the novel, Amory is beginning to cast off the melancholy self-absorption of Shelley as well as much of the dramatic posturing of Byron in favor of new "dreams and far hopes and clear visions" associated with the "classical severity" of the trees and clouds. As mentioned earlier, however, this classical severity is not to be taken literally, but rather linked to the image "breathless as the Grecian urn", for these new "dreams" and "clear visions" were to be romantic rather than classical. Fitzgerald himself had emphatically stressed the contrast with a youthful parody that was published in the Nassau Lit with the title, "To Iy Unused Greek Book":

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou joyless harbinger of future fear,
Garrulous alien, what thou mightst express
Will never fall, please God, upon my ear. 75

A few pages later, Amory similarly stresses a rejection of the realistic mode for his "clear visions" with the comment: "Nature as a rather coarse phenomenon composed largely of flowers that, when closely inspected, appeared moth-eaten, and of ants that endlessly traversed blades of grass, was always disillusioning; nature represented by skies and waters and far horizons was more likable". 76

In later works the dreams and far hopes and visions would be actualized through characters and events rather than merely described, just as moonlight would reoccur thematically in close relation to the suffering which beauty is capable of inflicting. Content here to allow "metallic as a trumpet" to suffice for the more poetic "silver, snarling trumpets" Amory had aspired to earlier, Fitzgerald is as yet able only to describe a mood as "breathless as the Grecian urn" rather than being able to achieve it in his own writing. As for Amory himself,

(74) Fitzgerald, F. Scott. This Side of Paradise, Scribners, pp. 266-67.
(76) op. cit., p. 279.
the personal sense of self proclaimed remains largely a matter of "old ambitions and unrealized dreams":

There was no God in his heart, he knew; his ideas were still in riot; there was ever the pain of memory; the regret for his lost youth—yet the waters of disillusion had left a deposit on his soul, responsibility and a love of life, the faint stirring of old ambitions and unrealized dreams. 77

What does emerge at the end of the novel, however, is the sense of a new generation "shouting the old cries, learning the old creeds, through a reverie of long days and nights", a generation "grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in men shaken", and although Amory pretends to disassociate himself from it finally, it is clearly the milieu from which he must emerge if, like Joyce's Stephen, he is "to help in building up the living consciousness of the race". 78 What remains, finally, is little more than a point from which to begin. "As an endless dream it went on; the spirit of the past brooding over a new generation, the chosen youth from the muddled, un-chastened world, still fed romantically on the mistakes and half-forgotten dreams of dead statesmen and poets..." 79

77 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 232.
78 ibid., p. 265.
79 ibid., p. 232.
THE BEAUTIFUL LADY WITHOUT MERCY

All my ways she wove of light,
Wove them all alive,
Made them warm and beauty bright...
So the trembling ambient air
Clothes the golden waters where
The pearl fishers dive.

When she went and begged a kiss
Very close I'd hold her,
And I know so well in this:
Fine fierce joy of memory
She was very young like me
Though half an aeon older.

Once she kissed me very long,
Tiptoed out the door,
Left me, took her light along
Faded as a music fades...
Then I saw the changing shades,
Color-blind no more.

--F. Scott Fitzgerald,
"First Love".

Lolling down on the edge of time
Where the flower months fade as the days move over,
Days that are long like lazy rhyme,
Nights that are pale with the moon and the clover,
Summer there is a dream of summer
Rich with dusks for a lover's food--
Who is the harlequin, who is the mummer,
You or time or the multitude?

Still does your hair's gold light the ground
And dazzle the blind till their old ghosts rise?
Then, all you care to find being found,
Are you yet kind to their hungry eyes?
Part of a song, a remembered glory--
Say there's one rose that lives and might
Whisper the fragments of our story:
Kisses, a lazy street—and night.

--F. Scott Fitzgerald,
"One Southern Girl"
When Fitzgerald describes the eleven-year-old heroine of "Winter Dreams" as "beautifully ugly as little girls are apt to be who are destined after a few years to be inexpressibly lovely and bring no end of misery to a great number of men", he is touching upon a theme which runs throughout the treatment of women in his works. One whole section of his "Note-books" is devoted to "Descriptions of Girls", and the emphasis upon 'girls' rather than 'women' is itself significant. "She was lovely and expensive, and about nineteen"; he writes in one entry, and in another "He had not realized that flashing fairness could last so far into the twenties". The association of beauty and youth is essentially a romantic theme, and Evylyn in "The Cut-glass Bowl" is but one example of the beautiful girl grown old, when the "flashing fairness" cannot last: "Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, / Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow". At its height, however, this intense beauty is capable of creating an illusion of virtual immortality: "A beauty that had reached the point where it seemed to contain in itself the secret of its own growth, as if it would go on increasing forever". As is also common in the romantic conception of beauty in women, however, it is a quality as capable of inflicting pain as it is of evincing pleasure, and when Fitzgerald includes the comment "I look like a femme fatale" as a separate entry, it reveals another important aspect of his romantic conception of feminine beauty. "He saw she was lying, but it was a brave lie. They talked from their hearts—with the half truths and evasions particular to that organ, which has never been famed as an instrument of precision." In one sense this sustains the Keatsian assertion "O for a Life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts"; and yet Fitzgerald was aware of the illusions embodied in such an attitude as well as the necessary consequences of such illusions.

(3) ibid., p. 132.
(4) ibid., p. 133.
(5) ibid., p. 134.
The lady was annoyed, and so intense was her personality that it had taken only a fractional flexing of her eyes to indicate the fact. She was a dark, pretty girl with a figure that would be full-blown sooner than she wished. She was just eighteen. 7

The lady is beautiful, but she is often without mercy in the most casual, even accidental manner. "Judy made these forays upon the helpless and defeated without malice, indeed half unconscious that there was anything mischievous in what she did". 8 Even after he has become aware of the illusion involved, however, the helpless male still cannot tear himself away: "No disillusion as to the world in which she had grown up could cure his illusion as to her desirability". 9 Near the end of This Side of Paradise, Amory Blaine's disillusionment goes one step further with the comment: "Women--of whom he had expected so much; whose beauty he had hoped to transmute into modes of art; whose unfathomable instincts, marvellously incoherent and inarticulate, he had thought to perpetrate in terms of experience--had become merely consecrations of their own posterity". 10 To understand the full implications of such a realization, however, it is necessary to look back at the string of romantic encounters he has experienced in the novel.

After the mild, adolescent attractions of Myra St Claire, Amory finds the stakes have been raised considerably in his encounter with the pre-flapper, Isabelle Borges:

Isabelle and Amory were distinctly not innocent, nor were they particularly brazen. Moreover, amateur standing had very little value in the game they were playing, a game that would presumably be her principal study for years to come. She had begun as he had, with good looks and an excitable temperament, and the rest was the result of accessible popular novels and dressing room conversation culled from a slightly older set. Isabelle had walked with an artificial gait at nine and a half, and when her eyes, wide and starry, proclaimed the ingenue most, Amory was proportionately less deceived. He waited for the mask to drop off, but at the same time he did not question her right to bear it. She, on her part, was not impressed by his studied air of blase sophistication. 11

The character of Isabelle derives directly from the early story, "Babes In the Woods" (the sub-section in the novel carries the same title), whose heroine is also named Isabelle. In the novel, however, the material is treated with a delicate irony superior to that which it receives in the earlier version, an irony perfectly suited to the development of Amory's gradual awareness.

7 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Crack-Up, New Directions, p. 130.
8 The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Winter Dreams" (1922), Scribners, ibid., p. 142.
9 ibid., p. 142.
10 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 263.
11 ibid., p. 66.
All through the spring Amory had kept up an intermittent correspondence with Isabelle Borge, punctuated by violent squabbles and chiefly enlivened by his attempts to find new words for love. He discovered Isabelle to be discreetly and aggravatingly unsentimental in letters, but he hoped against hope that she would prove not too exotic a bloom to fit the large spaces of spring as she had fitted the den in the Minnehaha Club. 12

The ironic implications carry over into the letters themselves, and the one which begins with, "Oh, it's so hard to write you what I really feel when I think about you so much; you've gotten to mean to me a dream that I can't put on paper any more", serves as an early expression of a theme which will pervade many of the works to come. The close resemblance between this letter and one of the many which Fitzgerald had sent to Ginevra King during their short-lived romance indicates the degree of autobiographicality of the novel itself:

I used to write endless letters throughout sophomore and junior years to Ginevra King of Chicago and Westover, who later figured in This Side of Paradise. Then I didn't see her for twenty-one years, though I telephoned her in 1933 to entertain your mother at the World's Fair, which she did. Yesterday I get a wire that she is in Santa Barbara and will I come down there immediately. She was the first girl I ever loved and I have faithfully avoided seeing her up to this moment to keep the illusion perfect, because she ended up by throwing me over with the most supreme boredom and indifference. I don't know whether I should go or not. It would be very, very strange. These great beauties are often something else at thirty-eight, but Ginevra had a great deal besides beauty. 13

That the strength of this "illusion" about the "first girl" he had ever loved enabled it to survive over the twenty years since he had last seen her is itself deeply significant with regard to Fitzgerald's own character, but more importantly it indicates the deeply rooted source of the theme of the beautiful but elusive heroine always just beyond the reach of the questing hero which crops up again and again throughout the works.

When Amory once again comes face to face with Isabelle after the long exchange of letters, he realizes "that he was enjoying life as he would probably never enjoy it again" and the actuality of the meeting is overridden by the very strength of his illusion of her.

It was Isabelle, and from the top of her shining hair to her little golden slippers she had never seemed so beautiful.

"Isabelle!" he cried, half involuntarily, and held out his arms. As in the story-books, she ran into them, and on that half-minute, as their lips touched, rested the high point of vanity, the crest of his young egotism. 14

(12) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 80.
(14) op. cit., p. 39.
The story-book illusion cannot last, however, and as the "crest of his young
egotism" begins to subside, Amory finds Isabelle "looking at him with something
that was not a smile, rather the faint, mirthless echo of a smile, in the corners
of her mouth." The illusion shattered finally, "Amory watched the night that
should have been the consummation of romance glide by with great moths overhead
and the heavy fragrance of roadside gardens, but without those broken words,
those little sighs..." Unkissed and cast aside by Isabelle with something
of the "supreme boredom and indifference" which Fitzgerald was latter to attrib­
ute to Cimerra King, Amory takes "a sombre satisfaction in thinking that perhaps
all along she had been nothing except what he had read into her". Here,
Fitzgerald is drawing on another important romantic theme which will permeate
the later works; namely, the inability of actual experience to live up to the
imaginative conception of its potentialities. Just as the diamond studded gold
walls suggest to the sumptuous imagination of John T. Unger "the platonic con­
ception of the ultimate prison", dazzling his eyes with "a whiteness that could
be compared only with itself, beyond human wish or dream", Amory has magnified
Isabelle within his imagination into an idealized "dream" which her merely
mortal presence is incapable of living up to. Similarly, John T. Unger finds
that in the sheer luxury of the château:

He was enjoying himself as much as he was able. It is youth's felicity
as well as its insufficiency that it can never live in the present, but
must always be measuring up the day against its own radiantly imagined
future--flowers and gold, girls and stars, they are only prefigurations
and prophecies of that incomparable, unattainable young dream. 13

The same theme of the youthful, idealizing imagination crops up again in Amory's
youthful visions of would-be paradise; in Anthony Patch's idealization of money
and of Gloria early in The Beautiful and Damned; in the "platonic" self-conception
and the "reveries" of "effable gaudiness" which occur in the adolescent James
Gatz as well as the visions of an "orgastic future" which dominate the elder
Gatsby; in the 'romantic philosophy' of the young Dick Diver and finally in
the youthful impressionability of the seventeen-year-old Rosemary Hoyt and in

(15) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 91.
(16) ibid., p. 92.
(17) ibid., p. 94.
(18) The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Scribners, p. 16.
the rather desperate need the young Celia Brady has for some affirming vision in *The Last Tycoon*. To understand the full significance of the 'romantic' nature of this theme, however, it is necessary to go back to the English Romantic poets and their works.

Shelley's women are too often veiled in vague abstraction to come through as living creatures, and even "The Witch of Atlas" is too beautiful almost for words:

For she was beautiful—her beauty made
The bright world dim, and everything beside,
Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade:
No thought of living spirit could abide,
Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,
On any object in the world so wide,
On any hope within the circling skies,
But on her form, and in her inmost eyes. 19

Even within this apparent idealization, however, there is a suggestion of another aspect in the sense of "to her looks had ever been betrayed", an implication of deception associated with such intense beauty. In another stanza she appears as:

A lovely lady garmented in light
From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are
Two openings of unfathomable night
Seen through a Temple's cloven roof—her hair
Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,
Picturing her form; her soft smiles shine afar,
And her low voice was heard like love, and drew
All living things towards this wonder new. 20

Here, in the face of such vivid beauty "the dim brain whirls with delight" while "Picturing her form", and siren-like "her low voice was heard like love, and drew / All living things towards this wonder new". Such powers are not limited to beautiful witches, however, as the poem "To Sophia" shows with the idealization of the actual Miss Stacey:

Thy deep eyes, a double Planet,
Gaze the wisest into madness
With soft clear fire,—the winds that fan it
Are those thoughts of tender gladness
Which, like zephyrs on the billow,
Make thy gentle soul their pillow. 21

Her "deep eyes!" are beautiful and soft, but they are also able to "Gaze the wisest into madness / With soft clear fire", implying an innocent and yet

(20) Ibid., p. 276.
(21) Ibid., p. 303.
implicitly sinister quality within the beauty itself, perhaps even beyond the control of its possessor.

At Princeton, Fitzgerald virtually worshipped Shelley, and even after he had lost something of the intensity of this devotion, the influence still remained.

Shelley was a God to me once. What a good man he is compared to that colossal egotist Browning! Haven't you read Ariel yet? For heaven's sake read it if you like Shelley, it's one of the best biographies I've ever read of anyone and it's by a Frenchman. I think Harcourt publishes it. And who 'thinks badly' of Shelley now? 22

The influence of Shelley is obvious in many of Fitzgerald's early poems and in This Side of Paradise (especially in the earlier versions), but Shelley lacked the consistent sense of irony which Fitzgerald would need to balance the idealization and abstraction employed in the later works. In a similar manner, Coleridge's idealization of Sara Hutchinson in "Dejection: an Ode" is balanced only by the poet's dejection at the loss of his artistic powers, rather than by any doubts about the woman herself. In "Christabel", however, the idealized young heroine is balanced by the more sinister and enigmatic Geraldine who exerts dark supernatural powers beyond her own control.

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;  
Ah! what a stricken look was hers!  
Deep from within she seems half-way 
To lift some weight with sick assay,  
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;  
Then suddenly, as one defled,  
Collects herself in scorn and pride,  
And lays down by the maiden's side!—  
And in her arms the maid she took,  
Ah weal-a-day!  
And with low voice and doleful look  
These words did say:  
"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell,  
Which is the lord of thy utterance, Christabel!  
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow,  
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;  
"Sure I have sinned!"said Christabel, / "Now heaven be praised if all be well." 24

The innocent and virginal Christabel feels an instinctive fear of the beautiful Geraldine, and awakened by the same the following morning she involuntarily cries out: "Sure I have sinned!" said Christabel. / "Now heaven be praised if all be well." 24 Geraldine never quite manages to bring into effect the sinister spell she manifests, but with her the theme of the beautiful but treacherous

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(24) Ibid., p. 69.
woman becomes firmly implanted in the Romantic Movement as a whole.

Of all those who took up the theme, however, none was to develop it as thoroughly as John Keats did throughout his works and in the personal writings. Even as early as 1816, long before any actual experiences with women, Keats was building up an imaginative picture of their contrasting natures.

Woman! When I behold thee flippant, vain,
Inconstant, childish, proud, and full of fancies,
Without that modest softening that enhances
The downcast eye, repentant of the pain
That its mild light creates to heal again—
E'en then, elate, my spirit leaps and prances,
E'en then my soul with exultation dances
For that to love, so long, I've dormant lain.
But when I see thee meek and kind and tender,
Heavens, how desperately do I adore
Thy winning graces! To be thy defender
I hotly burn—to be a Calidore,
A very Red Cross Knight, a stout Leander,
Might I be loved by thee like these of yore. 25

This rather naive imaginative picture of women, adoring their vices as well as their virtues, is one which would later nature with actual experiences into more sharply realized poetic expressions, and yet, referring to this sonnet and the two others written on women at the same time, Sidney Colvin comments:

To me its chief interest seems not poetical but personal, inasmuch as in it Keats already defines with self-knowledge the peculiar blend in his nature of ardent, idealizing boyish worship of women and beauty with acute critical sensitiveness to flaws of character defacing his ideal in actual women; a sensitiveness which grew with his growth and many a time afterwards put him ill at ease with his company and himself. 26

Keats idealized women, but they were constantly failing to live up to his imaginative conception of what they should (or could) be. The promise, naive as it may have been, consistently lacked fulfillment. Like Keats, Fitzgerald developed an awareness of both the "idealizing" and "critical" sides of his own nature through his own art, maintaining a delicate balance between imaginative extension and harsher reality which would find its most powerful statement in The Great Gatsby.

Returning for a moment to the youthful relationship between Amory and Isabelle, it is curious to note the similarities it bears to that which Keats describes to his brother George in October, 1818.

we went up stairs to her sitting-room—a very tasty sort of place with Books, Pictures a bronze statue of Buonaparte, Music, aeolian Harp; a parrot, a linnet—a Case of choice liquors &c &c &c. She behaved in the kindest manner—made me take home a Grouse for Tom's dinner—asked my address for the purpose of sending more game—As I had warmed with her before and kissed her—I thought it would be living backwards not to do so again—she had better taste; she perceived how much a thing of course it was and shrank from it—not in a prudish way but in as I say a good taste. She contrived to disappoint me in a way which made me feel more pleasure than a simple Kiss could do—She said I should please her much more if I would only press her hand and go away. Whether she was in a different disposition when I saw her before—or whether I have in fancy wrong'd her I cannot tell. I expect to pass some pleasant hours with her now and then; in which I feel I shall be of service to her in matters of knowledge and taste; if I can will. I have no libidinous thought about her—she and your George are the only women a peu près de mon age whom I would be content to know for their mind and friendship alone. 27

The woman in question, one Isabella Jones, was Keats's first real romantic interest (if not, apparently, his first love), and although the relationship remained platonic from that point on, it seems difficult to credit his claim (after the fact) that he had "no libidinous thought about her". Perhaps more to the point, however, is the remark: "She contrived to disappoint me in a way which made me feel more pleasure than a simple kiss could do". Unkissed (like Amory with Isabelle), he is able to retain the imaginative vision of what that kiss might be like without any intervention from merely 'physical' actuality. Immediately after this description of his disappointment with Isabella Jones, Keats announces that "I shall never marry", and then takes refuge in the abstract.

Though the most beautiful Creature were waiting for me at the end of a Journey or a Walk, though the carpet were of Silk, the Curtains of the morning Clouds; the chairs and Sofa stuffed with Cygnets' down; the food Manna, the Wine beyond Claret, the Window opening on Winander mere, I should not feel—or rather my Happiness would not be so fine, my solitude is sublime. Then instead of what I have described, there is a Sublimity to welcome me home. The roaring of the wind is my wife and the Stars through the window pane are my Children. The mighty abstract Idea I have of Beauty in all things stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness—an amiable wife and sweet Children I contemplate as part of that Beauty—but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart. I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds. 28

His subsequent dismissal "of the generality of women—who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a Sugar Plum than my time"22 has a similar sense of sour grapes about it, especially considering the affair with

(28) ibid. pp. 240-41.
(29) ibid., p. 241.
Fanny Brawne which is to follow. In spite of the immediate denial of significance with regard to the incident with Isabella Jones, however, the relationship must have exerted a substantial influence on the early poems "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil" and "The Eve of St. Agnes" (both of which, unlike "Lamia", were written before he had encountered Fanny Brawne). When Roger Sharrock remarks that in "these poems he is creating the facts and discoveries of first love out of his imagination", it becomes evident that he has failed to realize the full extent of the personal and artistic balance which the poet has achieved.

The kind of self-indulgence so richly and beautifully carried out in these poems is far removed from the impersonality of the poet of negative capability; it is also distinguished from the mere pouring out of personal emotion, since Keats is not by any means transcribing from his own experience but capturing by a supreme effort of the imagination love and the lover as he would wish them to be, and recreating the truths of passion as he does so; in such a process self-indulgence is turned into a discipline. 30

Although "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil" was written before the encounter described above, it is certainly probable that Keats had Isabella Jones in mind from earlier encounters (when he "had warmed with her before and kissed her"), and that artistically he was working out the "fancy" of her which had built up inside his mind before the encounter described. "The Eve of St. Agnes" was written a few months after the encounter, and it is significant that many of the sensuous images, from "the most beautiful creature" to "the food Manna", which he attributes to the ideal marriage carry over in much the same form into the poem itself. (The sense of fantasy, of self-indulgent luxury also parallels the sensuous paradise of "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz".) Even more significant, however, is the imaginative extension of limited experience into a lasting artistic expression in order to transcend "the mere pouring out of personal emotion", a process remarkably similar to that which Fitzgerald achieves in his artistic depiction of Ginerva King, not only in Isabelle Borge of This Side of Paradise, but in the heroine of "Winter Dreams" as well.

If it is coincidence that Isabelle so closely parallels Keats's Isabella, then it seems an even more extraordinary coincidence that Judy Jones, the femme fatale of "Winter Dreams", shares the same second name with Keats's

first romantic interest. Compared with the earlier Isabelle, however, Judy Jones provides a far more complex example of Fitzgerald's idealization of women (albeit balanced by a sharp "critical sensitiveness") in the aftermath of Ginerva King.

The little girl who had done this was eleven—beautifully ugly as little girls are apt to be who are destined after a few years to be inexpressibly lovely and bring no end of misery to a great number of men. The spark, however, was perceptible. There was a general ungodliness in the way her lips twisted down at the corners when she smiled, and in the—oh, heaven help us!—in the almost passionate quality of her eyes. Vitality is born early in such women. It was utterly in evidence now, shining through her thin frame in a sort of glow.

For Dexter Green, the protagonist, this first impression of Judy Jones serves as a strong "emotional shock, and his perturbation required a violent and immediate outlet. It was not as simple as that, either. As so frequently would be the case in the future, Dexter was unconsciously dictated to by his winter dreams."

As the title indicates, these winter dreams, similar in nature to those youthful visions of Amory Blaine and Rudolph Miller and James Gatz, are a crucial aspect of the story's thematic development; and although the exact nature of these winter dreams is never made explicit, the explanation offered a few sentences later further emphasizes their central importance:

The phrase 'winter dreams' itself implies a sense of anticipation, a desire for the pleasures of spring and then beyond that to the glittering things of life which are forever tantalizingly just out of reach. The most important of these 'glittering things' is Judy Jones herself, especially as she appears to Dexter nine years later.

The quality of exaggeration, of thinness, which had made her passionate eyes and downturnmg mouth absurd at eleven, was gone now. She was arresting beauty. The color of her cheeks was centred like the color in a picture—it was not a high color, but a sort of fluctuating and feverish warmth, so shaded that it seemed at any moment it would recede and disappear. This color and the mobility of her mouth gave a continual impression of flux, of intense life, of passionate vitality—balanced only partially by the sad luxury of her eyes.

[33] loc. cit.
[34] ibid., p. 136.
The absurdity of eleven year old beauty gone now, Judy is "arrestingly beautiful", now a beauty which "gave a continual impression of flux, of intense life, of passionate vitality". In this sense, much of Fitzgerald's romantic vision is associated with the desire for (not merely "association with") beautiful but elusive and, at times, deceptive women. Amory Blaine fails in three consecutive romantic involvements, Anthony Patch succeeds into failure with the comment: "the victor belongs to the spoils", Gatsby 'quests' for but fails to reach his dream object Daisy. Dick Diver 'obtains' the beautiful Nicole only to lose her again in the end, and Monroe Stahr remains haunted by the lingering memory of his beautiful wife, now dead.

The evening after Dexter Green again encounters the beautiful Judy Jones, he is stretched out on a raft in the middle of a lake when the sound of far off music takes him back five years to his college days—"They had played it at a prom once when he could not afford the luxury of proms, and he had stood outside the gymnasium and listened". Obviously the source of the Malcolm Cowley reference mentioned earlier, Dexter's mood is one of a blend of nostalgia and anticipation, as well as an "appreciation" of the luxurious moment itself which bears a marked resemblance to that of Amory just before he sees Isabelle again. "It was a mood of intense appreciation, a sense that, for once, he was magnificently attuned to life and that everything about him was radiating a brightness and a glamour he might never know again". The mood heightens into "a sort of ecstasy" which carries over into his reaction to Judy Jones when she suddenly roars up in a motor-boat.

"My name is Judy Jones"—she favored him with an absurd smirk—rather, what tried to be a smirk, for twist her mouth as she might, it was not grotesque, it was merely beautiful—"and I live in a house over there on the Island, and in that house there is a man waiting for me. When he drove up at the door I drove out of the dock because he says I'm his ideal."

The warning is not enough for Dexter, however, for he quickly falls under the spell of her elusive beauty. "His heart turned over like the fly-wheel of the

\[(35)\text{The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Winter Dreams"(1922), Scribners, p. 137.}
\[(*)\text{See page 58 for a discussion of the Cowley quotation.}
\[(36)\text{ibid., p. 138.}\]
boat, and for the second time, her casual whim gave a new direction to his life*. Judy Jones refuses to be 'idealized' in the sense of Coleridge's Christabel or Keats's Madeline, and yet that very refusal elicits a somewhat involuntary idealization of her by Dexter himself. The act of pulling away itself attracts him by increasing the desirability already aroused by her beautiful appearance, even as it serves as a warning of what might (and does) happen to him later. At the moment, however, "her casual whim gave a new direction to his life".

The new direction is a dangerous one emotionally for Dexter, but the danger, like the refusal, only makes her more desirable as she draws him closer, playing upon his imaginative extension of her physical beauty. "Then he saw—she communicated her excitement to him, lavishly, deeply, with kisses that were not a promise but a fulfillment". Unlike the lovers on Keats's urn, whose love can be idealized because it is never realized ("Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss, / Though winning near the goal"), Dexter achieves a momentary union of the imaginative and the sensual in the kiss itself, a sense of fulfillment made all the more delicious by the knowledge that it cannot last. At the same time, though, these kisses lead him deeper and deeper into emotional commitment as they "aroused in him not hunger demanding renewal but surfeit that would demand more surfeit... kisses that were like charity, creating want by holding back nothing at all".

Surfeit cannot continually produce further surfeit, however, and once the consummation has been achieved, an emotional 'law of diminishing returns' sets in with the subsequent emotional winding down.

It began like that—and continued, with varying shades of intensity, on such a note right up to the dénouement. Dexter surrendered a part of himself to the most direct and unprincipled personality with which he had ever come into contact. Whatever Judy wanted, she went after with the full pressure of her charm. There was no divergence of method, no jockeying for position or premeditation of effects—there was very little mental side to any of her affairs. She simply made men conscious to the highest degree of her physical loveliness. Dexter had no desire to change her. Her deficiencies were knit up with a passionate energy that transcended and justified them. 38

With her "direct and unprincipled personality", Judy Jones manifests the femme fatale for Dexter, emotionally if not literally, as he gradually "surrendered a

(37) The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Winter Dreams" (1922), Scribners, p. 140.

(38) ibid., p. 140-41.
"part of himself" to that personality "right up to the dénouement". The comment: "there was very little mental side to any of her affairs" also suggests the romantic theme of sensations over thoughts, as Judy "simply made men conscious to the highest degree of her physical loveliness" -- an appeal to the imagination rather than to the intellect. Often in romantic literature, the beautiful but somewhat sinister heroine (Coleridge's Geraldine and Keats's Lamia are examples) actually resents and even fears the intellect and its interference with the imagination, an interference which ironically is not always in the best interest of the romantic hero involved. When Apollonius exposes the true identity of Lamia with the shout "Begone, foul dream", the "bald-head philosopher" destroys the beautiful vision which she manifests and by so doing destroys her lover, Lycius, as well. Keats's own attitude to the act is something less than ambiguous:

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven;
'30 I know her woof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air and gnomèd mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it were, while made
The tender-personed Lamia melt into a shade.

At the same time, however, Lamia is also described as a "cruel lady" capable of tangling the innocent Lycius "in her mesh" with the kisses she gives to him.

The cruel lady, without any show
Of sorrow for her tender favourite's woos,
But rather, if her eyes could brighter be,
With brighter eyes and slow amenity,
Put her new lips to his, and gave arouch
The life she had so tangled in her mesh; 40

Keats seems to be in two minds about the "cruel" and yet "tender-personed" Lamia, perhaps because, like Judy Jones, her "deficiencies were knit up with a passionate energy that transcended and justified them", at least in the mind (or rather the imagination) of Dexter. This quality is an important aspect of Fitzgerald's own attitude towards women, an attitude focussed upon the ability of physical, sensual beauty to transcend any deficiencies of character with a "passionate energy" derived from that beauty and eventually unfathomable in nature.


(40) ibid., Part I, lines 230-95.
The deficiencies remain, however, and Fitzgerald develops them with something of the "critical sensitiveness" which Colvin attributed to Keats, in order to maintain a sense of balance in his female characters. Exerting an "unprincipled" brutality of the emotions, "Judy made these forays upon the helpless and defeated without malice, indeed half unconscious that there was anything mischievous in what she did". That she can be "half unconscious" of this emotional brutality is another important aspect of the *femme fatale* in Fitzgerald's works, as when Daisy is depicted sharing cold chicken with her husband immediately after deserting Gatsby, or when Rosemary deeply wounds Dick with her remarks on his dissipation in Rome without being aware of the effect her words are having. In the case of Judy Jones, however, something of an explanation (if not a justification) is offered a moment later with the comment: "Perhaps from so much youthful love, so many youthful lovers, she had come, in self-defence, to nourish herself wholly from within."  

What she does to Dexter, she does to a number of other men at the same time, except that there seems one important factor in her treatment of him in particular: "She had inflicted on him the innumerable little slights and indignities possible in such a case—as if in revenge for ever having cared for him at all". The cost of her caring is a high one for Dexter, and although he leaves the midwest considerably embittered by his experiences with her, "no disillusion as to the world in which she had grown up could cure his illusion as to her desirability". In spite of the fact that the relation is permeated by illusion and disillusion, her desirability lingers in his imagination undiminished by her "malice" and "indifference" and "contempt". Cast off with something of the "supreme boredom and indifference" Fitzgerald attributed to Ginevra King, Dexter keeps the "illusion as to her desirability" intact. All in all, "She had brought him ecstatic happiness and intolerable agony of spirit, and the benign indifference with which "She had beckoned him and yawned at him and beckoned him again" leaves him bitter but still loving. Like the knight in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", he consoles himself with memory and a half hidden hope.

(41) *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, "Winter Dreams" (1922), Scribners, p. 141.
(42) *loc. cit.*
(43) ibid., p. 143.
(44) ibid., p. 142.
(45) ibid., p. 143.
The spell was not broken by his move to the East, however, for almost two years later he returns to become engaged to another girl—beautiful enough and solid and stable—having almost convinced himself that he has done the right thing when suddenly Judy Jones appears at his side at a dance.

"Hello, darling."

The familiar voice at his elbow startled him. Judy Jones had left a man and crossed the room to him—Judy Jones, a slender enamelled doll in cloth of gold: gold in a band at her head, gold in two slipper points at her dress's hem. The fragile glow of her face seemed to blossom as she smiled at him. A breeze of warmth and light blew through the room. His hands in the pockets of his dinner-jacket tightened spasmodically. He was filled with a sudden excitement.

In spite of his engagement to another girl, he allows her to lure him away from the dance and gradually she sways him away from his defensive feelings towards her through the strength of her beauty and sheer personal confidence. Physically, her appearance is that of the archetypal 'golden girl' who is forever tantalizingly just out of reach. The "cloth of gold" complements "the fragile glow of her face", suggesting an immediate, slightly archaic, sensual appeal like that which Keats employs for the disrobing of Madeline in "The Eve of St. Agnes":

Of all its wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warned jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees.

Although Dexter never has the opportunity to overlook the disrobing of Judy Jones, the direct, sensual appeal of her sudden presence he finds irresistible. There is also a sense of irony within the reference to her as an "enamelled doll", however, for whatever artifice she creates around her appearance with "cloth of gold" and with rouge, she remains merely human with an all too 'perishable breath'; and unlike the lovers on Keats's urn she is subject to the diminishing effects of time.

Fair youth beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet do not grieve.
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Judy Jones most certainly will (and, in fact, does) fade with the passage of time.

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(48) Ibid., p. 535.
time (at least physically), and yet through the strength of his "illusion as to her desirability", Dexter is able to keep the memory of her 'intact' up until ten years after he sees her for the last time. Similarly, the lovers on the urn remain intact through time because they are not lovers at all, but merely the "enamelled" images of two lovers set down by an artist thousands of years ago.

In the same description, Fitzgerald draws upon one of his favorite images from Keats with the remark, "A breeze of warm and light blew through the room", a direct allusion to the lines from "Ode to a Nightingale": "here there is no light,/ Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown". Fitzgerald uses the image throughout his works, with that which occurs in The Great Gatsby remaining closest to the original: "there was no light save what the gleaming floor bounced in from the hall".

On the night of his last encounter with Judy Jones, however, neither the warmth nor the light are more than momentary for Dexter, and Fitzgerald emphasizes the fact through a mood of Keatsian moonlight:

The dark street lightened, the dwellings of the rich loomed up around them, he stopped his coupé in front of the great white bulk of the Mortimer Joneses' house, somnolent, gorgeous, drenched with the splendor of the damp moonlight. Its solidity startled him. The strong walls, the steel of the girders, the breadth and beam and pomp of it were there only to bring out the contrast with the young beauty beside him. It was sturdy to accentuate her slightness— "as if to show what a breeze could be generated by a butterfly's wing." The emotional brutality of Judy Jones early in the story shifts now to her fragile vulnerability in this moonlit scene as she begins to cry. "I'm more beautiful than anybody else," she said brokenly, "why can't I be happy?" Beauty can guarantee no happiness in the real world of "breathing human passion", for it is only within the static world of the urn itself that love can remain "For ever warm and still to be enjoyed, / For ever panting, and for ever young". Judy wants the permanent happiness of the urn where everything remains the same it is forever, and yet her very nature is diametrically opposed to this as it goes on giving "a continual impression of flux, of intense life, of passionate vitality". She is too much alive to ever exist outside of time, except.

(49) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Great Gatsby, Scribners, p. 96.
(50) The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Winter Dreams" (1922), Scribners, pp. 146-
(51) ibid., p. 147.
(52) ibid., p. 136.
perhaps, within the imagination of Dexter himself.

He has no regrets about the sudden intervention of Judy, even though she once again leaves him "alone and palely loitering" after only a month, breaking his engagement and giving him a "deeper agony". "Nor, when he had seen that it was no use, that he did not possess in himself the power to move fundamentally or to hold Judy Jones, did he bear any malice towards her. He loved her, and he would love her until the day he was too old for loving—but he could not have her." The "illusion" remains intact for ten years, until a businessman from Detroit happens to mention that Judy has married and settled down in that city. Dexter is shocked to learn that her husband "treats her like the devil" (a poetic irony), but moreover that "when he's particularly outrageous she forgives him. In fact, I'm inclined to think she loves him." Outrageous in her youth, Judy now suffers the outrage which she had dealt out so lavishly in her early affairs. Shocked by the revelation, Dexter finds himself "thinking wildly that there must be a reason for this, some insensitivity in the man or some private malice", but the fact is that Devlin, the common-sense businessman, is quite simply unaware of the complexities of the illusion of passionate vitality and beauty which he is shattering. Unlike Isabella's lover, Dexter does not die for his love; nor does he run off into the night with his fair Madeline; and thanks to Devlin, he is not even left with the warmth of memory and illusion in the manner of Keats's knight. At the end of Lamia, Apollonius accuses Lamia and "with a frightful scream she vanished: / And Lycius' arms were empty of delight, / As were his limbs of life, from that same night". The final implications of "Winter Dreams" are less precisely rendered, but intentionally so, as if Fitzgerald is more concerned with a deeper Keatsian ambiguity with regard to the nature of love itself.

The critical spirit of Apollonius brings about the destruction of romantic passion. But its chief enemy is within; here a radical ambiguity appears, not present in the earlier poems. Love is seen as at once exquisite and fatal, not running into danger from external forces, but bearing the seeds of death within itself; it is not only fatal, but has about it a quality of corruption. Lamia is a demon as well as a woman. 56

53 The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Winter Dreams" (1922), Scribners, p. 147.
54 Ibid., p. 149.
With Devlin’s revelation, Dexter gradually realizes just how much he has “lost”, as he feels a “sort of dullness” looking “out of the window at the New York sky-line into which the sun was sinking in dull lovely shades of pink and gold”. The particular season is not mentioned at this point in the story, but having begun with spring, deepened with summer, the description here suggests the “last oozings hours by hours” of Keats’s “To Autumn” where “barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day / And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue”.57 (The allusion also suggests a deeper sense of irony with regard to the east-west theme of The Great Gatsby, for which the story was “a sort of first draft”, in that Dexter is looking out upon “the grey beauty of steel” in New York rather than the “stubble plains” of the mid-west from which he had begun). The day is not all that is dying, however, as Dexter finally realizes.

He had thought that having nothing else to lose he was invulnerable at last—but he knew that he had just lost something more, as surely as if he had married Judy Jones and seen her fade away before his eyes.

The dream was gone. Something had been taken from him. In a panic he pushed the palms of his hands into his eyes and tried to bring up a picture of the waters lapping on Sherry Island and the moonlit veranda, and pincham on the golf-links and the dry sun and the gold color of her neck’s soft down. And her mouth damp to his kisses and her eyes plaintive with melancholy and her freshness like new fine linen in the morning. Why, these things were no longer in the world! They had existed and they existed no longer. 59

Dexter’s final mood is one of disillusionment in the most literal sense of the word, for Devlin, however unwittingly playing the part of Apollonius, has stripped him of the single thing he still held precious—the dreamlike illusion of the golden girl—just as if he had “seen her fade away before his eyes”. Lycurgus dies at such a moment, but for Dexter there is no such escape and he is left to live in a cold world without illusions or hopes or dreams.

He wanted to care, and he could not care. For he had gone away and he could never go back any more. The gates were closed, the sun was gone down, and there was no beauty but the grey beauty of steel that withstands all time. Even the grief he could have borne was left behind in the country of illusion, of youth, of the richness of life, where his winter dreams had flourished. 60

From this it becomes even more clear why Fitzgerald referred to the story as “a sort of first draft of the Gatsby idea”, for Dexter’s disillusionment is one associated with the loss of his dream of Judy, not of Judy herself, as

(60) Loc. cit.
well as the loss of the visionary powers which produced that dream within his imagination; powers linked not with the East, but with the West—"the country of illusion, of youth, of the richness of life, where his winter dreams had flourished".

Ironically, Gatsby is even closer to Lyceus in the sense that he doesn't realize the death of his dream of Daisy until just before his own actual death at the hands of Wilson—"he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream" in a "new world, material without being real".61 While Daisy is not overtly 'evil', she does possess "a quality of corruption" in her relationship with Gatsby, a sense, like Judy Jones, of "nourishing herself wholly from within" (as suggested by the cold chicken which she puts out but does not eat shortly after she has cast Gatsby aside). Emotional death is associated with actual death throughout Fitzgerald's works, however, as when Dick Diver realizes that "Rome was the end of his dream of Rosemary" at the same time as he evokes the picture of "the house where Keats had died"62; and again in the case of Monroe Stahr as he learns that Kathleen has left him for another man.

But he could not even believe this now, and the whole adventure began to peel away even as he recapitulated it searchingly to himself. The car, the hill, the hat, the music, the letter itself, blew off like the scraps of tar paper from the rubble of his house. And Kathleen departed, packing up her remembered gestures, her softly moving head, her sturdy eager body, her bare feet in the wet swirling sand. The skies paled and faded—the wind and rain turned dreary, washing the silver fish back to sea. It was only one more day, and nothing was left except the pile of scripts on the table.

He went upstairs. Minna died again on the first landing, and he forgot her lingeringly and miserably again, step by step to the top. The empty floor stretched around him—the doors with no one sleeping behind.63

The loss of Kathleen almost immediately evokes the death of his wife which still haunts him, and the sense of death is also reflected in the reference to "the silver fish" washing back out to sea—"the thousands of grunion which he and Kathleen had seen coming ashore to die only pages before.

In addition to its association with death, its quality of being "at once exquisite and fatal", there is also a sense of the demonic about the emotion

of romantic love in Fitzgerald's works, in that it is threatened by "external forces, but bearing the seeds of death within itself; it is not only fatal, but has about it a quality of corruption". From Isabellle in This Side of Paradise to Kathleen in The Last Tycoon, the femme fatale heroines of Fitzgerald's works exert a belle dame influence over the men they become involved with; at times unconsciously and at times very consciously indeed. The "romantic communion of unbelievable intensity" which Kathleen's eyes promise Stahr at their first encounter leaves him with a deep emotional hurt in the end, and with a deepening sense of guilt with regard to his dead wife. The effect is not intentional in this case, but the same cannot be said of Eleanor near the end of This Side of Paradise: "Eleanor was, say, the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty, the last weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his soul to flakes".65

 Appropriately, when Amory first encounters Eleanor he is lost in the rain and blackness of a thunderstorm as "Thunder rolled with menacing crashes up the valley and scattered through the woods in intermittent batteries" and "lightning made everything vivid and grotesque for great sweeps around".66 Like Endymion in the underworld, everything for him becomes "suddenly furtive and ghostly" until just as suddenly a "strange sound" is audible through the darkness: "It was a song, in a low, husky voice, a girl's voice, and whoever was singing was very close to him". Amory is amazed, for the song is in French (appropriately enough), and his initial response is even more accurate than he had intended: "'Who the devil is there in Ramilly County', muttered Amory aloud, 'who would deliver Verlaine in an extemporaneous tune to a soaking haystack?'".67 The 'evil' Eleanor of course. Initially (for he cannot see her face in the dark), she takes the ironic guise of "Psyche, your soul", but when the lightning flashes a moment later and he sees her for the first time, the guise becomes even more sinister in his eyes.

Oh, she was magnificent—pale skin, the color of marble in starlight, slender brows, and eyes that glittered green as emeralds in the blinding glare. She was a witch, of perhaps nineteen, he judged, alert and

64 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Last Tycoon, Scribners, p. 74.
65 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 222.
66 Ibid., p. 224.
67 Ibid., p. 225.
dreamy and with the tell-tale white line over her upper lip that was a weakness and a delight. He sank back with a gasp against the wall of hay.

"Now you've seen me," she said calmly, "and I suppose you're about to say that my green eyes are burning into your brain." 68

Amory does not, though in truth she is not far off the mark. Not knowing her name, he calls her "Madeline", after the heroine of "Eve of St. Agnes", and she quickly corrects him, as if to say that the delicate Madeline is too innocent for her. A nineteen-year-old "witch" in the form of a flapper, Eleanor all but binds him in the trance he then experiences. "Amory was in a trance. He felt every moment was precious. He had never met a girl like this before—she would never quite seem the same again."69 Half perceiving, half creating her in his own imagination, Amory is carried away by the encounter, experiencing a deadly fear that the magical moment will pass away from before he has fully realized it.

When Eleanor's arm touched his he felt his hands grow cold with deadly fear lest he should lose the shadow brush with which his imagination was painting wonders of her. He watched her from the corners of his eyes as ever he did when he walked with her—she was a feast and a folly and he wished it had been his destiny to sit forever on a hay-stack and see life through her green eyes. His paganism soared that night and when she faded out like a gray ghost down the road, a deep singing came out of the fields and filled his way homeward. All night the summer moths flitted in and out of Amory's window; all night large looning sounds swayed in mystic revelry through the silver grain—and he lay awake in the clear darkness. 70

Amory's idealization of her in his imagination cannot last, and he knows it. They take refuge in the abstractions of poetry as a means of idealizing love, but even that becomes a sublimation for something deeper and more sinister. "Their chance was to make everything fine and finished and rich and imaginative; they must bend tiny golden tenacles from his imagination to hers, that would take the place of the great, deep love that was never so near, yet never so much of a dream."71 It isn't enough finally, for the sense of "evil" in Eleanor is directly associated with sex and the frustrations involved in its avoidance. As Amory himself points out, "the truth is that sex is right in the middle of our purest abstractions, so close that it obscures vision". 72

(68) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise. Scribners, p. 227.
(69) Ibid., p. 228.
(70) Ibid., p. 230.
(71) Ibid., p. 231.
(72) Ibid., p. 233.
She denies him the kiss he seeks, and shortly afterwards she suddenly turns her horse and rides "breakneck for the end of the plateau" with the cry—"Watch! I'm going over the cliff!"

Ten feet from the edge she flings herself sideways as the "horse went over with a frantic whinny". She can't bring herself to do it, but the intention is there, arising out of the frustration of the 'evil' forces within. It is their last night together before Amory has to return to New York, and once again death becomes associated with the end of romantic love. She tries to explain the act away with the remark "I've got a crazy streak", adding that "twice before I've done things like that. When I was eleven mother went—went mad—stark raving crazy. We were in Vienna—."

Where else? Discussing love with Amory shortly before, she had made the comment: "Oh, just one person in fifty has any glimmer of what sex is. I'm hipped on Freud and all that, but it's rotten that every bit of real love in the world is ninety-nine per cent passion and one little soupcon of jealousy." She's "hipped on Freud", but she fears and resents the intrusion of sex into love even as she so strongly desires it; a creature of passion who denies the very passions which finally drive her into wild actions. As Amory says, "sex is right in the middle of our purest abstractions, so close that it obscures vision". The sweet, platonic relationship of the imagination which they try to content themselves with fails finally because of the frustration of the passions within, in much the same sense as the frustration which Keats experienced in his relationship with Isabella Jones. Like it or not, and in spite of whatever denials are made against it, the "Libidinous" element exists in any relationship. In spite of their 'rational' discussion of the nature of sex, both of them feel a kind of revulsion after Eleanor's wild act with the horse, and they end up by "hating each other with a bitter sadness".

As Amory then admits, however, just as he "had loved himself in Eleanor, so now what he hated was only a mirror". Revulsion for one another in a romantic relationship becomes self-revulsion finally, a theme which will crop up again and again in the works to follow.

(73) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 239.
(74) Ibid., p. 240.
(75) Ibid., p. 233.
(76) Ibid., p. 240.
Eleanor is quite right to deny Amory's association of her with the innocent Madeline, but had he chosen Lamia instead, he would have been far closer to the truth of her nature. Just as he is first attracted to her by the song she sings "in a low, husky voice", Lamia first attracts the attention of Lycius with a "delicious" song that breaks through his own self absorption.

He passed, shut up in mysteries,
His mind wrapped like his mantle, while her eyes
Followed his steps, and her neck regal white
Turned—syllabiling thus, "Ah, Lycius bright,
And will you leave us on the hills alone?
Lycius, look back, and be some pity shown!"
He did—not with cold wonder fearingly,
But Orphens-like at an Eurydice;
For so delicious were the words she sung,
It seemed that he had loved them a whole summer long.

Like Eleanor, Lamia is a creature of the passions, offering a beautiful presence which will keep him from looking too deeply within. She tangles his life "in her mesh" and sings again "Happy in beauty, life, and love, and everything / A song of love, too sweet for earthly lyres" and yet at the same time insisting "that she was a woman, and without / Any more subtle fluid in her veins / Then throbbing blood, and that the self-same pains / Inhabited her frail-strung heart as his". The "throbbing blood" runs through Eleanor's veins as well, whatever denials she seeks to make at times, and it is the source of the 'evil' which he attributes to her (and implicitly to himself) as he sums up the final romantic implications of the affair as a whole.

For years afterward when Amory thought of Eleanor he seemed still to hear the wind sobbing around him and sending little chills into the places beside his heart. The night when they rode up the slope and watched the cold moon float through the clouds, he lost a further part of him that nothing could restore; and when he lost it he lost also the power of regretting it. Eleanor was, say, the last time that evil crept close to Amory under the mask of beauty, the last weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his soul to flakes.

With her his imagination ran riot and that is why they rode to the highest hill and watched the evil moon ride high, for they knew then that they could see the devil in each other. But Eleanor—did Amory dream her? Afterward their ghosts played, yet both of them hoped from their souls never to meet. Was it the infinite sadness of her eyes that drew him or the mirror of himself that he found in the gorgeous clarity of her mind? She will have no other adventure like Amory, and if she reads this she will say:

"And Amory will have no other adventure like me". 79

(78) ibid., Part I, ll. 255-99.
(79) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 222.
Like Lania, Eleanor is capable of exerting a "trance" over her lover, "sending little chills into the places beside his heart", and of masking "evil" with her beautiful appearance; a "weird mystery that held him with wild fascination and pounded his soul to flakes". Another Keatsian ambiguity creeps in with the comment: "But Eleanor—did Amory dream her?", suggesting a sense of half perceiving, half creating imaginative conception which parallels that at the end of the relationship with Isabelle—"that perhaps all along she had been nothing except what he had read into her". In a more abstract sense, however, Amory's question with regard to Eleanor parallels the ambiguity at the end of "Ode to a Nightingale": "Was it a vision, or a wakening dream? / Fled is that music...Do I wake or sleep?". The confusion of imagination with reality, of reality with imagination, is one which will pervade the later works in a far more deeply realized, and deeply ironic, thematic development. Finally, Eleanor's penchant for song might well invite a comparison with the "fairy's song" of "La Belle Dame sans Merci", but this is a theme which Fitzgerald was to work out in far more elaborate detail in his second novel, The Beautiful and Damned.

Shortly after the publication of This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald remarked in a letter to his aunt and uncle dated December 28, 1920:

"I am just putting the finishing touches on my novel, The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy, which is the story of a young couple who rapidly go to pieces. It is much more carefully written than the first one and I have a good deal of faith in it tho it's so bitter and pessimistic that I doubt if it'll have the popular success of the first. Still, as you know, I really am in this game seriously and for something besides money and if it's necessary to bootlick the pot delusions of the inhabitants of Main Street (Have you read it? It's fine!) to make money I'd rather live on less and preserve the one duty of a sincere writer—to set down life as he sees it as gracefully as he knows how."

The Beautiful and Damned was published two years later, and though it lacks the gracefulness which Fitzgerald had aspired to, the thematic development suggested by the earlier title becomes the predominant theme of the novel in its final version. Gloria Gilbert, the belle dame of the novel, first appears to Anthony Patch as "a sun, radiant, growing, gathering light and storing it—then after an eternity pouring it forth in a glance, the fragment of a sentence, to that part of him that cherished all beauty and all illusion". The final phrase

(C6) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 94.
(C1) The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Turnbull, Penguin, "to Mr. and Mrs. 'Phillip Macquillan' (under "Miscellaneous Letters").
(C2) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 73.
suggests a further aspect necessary for the femme fatale's success; namely the presence of a male with a particular vulnerability to beauty and illusion. She has Lamia's dislike for intellectuals, for as she later comments, these cherishing then would fall in love with me and admire me, whereas the clever men I meet would just analyse me and tell me I'm this because of this or that because of that". 33 Though, like Amory Blaine, Anthony has intellectual pretensions from time to time, his overriding nature is that of a romantic proclivity to sensations rather than thoughts, and as such easily falls prey to the beauty and illusions of the "Siren" Gloria. As is characteristic with other such heroines in Fitzgerald's works, there is also a peculiar ruthlessness in Gloria's attitude, "enjoying the fierce jealousy of other girls" and "loving it with a vanity that was almost masculine". 34 The essential difference with Gloria, however, is that whereas her predecessors were content to fade away, leaving their men "alone and palely loitering", she lingers to marry Anthony once she has tired of her flapperish attitude to life.

The courtship proves to be a tenacious one, alternating as it does between Anthony's ecstatic image of her as a "vision of unhoped for hyacinthine spring" and his gradual realization of her innate cruelty, a cruelty of "indifference" capable of reducing him at times to an "insolent and efficiently humiliated man". 36 The hold she exerts on him is a powerful one, directly linked to the demonic influence of Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci".

He was not so much in love with Gloria as mad for her. Unless he could have her near him again, kiss her, hold her close and acquiescent, he wanted nothing more from life. By her three minutes of utter unavering indifference the girl had lifted herself from a high but somehow casual position in his mind, to be instead his complete preoccupation. However much his wild thoughts varied between a passionate desire for her kisses and an equally passionate craving to hurt and mar her, the residue of his mind craved in finer fashion to possess the triumphant soul that had shone through those three minutes. She was beautiful—but especially she was without mercy. He must own that strength that could send him away. 37

Driven "mad for her" (he actually does go mad later in the novel), Anthony feels a sense of physical frustration at her indifference and elusiveness, and perhaps because of a sexual frustration like that of Amory and Eleanor, he feels "a

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33 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 73.
34 ibid., p. 81.
35 ibid., p. 101.
36 ibid., p. 116.
37 loc. cit.
passionate desire for her kisses and an equally passionate craving to hurt and
mar her". Though, again, she is not overtly 'evil', she does possess a "quality
of corruption" in common with her predecessors, a quality which, ironically,
only makes her all that more desirable to Anthony. Like Lamia, she tangles him
"in her mesh", and yet there is a further aspect to her, suggested earlier with
Judy Jones, but specifically stated here: "She was beautiful—but especially she
was without mercy". Capable of playing his imaginative visions of her up into
ecstasy at the highest moments, Gloria can just as easily crash him back down
to earth again with a ruthlessness which at times is not even intentional. For
Anthony, however, "that part of him that cherished all beauty and all illusion"
leaves him all too vulnerable to Gloria when "between Kisses Anthony and this
golden girl quarrelled incessantly". Here, the golden girl is again "beautiful",
but she is also "without mercy" in a manner "almost masculine".

"You like men better don't you?"
"Oh, much better. I've got a man's mind."
"You've got a mind like mine. Not strongly gendered either way."

Gloria's admission that she has a "man's mind" differentiates her from earlier
heroines modelled after Ginerva King, for this masculine quality is one which
Fitzgerald associated more closely with his wife Zelda. (Rosalind and Eleanor
in This Side of Paradise, and the heroines of "The Ice Palace", "The Jelly -Bean",
and "The Sensible Thing" are other examples of this type). Just as Keats's
heroines seem to fall into two categories (Isabella and Madeline on the one
hand, based on Isabella Jones; and Lamia and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" on the
other, and based on Fanny Brawne), Fitzgerald's early heroines based on Ginerva
King possess a more innocent and idealized nature than those who were later
based on Zelda. At the same time, however, Anthony's final remark above, that
his was a mind "not strongly gendered either way" was one which Fitzgerald
would later attribute to himself and to his art.

I am an intuitive introvert. I take people to me and change my con-
ception of them and then write them out again. My characters are all
Scott Fitzgerald. Even my feminine characters are feminine Scott
Fitzgeralds. 90

(89) Ibid., p. 134.
This ability to absorb other personalities again suggests Keats in the sense of his comments on taking on other identities as part of the artistic process. "A Poet is the most unpoeitical of any thing in existence; because he has no Identity—he is continually in for—and filling some other Body—The Sun, the Moon, the Sea and Men and Women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute—the poet has none". Elsewhere Keats would be very insistent about his own identity, and yet it is his sense of standing back which makes the poems seem to come forward to the reader, and the sense of being "continually in for—and filling some other Body" is further elaborated a moment later in the same context: "Then I am in a room with People if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself: but the identity of every one in the room begins to press upon me that I am in a very little time annihilated". Once creation commences, however, the process is reversed and the new identities are translated back through the artist into his art, or as Fitzgerald says: "I take people to me and change my conception of them and then write them out again". As in the case of Keats, it is this ability to absorb other personalities, male or female, into himself and "then write them out again" which forms an integral aspect of Fitzgerald's particular genius, and which helps to make his characters ring so true. "Then he writes about Gloria he is Gloria, and when he writes about Anthony he is Anthony, and when he writes about deeply ambiguous tensions between them he is often writing out deeply ambiguous tensions from within himself.

In a revealing letter to his daughter, Fitzgerald looked back on his marriage with Zelda from the perspective of a wide span of years.

"Then I was your age I lived with a great dream. The dream grew and I learned how to speak of it and make people listen. Then the dream divided one day when I decided to marry your mother after all, even though I knew she was spoiled and meant no good to me. I was sorry immediately I had married her but, being patient in those days, made the best of it and got to love her in another way. You came along and for a long time we made quite a lot of happiness out of our lives. But I was a man divided—she wanted me to work too much for her and not enough for my dream. She realized too late that work was dignity, and the only dignity, and tried to atone for it by working herself, but it was too late and she broke and is broken forever."

The tension involved in this essentially existential choice between a personal dream and the love of a woman is one which appears thematically throughout the works, as when Anory discovers at the end of This Side of Paradise that "women—of whom he had expected so much; whose beauty he had hoped to transmute into modes of art...had become merely consecrations of their own posterity". In a similar manner, Gatsby gives up the "indefatigable gaudiness" of his visions when he chooses the "perishable breath" of Daisy instead, and Dick Diver sacrifices any lasting accomplishment in psychiatry when he chooses to share his life with Nicole in the "warm South" of France. Almost inevitably the choice is made in favor of the woman rather than the dream (Monroe Stahr is something of a special case in that he avoids the choice altogether with Kathleen, but then suffers for it in the end); and Anthony Patch is no exception to the general trend. On the opening page of the novel, we are told that "he considered that he would one day accomplish some quiet subtle thing that the elect would deem worthy and, passing on, would join the dimmer stars in a nebulous, indeterminate heaven half-way between death and immortality". He never does. The historical treatise which he dabbles with early in the novel is abandoned shortly after he meets Gloria, and even his fierce desire to "paint her, to set her down now, as she was, as with each relentless second she could never be again" is little more than wishful thinking on his part. When Gloria asks him in the early days of the relationship "What do you do with yourself", his answer is all the more revealing: "I do nothing, for there's nothing I can do that's worth doing". The remark, intended to "impress this girl whose interest seemed so tantalizingly elusive", only partially disguises the deeper sense of frustration within Anthony himself.

The sense of depression, with its feeling of loneliness, of aimlessness, "a sense of time rushing by, ceaselessly and wastefully", is itself thoroughly

(93) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 263.
(94) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 73.
(95) ibid., p. 85.
(96) ibid., p. 93.
imbued with romantic preoccupations. Anthony desires achievement, yet he achieves nothing; he desires the beautiful girl only to discover her full mercilessness; he is obsessed with the passage of time, which itself only further emphasizes his lack of any significant accomplishment. As such, he becomes the ideal victim for the beautiful lady without mercy.

On the eve of his wedding with Gloria, Anthony suddenly feels an abject vulnerability, and yet, in direct contrast, a sense of rather hopeful optimism about the future.

Back in his apartment after the bridal dinner, Anthony snapped out his lights and, feeling impersonal and fragile as a piece of china waiting on a serving table, got into bed. It was a warm night—a sheet was enough for comfort—and through his wide-open windows came sound, evanescent and summy, alive with remote anticipation. He was thinking that the young years behind him, hollow and colorful, had been lived in facile and vacillating cynicism upon the recorded emotions of men long dust. And there was something beyond that; he knew now. There was the union of his soul with Gloria’s, whose radiant fire and freshness was the living material of which the dead beauty of books was made. 97

The initial reference to "feeling impersonal and fragile as a piece of china" foreshadows a similar image in "The Crack-Up" over a decade later, as Fitzgerald describes his own emotional breakdown as "cracked like an old plate", 98 and the image is further elaborated in the subsequent essay "Pasting It Together":

Sometimes, though, the cracked plate has to be retained in the pantry, has to be kept in service as a household necessity. It can never be served on the stove nor shuffled with the other plates in the dishpan; it will not be brought out for company, but it will do to hold crackers late at night or to go into the ice box under left-overs... 99

Anthony’s "piece of china" is not cracked (though it will be before the end of the novel), and therefore it can still be "waiting on a serving table"; but the fragile vulnerability is always there and he has already begun to feel it.

Ironically, when Fitzgerald described the novel as the "story of a young couple who go rapidly to pieces", the emphasis is similar, and yet it also suggests the breakdown of the belle dame along with that of her victim. Anthony’s reference to "the recorded emotions of men long dust" in books which he had read in "the young years behind him", suggests the theme of emotionlessness of art as it survives through time (the sense of 'breathlessness' in 'Ode on a Grecian Urn').

(99) Ibid., p. 75.
for however beautiful the worlds of artistic creation are, it is still merely
"the dead beauty of books" compared with life itself. In part a self justification
for his own lack of achievement, this cynicism also allows the rationalization
of his choice of Gloria, "whose radiant fire and freshness was the living materi-
al of which the dead beauty of books was made".

The tranquility of Anthony's optimistic vision of "the union of his soul
with Gloria's", of the waking-dream that "life would be as beautiful as a story,
promising happiness—and by that promise giving it" is suddenly shattered a
moment later as the harsh, hysterical laughter of a woman rings out through the
area-way below his window. Realizing that the woman is with her lover somewhere
below in the darkness, Anthony is shaken as the laughter becomes "strangely terr-
ible", rising in volume until it has "reached a high point, tense and stifled,
almost the quality of a scream". Suddenly it ceases, leaving "behind it a silence
empty and menacing as the greater silence overhead".

He found himself upset and shaken. Try as he might to strangle his
reaction, some animal quality in that unrestrained laughter had grasped at his imagination, and for the first time in four months
aroused his old aversion and horror toward all the business of life.
The room had grown smothery. He wanted to be out in some cool and
bitter breeze, miles above the cities, and to live serene and det-
ached back in the corners of his mind. Life was that sound out
there, that ghastly reiterated female sound. 101

Having neatly dismissed "the dead beauty of books" in favor of the "radiant
fire" of the breathing Gloria, Anthony immediately retreats to "his old aversion
and horror toward all the business of life". He wants life rather than abstraction,
and yet he doesn't want that life to be too open, too passionate and unrestrained.
In point of fact, he wants his dream of Gloria, not Gloria herself; and when
the laughter reminds him that she is merely human, a creature of the passions,
his immediate response is to escape from the actual world of "that ghastly reit-
erated female sound" in order "to live serene and detached back in the corners
of his mind", to live within the safety of his own imagination. The conflicting
desires torment him on the eve of his marriage, and yet he already knows that
it is too late to do anything about it, that he must learn to live with "that

(100) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 149.
(101) ibid., pp. 149-50.
ghastly reiterated female sound" for the rest of his life.

Anthony's fears on the eve of his wedding are forgotten in the early weeks of the marriage, pushed aside by the strength of their love for one another as well as by his continued adoration of her beautiful appearance. All too soon, however, the "magic" vanishes and the "enraptured hours" of the honeymoon are suddenly a thing of the past.

The breathless idyl of their engagement gave way, first, to the intense romance of the more passionate relationship. The breathless idyl left them, fled on to other lovers; they looked around one day and it was gone, how they scarcely knew. Had either of them lost the other in the days of the idyl, the love lost would have been ever to the loser that dim desire without fulfilment which stands back of all life. But magic must hurry on, and the lovers remain...

In addition to the themes of the passing of ecstasy and the effects of time in the real world, this passage also suggests that any resolution of the conflict between the personal dream and earthly desire is little more than temporary. The imaginative luster gone, "the more passionate relationship" suffices for a time, and then the idyl finally disappears altogether. Unlike the speaker in "Ode to a Nightingale" or the knight in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci", however, Anthony is hardly left "alone and palely loitering" once the magic passes. Gloria remains, and Anthony's disillusionment goes all that more deeper because of it. Gradually, doubts begin to creep into their feelings for one another as Anthony discovers "that he was living with a girl of tremendous nervous tension and the most high-handed selfishness" and Gloria learns "that her husband was an utter coward toward any one of a million phantasms created by his imagination".

These early seeds of disillusionment grow into violent arguments even before the extended honeymoon is over, and the expression of love's self-destructive nature has already begun.

Even at sympathetic moments in this early stage of their marriage, there seems to be a sense of romantic frustration which anticipates further problems.

 Everywhere we go and move on and change, something's lost—something's left behind. You can't ever quite repeat anything, and I've been so yours, here—"

He held her passionately near, discerning far beyond any criticism of her sentiment, a wise grasping of the minute, if only an indulgence of her desire to cry—Gloria the idler, caresser of her own dreams, extracting poignancy from the memorable things of life and youth. 104

(102) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 156.
(103) Ibid., p. 157.
(104) Ibid., p. 169.
(*) see page 31 for a full discussion of these themes.
The dream does not die; it slowly disintegrates as the merely passionate relationship develops into sentimentality, with the "wise grasping of the minute" allowing the days and then the months to slip by barely noticed. Her comment, "You can't ever quite repeat anything", anticipates Gatsby's dilemma, and yet the vulnerability of the relationship itself lies in the sense of self-indulgence upon which it is based: "Gloria the idler, caresser of her own dreams, extracting poignancy from the memorable things of life and youth". The passing of the pleasure is almost more delectable than the pleasure itself, for as she comments a moment later: "There's no beauty without poignancy and there's no poignancy without the feeling that it's going, men, names, books, houses—bound for dust—mortal". The ambitions of "Gloria the idler" are directly opposed to Anthony's own dream that "he would one day accomplish some quiet subtle thing that the elect would deem worthy", and it is this conflict which brings about his own personal dissipation. Anthony becomes "a man divided" in the same sense that Fitzgerald intends when he uses the phrase to sum up the effect of his relationship with Zelda, for Gloria wants him to participate in her pleasure, in the "wise grasping of the minute", even as she positively deplores any sense of permanent achievement (any such permanence lacks poignancy, and, lacking poignancy, lacks beauty as well).

Just as Gatsby sacrifices "the incomparable milk of wonder" associated with his early visions for the gaudy artificialities of wealth necessary for winning back Daisy; and just as Dick Diver gives up any real accomplishment through work when he surrenders himself to the self-indulgent life with Nicole in the warm south; Anthony yields his own dream when he settles for life with "Gloria the idler", and the process of deterioration has already begun.

As Fitzgerald himself pointed out in a letter to his daughter, however, the obvious similarities between Zelda and Gloria can be extended beyond usefulness:

Gloria was a much more trivial and vulgar person than your mother. I can't really say there was any resemblance except in the beauty and certain terms of expression she used, and also I naturally used many circumstantial events of our early married life. However the emphases were entirely different. We had a much better time than Anthony and Gloria had.

The fact that the same theme dominates the two major novels which followed, as well as many of the short stories of the period, suggests that the conflict

between permanent achievement and immediate pleasure was deeply rooted within Fitzgerald himself. Referring to Fitzgerald's comment to his daughter, Andrew Turnbull appropriately points out:

Still, an imagined kinship remained. The Beautiful and Damned was a projection of what Fitzgerald had come to consider the decayed part of their lives, and his amazing prescience, as we read the book today, gives a touch of heartache to its brassy prose. The jaunty epigraph—'
The victor belongs to the spoils'—might have been the epigraph for Fitzgerald's whole career, while the final glimpse of Gloria with her looks gone and of Anthony sunk in alcoholism is all too prophetic. The victor does belong to the spoils in the end, for in giving up his own vague ambitions for "Gloria the idler", he has surrendered the most vital part of himself to her and to her attitude to life. When Anthony submits at the end of an argument, he finally realizes just how tangled in her mesh he has become.

His face fell—yet he knew, with his wife's question, that it was too late. Her arms, sweet and strangling, were around him, for he had made all such choices back in that room at the Plaza the year before. This was an anachronism from an age of such dreams....As she smiled he realized again how beautiful she was, a gorgeous girl of miraculous freshness and shrewdly honorable eyes. She embraced his suggestion with luxurious intensity, holding it aloft like a sun of her own making and basking in its beams. She strung together an amazing synopsis for an extravaganza of marital adventure.

The reference to her "sweet and strangling" arms again suggests the snake-woman, Lamia, diverting Icarius from his scholarly preoccupations with the elaborate illusion of her own beauty. For Anthony, however, the illusion lies not in Gloria's beauty itself, but rather in his imaginative conception of that beauty; for even as he realizes the hopelessness of his situation, he is also showing just how susceptible he is to the "luxurious intensity" of her personality.

The "amazing synopsis for an extravaganza of marital adventure" is one which is never realized in actuality, and day by day the relationship continues to go "rapidly to pieces" until Anthony finally leaves for the war.

Almost their last conversation was a senseless quarrel about the proper division of the income—at a word either would have given it all to the other. It was typical of the muddle and confusion of their lives that on the October night when Anthony reported at the Grand Central Station for the journey to camp, she arrived only in time to catch his eye over the anxious heads of a gathered crowd. Through the dark light of the enclosed train-sheds their glances stretched across a hysterical area, foul with yellow sobbing and the smells of poor women. They must have pondered upon what they had done to one another, and each must have accused himself of drawing this sombre pattern through which they were tracing tragically and obscurely. At the last they were too far away for either to see the other's tears.

108 ibid., p. 209.
109 ibid., pp. 301-309.
As opposed to the "sun of her own making" in the earlier passage, here the atmosphere is one of "dark light", directly paralleling Keats's reference to "black brightness"; just as the blend of the senses in "yellow sobbing" allows a deeper sense of the hysteria in the station, the sort of blend Keats was so fond of using in images like "gleaming melancholy" and "tender is the night"

Throughout Fitzgerald's works, however, there seems a further meaning behind the images of light and dark. The sun, or sunlight, seems to represent all that is rational in the Apollonian sense, whereas night and moonlight are associated with imaginative vision and dreaming. Thus, in order to sustain the strength of her illusion of beauty in Anthony's eyes, the belle dame Gloria must contrive, Lamia-like, to come between Anthony and this analytical light.

Gloria had lulled Anthony's mind to sleep. She, who scored of all women the wisest and the finest, hung like a brilliant curtain across his doorways, shutting out the light of the sun. In those first years that he believed bore invariably the stamp of Gloria; he saw the sun always through the pattern of the curtain. 110

Ironically, Gloria, who seems to Anthony "of all women the wisest and the finest", herself has an instinctive dislike toward "clever men" who would "just analyse" her in the sense in which Apollonius 'analyses' Lamia. Instead she "hung like a brilliant curtain across his doorways, shutting out the light of the sun", shutting out the rational responses in him so that she can direct her sensual and imaginative appeal "to that part of him that cherished all beauty and all illusion". 111

Significantly, the end of Gatsby's dream of Daisy occurs amid the torrid sunlight of the hottest day of the year in New York; and after the deaths and Nicole's second severe breakdown in Paris shatter the imaginative softness of the affair between Dick and Rosemary in Tender Is the Night, he mechanically reiterates on the train ride home "Do you mind if I pull down the curtain" to the similarly mechanical, reiterated response: "Please do. It's too light in here". 112 If the sun and sunlight stand for cold rationality, however, the moon and moonlight are more traditionally romantic and imaginative. Amory's romantic encounters usually take place at night, often in moonlight; John arrives at the luxurious château in full moonlight; Gatsby's lonely vigils take place at night; and Dick meets

(111) ibid., p. 73.
(112) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 88.
and unintentionally courts Nicole in the moonlit gardens of the asylum. The visionary aspect of moonlight occurs in the boyhood dreams of Amory, but even more significant is its effect upon the formative dreams of the young James Gats,

when the "most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night" while the "moon soaked with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor". 113

At the same time, however, there is also a more sinister side to the "ineffable gaudiness" of these visions associated with the moon itself. When Amory encounters Eleanor, he finds that with "her his imagination ran riot and that is why they rode to the highest hill and watched an evil moon ride high, for they knew then that they could see the devil in each other". 114 Here, the sense of "evil" in the moon derives from within the young lovers, from the same imaginative distortion which allows them to "see the devil in each other". Later, the moon becomes associated with the more sinister distortions of lunacy as Eleanor's "crazy streak" prompts the moonlit suicide attempt, just as the "Queen Moon" theme of lunacy derived from an overextension of the imagination becomes the predominant theme of Tender Is the Night. The night is tender, but it is a tenderness which twists two ways once the imagination is pushed too far from the realities of life itself.

Having left Gloria in New York as he travels to a training camp in the South, Anthony becomes involved in a pallid affair with a young girl named Dot, who uses the moonlight to full advantage in the breaking of Gloria's hold over him.

Then, as if it had been waiting on a near-by roof for their arrival, the moon came slanting suddenly through the vines and turned the girl's face to the color of white roses.

Anthony had a start of memory, so vivid that before his closed eyes there formed a picture, distinct as a flashback on a screen—a spring night of that set out of time in a half-forgotten winter five years before—another face, radiant, flower-like, upturned to lights as transforming as the stars—

Ah, la belle dame sans merci who lived in his heart, made known to him in transitory fading splendor by dark eyes in the Ritz-Carlton, by a shadowy glance from a passing carriage in the Bois de Boulogne! But those nights were only part of a song, a remembered glory—here again were the faint winds, the illusions, the eternal present with its promise of romance. 115

As Anthony succumbs to her, "the drifted fragments of the stars became only light, the singing down the street diminished to a monotone", and he kisses her even

(114) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 222.
as "her arms crept up about his shoulders". The image parallels that of the "sweet and strangling" arms of Gloria earlier, yet the implicit reference to Lamia is overridden here by the direct evocation of "la belle dame sans merci who lived in his heart". Gloria, the belle dame, haunts his imagination even as he is in the presence of the young and beautiful Dot (the theme reoccurs in both Tender Is the Night and The Last Tycoon); but Anthony is also existentially aware of the moment itself, and that the memories of Gloria "were only part of a song, a remembered glory". The images here are 'lifted' directly out of "One Southern Girl", Fitzgerald's evocation of Zelda in a poem written when he had thought that he had lost her. The contrast of Dot with Gloria here is one which occurs throughout the works; that of the young idealized 'first love' heroine with that of the more experienced belle dame who exerts a lasting hold on the male with whom she is involved. Significantly, Anthony remembers Gloria as she had appeared to him early in the 'idyl' days of the relationship, rather than as he had last seen her: "another face, radiant, flower-like, upturned to lights and as transforming as the stars". This is not the Gloria who argued with him into the night, who lulled his mind asleep, but rather an idealized Gloria tucked away in the recesses of his imagination from those early encounters. By contrast, Dot seems little more than a photographic negative of Gloria's idealized beauty with a face "the color of white roses"; yet she offers him the idealization of the transitory moment as "here again were the faint winds, the illusions, the eternal present with its promise of romance".

Idealized memory is not enough finally, and Anthony succumbs to Dot in order to break the "spell" of Gloria's 'belle dame' hold over him.

For a moment, while conflicting warnings and desires prompted Anthony, it seemed one of those rare times when he would take a step prompted from within. He hesitated. Then a wave of weariness broke against him. It was too late—everything was too late. For years now he had dreamed the world away, basing his decisions upon emotions unstable as water. The little girl in the white dress dominated him, as she approached beauty in the hard symmetry of her desire. The fire blazing in her dark and injured heart seemed to glow around her like a flame. With some profound and uncharted pride she had made herself remote and so achieved her purpose. 116

( *) The entire poem is included in the frontispiece to this section, p. 73.
Finding himself "helpless and beaten", Anthony yields to Dot just as he had yielded to Gloria five years before, and responding Lania-like "she wound her arms around him and let him support her weight while the moon, at its perennial labor of covering the bad complexion of the world, showered its illicit honey over the drowsy street". The decision, made amid the imaginative illusions of moonlight rather than 'rational daylight', is one which directly contradicts Anthony's own analysis of the sources of his personal failure immediately before.

"I've often thought that if I hadn't got what I wanted things might have been different with me. I might have found something in my mind and enjoyed putting it into circulation. I might have been content with the work of it, and had some sweet vanity out of the success. I suppose that at one time I could have had anything I wanted, within reason, but that was the only thing I ever wanted with any fervor. God! And that taught me that you can't have anything, you can't have anything at all. Because desire just cheats you. It's like a sunbeam skimming here and there about a room. It stops and gilds some inconsequential object, and we poor fools try to grasp it—but when we do the sunbeam moves on to something else, and you've got the inconsequential part, but the glitter that made you want it is gone—" 113

Like Dexter in "Winter Dreams", Anthony had "wanted not association with glittering things and glittering people—he wanted the glittering things themselves", only to learn that "desire just cheats you". The sunbeam seems to blend beauty with truth as it glitters on "some inconsequential object", but once the "glitter that made you want it is gone" the illusion itself vanishes. Anthony makes the same realization more directly later in the novel as amid "the memories of ephemeral and faded evenings" he finally rejects the "fruit of youth or of the grape, the transitory magic of the brief passage from darkness to darkness—the old illusion that truth and beauty were in some way entwined". 120 The union of beauty and truth, though possible in the imagination, is impossible in the actual world "Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes / Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow".

At the end of the novel, Anthony (like Amory Blaine in This Side of Paradise) bitterly sums up women according to the pain associated with those whom he had known intimately.

(118) ibid., p. 341.
(120) op. cit., p. 417.
All the distress that he had ever known, the sorrow and the pain, had been because of women. It was something that in different ways they did to him, unconsciously, almost casually—perhaps finding him tender-minded and afraid, they killed the things in him that menace their absolute sway. 121

It is a description of the women throughout Fitzgerald's works, from the "hard" Evylyn in "The Cut-glass Bowl" to the three heroines of This Side of Paradise, from the "unprincipled personality" of Judy Jones to the "carelessness" of Daisy Buchanan and the inconstancy of Nicole Diver. Both the femme fatale (the early, idealized heroines) and the belle dame exert their influences "unconsciously, almost casually", playing upon the hero's fears and tender-mindedness to kill "the things in him that menace their absolute sway". Once again, however, there is the suggestion that the seeds of destruction lie within, that love is itself virtually self-destructive. The theme of self-destructiveness occurs throughout the works of Keats, where Leander dies for his loving, where Lucius is destroyed by his sensual passion, and where the knight loses all sense of purpose to linger "alone and palely loitering" with the faint hope that "la belle dame sans merci" will someday return to him. In Fitzgerald, as in Keats, women become directly opposed to any imaginative accomplishment, killing anything that menaces their absolute sway. As Keats said in a letter to his brother with regard to sensual passion: "how sad it is when a luxurious imagination is obliged in self-defence to deaden its delicacy in vulgarity and not in things attainable that it may not have leisure to go mad after things which are not". 122 (Having come to terms with the problem in the abstract, however, Keats would shortly find the "absolute sway" of the belle dame, Fanny Brame, irresistible.) Two weeks after the letter to his brother, Keats summed up his problem with women to Bailey:

I am certain I have not a right feeling towards Women—at this moment I am striving to be just to them but I cannot—Is it because they fall so far beneath my Boyish imagination? When I was a Schoolboy I thought a fair woman a pure Goddess, my mind was a soft nest in which none one of them slept, though she knew it not— I have no right to expect more than their reality. 123

Just as Gatsby's dream enlarges Daisy beyond reality, Keats's "Boyish imagination" leads him to idealize women; and yet there is another side to his feelings about

(121) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 444.
(123) ibid., (to BB, 12/7/1818), p. 192.
( * ) the inclusion of 'not' is apparently an error on Keats's part.
then which he elaborates in the same immediate context: "When I am among men I have evil thoughts, malice spleen—I cannot speak or be silent—I am full of Suspicions and therefore listen to nothing—I am in a hurry to be gone—You must be charitable and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since Boyhood". As with Fitzgerald's heroes, the "evil" lies not in women alone, but within those involved with them as well. Amory sees the "devil" in himself as well as in Eleanor, and the sense of evil arises out of a sexual frustration similar to that described here by Keats. The tension persists within.

Like that of many another romantic, Keats's world was forged in his imagination. He could not serve both Dagon and the Muse and exist. It was enough for him to adore women from afar. To possess them in reality meant to be possessed—the plight of Paolo and Francesca had fascinated him, but in the end it repelled him. As he had said only several days after writing his apologetic note to Fanny Brawne: "I feel I can bear any thing, any misery, even imprisonment—so long as I have neither wife nor child". This is not chivalry speaking. It is an admission that a surrender to earthly love was for him a surrender to the sickness unto death. 124

Anthony Patch does surrender, however, and he pays a high price for it as his "tender-minded" nature yields to an emotional breakdown and semi-madness eventually. Ironically, he goes "mad after things" which are, rather than Keats's "things which are not". Having abandoned any sense of imaginative accomplishment in favor of Gloria, "there was a madness in his eyes" as he undergoes a regression to boyhood in the form of his stamp collection.

They found Anthony sitting in a patch of sunshine on the floor of his bedroom. Before him, open, were spread his three big stamp-books, and then they entered he was running his hands through a great pile of stamps that he had dumped from the back of one of them. 125

Anthony is broken as his dream is broken; ironically emphasized by the fact that he is sitting in the rational world of sunshine (contrasted with the "sunbeam" of desire associated with his dreams) even as he loses his grasp on rationality. Earlier in the novel, for Anthony as a boy, "his stamps were his greatest happiness and he bestowed impatient frowns on anyone who interrupted him at play with them; they devoured his allowance every month, and he lay awake at night musing untiringly on their variety and many-colored splendor". Four-hundred-and-forty

(125) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 446.
(126) ibid., p. 7.
pages later the emphasis is one of deepening irony at the peak of his madness as "he held up a handful of stamps and let them come drifting down about him like leaves, varicolored and bright, turning and fluttering gaudily upon the sunny air: stamps of England and Equador, Venezuela and Spain—Italy...." 127

A further irony lies in the fact that as Gloria comes in, he waves her away with the comment "you'll miss them... Everything always gets missed". The attempt to order the stamps, symbol of his boyhood visions, is abandoned finally as he lets "them come drifting down about him like leaves"; for visions cannot be ordered with any finality in the actual world of merely "breathing human passion".

The final reference to Italy in the image of falling stamps carries the irony forward to the final scene ("four or five months" later), as Anthony and Gloria are on a liner bound for that country, for reasons which Anthony had elaborated earlier.

Italy—"if the verdict was in their favor it meant Italy. The word had become a sort of talisman to him, a land where the intolerable anxieties of life would fall away like an old garment. They would go to the watering-places first and among the bright and colorful crowds forget the gray appendages of despair. Marvelously renewed, he would walk again in the Piazza di Spagna at twilight, moving in that drifting flotam of dark women and ragged beggars, of austere, barefooted friars. The thought of Italian women stirred him faintly—when his purse hung heavy again even romance might fly back to perch upon it—the romance of the blue canals in Venice, of the golden green hills of Fiesole after rain, and of women, women who changed, dissolved, melted into other women and receded from his life, but who were always beautiful and always young. 128

Anthony's dream of renewal, of escape from "the intolerable anxieties of life" and "the gray appendages of despair" suggests a similar desire to escape to the "warm South" in "Ode to a Nightingale", to "leave the world unseen" and

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and specter-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-bayed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. 129

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(128) ibid., pp. 443-44.
His youth gone, Anthony still clings to some hope of renewal in an illusory
world of the "fruit of youth or of the grape, the transitory magic of the brief
passage from darkness to darkness—the old illusion that truth and beauty were
in some way entwined"\(^{130}\); all of which he had previously disparaged. The largest
irony of all, however, lies in his hopeful attitude towards Italian women as the
source of future romance when he has already admitted that "All the distress that
he had ever known, the sorrow and the pain, had been because of women."\(^{131}\)
Throughout Fitzgerald's works there is this sense of oscillation in the attitude towards
women who first attract and then repel after the initial illusions associated
with their beauty have worn off. The femme fatale sort of woman (based on Ginerva
King), who breaks away while the illusions are still intact, can remain idealized
through the strength of the illusions themselves; but the belle dame heroine, who
lingers after the illusions have fallen away (modelled after Zelda), becomes an
object of repulsion eventually. All too aware of the difference, Anthony longs
for the romance of "women who changed, dissolved, melted into other women and
receded from his life, but who were always beautiful and always young". The women
themselves will not stay forever beautiful and young and he knows it; so instead
he will simply have them recede from his life to grow old and ugly elsewhere so that
he will not have to see it happen, so that the illusion of perennial youth can
remain intact. As they recede, others replace them and the world stays "For ever
panting, and for ever young", except for one thing--day by day Anthony himself is
growing irrevocably older and there is nothing which he can do about that.

It is doubtful that Anthony will ever be able to realize his illusions in
the actuality of Italy, the full escape from the harsh world left behind on this
pilgrimage to pleasure, for even in the final pages he remains obsessed with the
past, "concerned with a series of reminiscences" on the deck of the liner itself.

He was thinking of the hardships, the insufferable tribulations he
had gone through. They had tried to penalize him for the mistakes of
his youth. He had been exposed to ruthless misery, his very craving
for romance had been punished, his friends had deserted him—even
Gloria had turned against him. He had been alone, alone--facing it
all. 132

\(^{130}\) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 417.
\(^{131}\) ibid., p. 444.
\(^{132}\) ibid., pp. 448-449.
Penalized for the "mistakes of his youth", exposed to "ruthless misery", "his very craving for romance" punished, Anthony finds himself alone with a marriage that is little more than a matter of formalities as "even Gloria had turned against him". His final defiant statement—"It was a hard fight, but I didn't give up and I came through!"—seems little more than ironic, finally; "That exquisite heavenly irony which has tabulated the demise of so many generations" which Fitzgerald evokes at the beginning of the scene. Anthony is still alone, existentially "alone and palely loitering", even though Gloria is still with him, the belle dame no longer beautiful, no longer young. If there is to be any renewal for him in Italy, it is far more likely to be imaginative rather than actual; perhaps the sort of consolation which Dick Diver discovers at the depths of his own dissipation in Tender Is the Night.

Dick evoked the picture that the few days had imprinted on his mind and stared at it. The walk toward the American Express past the odorous confectionaries of the Via Nationale, through the foul tunnel up to the Spanish Steps, where his spirit soared before the flower stalls and the house where Keats had died. 134

Ironically, Dick's dissipation is a direct result of the self-indulgent way of life in the "warmed South", and "Rome was the end of his dream of Rosemary".

One can only wonder what it will become for Anthony, or even for the "belle dame sans merci" herself.

But more than all this
Was the promise she made
That nothing, nothing,
Ever would fade—
Nothing would fade,
Winter or fall,
Nothing would fade,
Practically nothing at all. 135

(134) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 220.
(135) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, "Thousand-and-First Ship", in The Crack-Up, New Directions, p. 160."(The poem, though based on the image of Helen of Troy, is structurally an updated version of "La Belle Dame Sans Merci")
BEYOND THE SHADOW OF A DREAM

My restless spirit never could endure
To brood so long upon one luxury,
Unless it did, though fearfully, espy
A hope beyond the shadow of a dream.

--John Keats,
Endymion

It is when we try to grapple with another
man's intimate need that we perceive how
incomprehensible, wavering and misty are
the beings that share with us the sight of
the stars and the warmth of the sun.

--Joseph Conrad,
Lord Jim

Oh might I rise again! Might I
Throw off the throbs of that old wine--
See the new morning mass the sky
With fairy towers, line on line--
Find each mirage in the high air
A symbol, not a dream again!

--F. Scott Fitzgerald,
"The Way of Purgation"
By comparison with *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald’s third novel was a breakthrough of major proportions. Shortly after he began work on *The Great Gatsby* in 1922, he outlined his intentions to Maxwell Perkins with the comment: "I want to write something new--something extraordinary and beautiful and simple and intricately patterned". He succeeded in this and something more; for drawing on many of the same themes expressed in the earlier works, he developed them with a depth and consistency perfectly complemented by a new dynamic, concentrated style. When he wrote to Perkins almost two years after beginning work on it, the novel was still unfinished, but his ambitions for it had extended even further. "While I have every hope and plan of finishing my novel in June, you know how these things often come out, and even if it takes me ten times that long I cannot let it go out unless it has the very best I’m capable of in it, or even, as I feel sometimes, something better than I’m capable of". With the publication of *The Great Gatsby* in April of the following year, Fitzgerald achieved all of the ambitions expressed during its composition, and that extra "something better than I’m capable of" which lifts art from the level of talent to that of genius. By turning away from the clumsy conventions of naturalism and social realism evident in the previous novels, he was able to realize with far greater depth the themes and symbolic developments deeply ingrained in his essentially romantic vision.

Ironically, *The Great Gatsby* is one of the most unromantic romantic novels ever written. Delving deep into the sordidness and corruption of the period, Fitzgerald was able to make a penetrating social comment without sacrificing the intricate balance of the novel’s structure, style and tone. Gatsby’s world, "material without being real", is a blend of reality and illusion where material being and imaginative vision merge with intricate precision and sinister implic-
ations, an effect which could not have been achieved within the limitations of either realism or naturalism. As Henry Dan Piper points out with regard to the weaknesses of Fitzgerald's second novel, Fitzgerald "was temperamentally unsuited to the conventions of naturalism", for "he was too much of a poet". 3

Robert Skyler makes the same point in more detail.

The romantic themes in *The Beautiful and Damned* are less clear than the universal themes, perhaps because they came more from within Fitzgerald than from without. Yet in the contradictions and inconsistencies of the romanticism in *The Beautiful and Damned* Fitzgerald was working out his more lasting, and more original themes. 4

In *The Great Gatsby*, the sense of universality derives directly from the romantic themes which develop from within, rather than from any aping of external conventions.

Structurally, Fitzgerald gained much from the example of Conrad's use of the oblique narrator when he revised the novel from the third-person point-of-view, and yet this was a technique chosen specifically because it allowed him a means of developing these romantic themes with a "continuous and cumulative" effect sorely lacking in the earlier novels. As Lionel Trilling comments:

What underlies all success in poetry, what is even more important than the shape of the poem or the wit of its metaphor, is the poet's voice. It either gives us confidence in what is being said or it tells us that we do not need to listen, and it carries both the modulation and the living form of what is being said. In the novel no less than the poem, the voice of the author is the decisive factor. We are less consciously aware of it in the novel, and, in speaking of the elements of a novel's art, it cannot properly be exemplified by quotation because it is continuous and cumulative. In Fitzgerald's work the voice of of his prose is of the essence of his success. We hear in it at once the tenderness toward human desire that modifies a true firmness of moral judgment. It is, I would venture to say, the normal or ideal voice of the novelist. It is characteristically modest, yet it has in it, without apology or self-consciousness, a largeness, even a stateliness, which derives from Fitzgerald's connection with tradition and with mind, from his sense of what has been done before and the demands which this past accomplishment makes. 5

Just as the romantic poets had struggled with the varieties of language and the modulations of tone to develop new modes of the short lyric, Fitzgerald adopted "the poet's voice", and then worked and remodeled the revisions of his novel until he had achieved an "intricately patterned" structure where "the

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thing you have to say and the way of saying it blend as one matter—as
indissolubly as if they were conceived together." By detaching the narrative
from himself, he was able to achieve "a true firmness of moral judgment" with-
out sacrificing anything of the "tenderness toward human desire" so deeply
engrained in his own romantic vision. Nick Carrasy does not merely mouth the
author's views (at times he seems to directly contradict them); his imaginative
sympathy is moderated by a sense of snobbish priggishness which is gradually
toned down by experience during the course of the novel. In the process of
writing out Gatsby's story, Mick is charting his own carefully balanced moral
and imaginative growth. To take Nick's views to be those of Fitzgerald himself
would be to deprive the work of its balanced blend of form and content, just
as to take the speaker in one of Keats's odes to be Keats himself would deprive
the particular work of its full range of interpretation.

In a letter to Maxwell Perkins years later, Fitzgerald summed up a central
aspect of his works as "the attempt that crops up in our fiction from time to
time to recapture the exact feel of a moment in time and space, exemplified
by people rather than by things—that is, an attempt at what Wordsworth was
trying to do rather than what Keats did with such magnificent ease, an attempt
at a nature memory of a deep experience". Nature is the key word here, for
Fitzgerald's interest in the flatulence of youth and glamor had been tempered
by a deep and far ranging irony when he came to write his third novel. In the
early pages of the novel, Mick's mood is one of emotional deflation moderated
by a certain hardening of view. "In my younger and more vulnerable years!, he
begins, "my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind
ever since". No longer young, no longer vulnerable, he is almost cynically
disillusioned as he looks back upon the events of the story which he is about
to relate. "When I came back from the East last Autumn I felt that I wanted
the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted
no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart."
Gradually, Mick's initial stiffness gives way to a deepening imaginative vision directly contradicting this desire for uniformity as he begins to write, a vision culminating in the nature, meditative descriptions which end the novel. For Mick, the novel provides a means of retrospective moral growth arising organically and unconsciously from the process of the telling itself. Later, he refers specifically to the alteration in perspective which the retrospective view allows him to realize.

Reading over what I have written so far, I see that I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary, they were merely casual events in a crowded summer, and until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs. 10

It is this sense of retrospective selection, the attempt "to recapture the exact feel of a moment in time and space", which constitutes the "attempt at a nature memory of a deep experience" that Fitzgerald had come to associate with the romantic poets.

When Wordsworth composed his poem, "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey", the subject was not as much the natural scenes of the Mye Valley which he had visited shortly before, as it was the contrast between the maturity of these perceptions with the more youthful perceptions of the same scenes which he had made five years before. In the intervening years the earlier perceptions have returned to him "In hours of weariness" to be "Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart, / And passing even into my purer mind, / With tranquil restoration"; a process which he would later refer to as the "emotion recollected in tranquility" in the 1800 edition of the "Preface To Lyrical Ballads". 12 Later in the poem, however, Wordsworth realizes from his second visit just how much he himself has changed during those five years, and how his perceptions have changed accordingly.

The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite: a feeling and a love,

(12) ibid., p. 230.
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. 13

Wordsworth has matured considerably from the "coarser pleasures" of his "boyish days" experienced on the first visit, from the merely associative or materialist mode of perception to one of a "remoter charm" through contemplation and something more: "the mighty world/Oe eye and ear, both what they half create,/ And what perceive". 14 Here perception is no longer enough for the nature Wordsworth, for what is perceived must also be re-created in the imagination so that it becomes part of a far wider perspective.

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. 15

In spite of this development within Wordsworth's artistic vision, however, there is also a suggestion of regret with regard to what he has lost; the "aching joys" and "dizzy raptures" of youthful, sensual perception.

Fitzgerald was twenty-nine when The Great Gatsby was published, and the romantic theme of the loss of youthful vision, with all its aching joys and dizzy raptures, had begun to take on a deeply personal significance. In a letter to Maxwell Perkins shortly before he finished the novel, he described his prevailing mood as "bad", adding "I feel old too, this summer", before making the telling comment: "That's the whole burden of this novel—the loss of those illusions that give such color to the world that you don't care whether things are true or false as long as they partake of the magical glory". 16 Something of this mood of loss is reflected in Nick's mood of deflation at the beginning of the novel, as he pronounces his aversion to the dizzy raptures of "riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart", reducing them in fact to "the abortive sorrows and short-minded elations of men". 17 It soon becomes apparent that Nick's elegiac tone refers

(14) Ibid., p. 155.
(15) Ibid., p. 154.
to a sense of loss greater than that of a merely personal vision, however, as he shifts his attention to the central subject of the novel.

Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction—Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of "creative temperament"—it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-sighted elations of men.

Nick's use of the past tense as he refers to Gatsby and his reference to "the end" establish that Gatsby is no more, creating a dramatic interest which draws the reader's interest into the smooth flow of narrative which follows. For Nick, "the still, sad music of humanity" has been refined to a more direct sense of sorrow for Gatsby himself, a man who enigmatically could arouse both his "unaffected scorn" and this almost ecstatic praise for his "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life", a "romantic readiness" such that Nick has never known before. As he describes himself at the beginning of the novel, Nick gives an impression of priggish snobbishness blended with quiet reserve; the pragmatic bond salesman with anything but romantic, imaginative inclinations. A calm, firm moralist to be sure, but hardly one likely to ever attempt to drink "the milk of Paradise". By contrast, Gatsby is a romantic in the most unbounded sense of the word, and his dream becomes the ultimate manifestation of this romanticism, "a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing". Although this "romantic readiness" becomes the source of his 'greatness' in the novel, it is also the source of his personal vulnerability to the "foul dust" that "floated in the wake of his dreams" within this "new world, material without being real".

Thus, although Nick realizes, as Wordsworth did at the beginning of the "Immortality Ode", that "there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth" (a line

12 Ibid., p. 100.
which Fitzgerald later quotes in The Crack-Up), he also realizes that he has lost something more than his own personal vision—"The glory and the freshness of a dream" which has transcended the dream object so completely that it still dominates Nick's mood long after Gatsby's death.

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparel'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it has been of yore;--
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I can now see no more.\(^{21}\)

There is something in the dream, in the "extraordinary gift for hope" that has gone into it, which raises Gatsby to greatness in Nick's eyes in spite of the "unaffected scorn that he feels for what the man outwardly represents. It is Gatsby the dreamer whom Nick mourns at the beginning of the novel, implicitly asking: "Whither is fled the visionary gleam? / Where is it now, the glory and the dream?"\(^{22}\)

The flaw which allows Gatsby to be destroyed lies not in the dream, but rather in the dream object—Daisy; for the attempt to idealize the actual and then to realize that idealization in real life is one which is doomed from the beginning. Judy Jones, Daisy's femme fatale predecessor, had sounded a warning regarding any attempts to idealize her; whether Gatsby ever received such a warning is not established, but if he did he certainly doesn't heed it. (Ironically, the symbol Gatsby adopts for the idealization of Daisy, the green light, is a warning light set out at the end of her dock.) The central importance of Daisy's all too "perishable breath" suggests an important reason why Fitzgerald, though he admired Wordsworth, found a deeper source of inspiration in Keats.* When he described to Perkins "the attempt...to recapture the exact feel of a moment in time and space", he specified further, "exemplified by people rather than by things", a distinction which figures largely in the final comment: an attempt at what Wordsworth was trying to do rather than what Keats did with such magnificent ease, an attempt at a mature memory of a deep

\(^{22}\) ibid., p. 577.
\(*\) see Kuehl's "Scott Fitzgerald's Critical Opinions" in Bruccoli, Profile of Scott Fitzgerald, for Fitzgerald's comparison of the two poets.
experience\textsuperscript{23} Thus, although natural places and their associations are important in the overall symbolism of Fitzgerald's works, it is people rather than things or locations which provide the central focus throughout. In Tender Is the Night, when Dick Diver finds that "his spirit soared before the flower stalls and the house where Keats had died", he immediately adds that "He cared only about people; he was scarcely conscious of places except for their weather, until they had been invested with color by tangible events".\textsuperscript{24} Gatsby's dream, though its manifestation bears many resemblances to the personal vision altered by the effects of time in Wordsworth, is a dream of Daisy, a person rather than place (the thematic importance of place is a realization made by Nick, not Gatsby), and as such is more directly influenced by the works of Keats.

Structurally, Nick's opening comments relating his own sense of deflation, his memories of Gatsby, and his subsequent loss of "interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men", also create a dramatic interest leading in (or back) to the central focus of the novel. In relation to the rest of the novel, the effect is similar to that which Keats had used in "Ode to a Nightingale".

| His dramatic sense prevents Keats' starting with the nightingale; the stage must be set, however briefly, and he sets it with a description of his own sensations, his heartache and a painful numbness. It is the same feeling perhaps that he has described to Bailey in a letter of the preceding year: 'I have this morning such a lethargy that I cannot write... and yet it is an unpleasant numbness it does not take away the pain of existence.'\textsuperscript{25} |

As Ridley indicates, the opening lines of the poem establish the "poetic voice" through the sensations which themselves are such an essential part of the creative process both outside and within the poem. In this way the poetic voice becomes part of the poem rather than remaining detached from it in the classical sense, such that "the thing you have to say and the way of saying it blend as one matter--as indissolubly as if they were conceived together."\textsuperscript{26} Nick makes the comment early that "I'm inclined to reserve all judgments", and then: adds a moment later, "Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite

\textsuperscript{23} The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Turnbull, Penguin, (to MP, 30/7/34).
\textsuperscript{24} Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 220.
\textsuperscript{26} The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Turnbull, Penguin, (to FSF, 20/10/36).
hope", a secondary qualification which suggests the influence of Gatsby's "extraordinary gift for hope" so as to tie Nick's point-of-view in even more closely with the story which he is about to tell.

Having completed the description of his own sensations as he begins to write, as well as a short history of his family background and the reasons for his coming east, Nick moves back in time with the remark, "the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans." Although Daisy Buchanan is his "second cousin once removed" (a delicate irony with regard to the east-west theme in the novel) and Tom had been an acquaintance at college, he describes them ironically as "two old friends whom I scarcely knew at all." At this point, Nick has not yet met Gatsby and knows nothing about his dream, but it doesn't take long for him to recognize the very quality which set that dream on Daisy five years before.

I looked back at my cousin, who began to ask me questions in her low, thrilling voice. It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a passionate mouth, but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen", a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour.

Enter the nightingales. From the beginning, Nick is captivated by Daisy's "thrilling voice", her "singing compulsion", as if "each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again", while she almost literally, "sings of summer in full-throated ease". At the same time, however, there lingers a femme fatale quality in her "sad and lovely" expression, her "bright eyes and a passionate mouth, but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had cared for her found difficult to forget." Though she has all the qualities of the idealizable femme fatale who is difficult to get out of the mind, Daisy, married to Tom, has also settled into the role of the belles dame who has remained behind once the magic has hurried on to other lovers. The foremost of the men "who had cared for her" and who had found her "difficult to forget" is of course Gatsby himself. When Jordan Baker hautly mentions his

(28) ibid., p. 3.
(29) ibid., p. 6.
(30) ibid., pp. 9-10.
name just before dinner, however, there is an early indication that the
inability to forget is reciprocated by Daisy.

"You live in West Egg," she remarked contemptuously. "I know some-
body there."
"I don't know a single—"
"You must know Gatsby."
"Gatsby?" demanded Daisy. "What Gatsby?"
Before I could reply that he was my neighbor dinner was announced...31

Although Nick does not actually meet Gatsby until much later in the novel, he
sees him for the first time at the end of the chapter, stretching his arms out
to the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. As yet unaware of the connection
with Daisy, however, Nick is left in mystery with regard to his neighbor's
strange behavior as the chapter ends.

In earlier drafts of the novel, Nick had also been in love with Daisy,
which helps to explain the extent to which he is captivated by her nightingale-
like appeal in this early scene. As if to further emphasize the relationship
between Daisy and the nightingale, Fitzgerald has her comment as they sit
down to dinner:

"I looked outdoors for a minute, and it's very romantic outdoors.
There's a bird on the lawn that I think must be a nightingale come
over on the Cunard or White Star Line. He's singing away—" Her
voice sang: "It's romantic, isn't it Tom?"
"Very romantic," he said 32

Nick's remark, "Her voice sang", reiterates the impression of her song-like
voice even as she is artificially importing nightingales to her lawn. Daisy is
as artificial as the imagined nightingale, however, and although she exerts
a femme fatale influence over men in much the same manner as many of her pred-
ecessors, there is a further quality of illusion, the deceiving elf nature of
Keats's nightingale, which allows her to become not only an object of desire,
but of idealization as well. Towards the end of the evening, Nick begins to
see through this "deceiving elf" quality of her appeal as she sits down with
him outside in the "deep gloom" of the porch.

The instant her voice broke off ceasing to compel my attention, my
belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me
uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to
exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a

(32) ibid., p. 16.
moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face, as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged. 33

Just as Tom physically "compels" Nick from room to room, Daisy's voice compels him imaginatively, exacting a "contributory emotion" from him in order to foster the illusions which she constructs from within.

The deceiving elf nature, which Nick has already begun to see through with Apollonius-like clarity by the end of the intimate dinner party, lingers in the more sumptuous imagination of Gatsby, its effects exaggerated by memory and the richness of imaginative creation until it is finally capable of transcending any disappointment when "Daisy tumbled short of his dreams" at times during their eventual reunion.

As I watched him he adjusted himself a little, visibly. His hand took hold of hers, and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most, with its fluctuating, feverish warmth, because it couldn't be over-dreamed—that voice was a deathless song. 34

Here the link between Daisy and the nightingale becomes absolute (a page earlier the scene is set with the remark, "there was no light save what the gleaming floor bounced in from the hall"). Nick's own realization comes only after "her voice broke off", ceasing to compel his attention; for as long as she is vocalizing, the illusion remains intact, just as it is not until the nightingale departs that the speaker can realize the "deceiving elf" quality of the song which has held his attention throughout the poem. In the case of the bird, however, the effect is not intentional; the same cannot be said for Daisy. The realization of the deception involved, if it comes at all to Gatsby, comes too late to prevent his own destruction.

When Nick arrives home from the dinner party that same evening, he sees Gatsby for the first time and although they do not speak, he receives the first distinct impression of his neighbor's "extraordinary gift for hope", that "romantic readiness" which stems from "some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life." 35

(34) ibid., p. 27.
(35) ibid., p. 2.
The wind had blown off, leaving a loud, bright night, with wings beating in the trees and a persistent organ sound as the full bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life. The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight, and turning my head to watch it, I saw that I was not alone—fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet on the lam suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens.

I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction. But I didn't call to him, for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone—he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, as far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness.

Compared with the pervading sense of artificiality inherent in the Buchanan's dinner party, this first glimpse of Gatsby assumes a poetic dignity through the natural rhythm of the prose and Nick's delicate attention to detail. There is also a deep undertone of irony, however, for although there are birds in the trees there is no nightingale's song, only the sound of "wings beating" and "the persistent organ sound" of frogs along the shore in the "unquiet darkness". Suggesting the vagueness of his own background, Gatsby emerges from the "shadow" of his house into the moonlight (with all of its imaginative associations), and then vanishes again after his brief ritual. Nick's only clue about the mysterious proceeding is the green light which he perceives "minute and far away" across the sound, "that might have been the end of a dock". It's the warning light set out at the end of Daisy's dock—a warning which is not heeded by Gatsby, who instead has turned it into the symbol of his dream of Daisy.

That the light is green (a warning light would normally be red) is especially significant. At the end of the novel, Nick comments that "Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us"., suggesting the paradoxical sense of time throughout the novel. The greenness of the light symbolizes the future, that which is to come, and yet every future must inevitably become a part of the past in the irrevocable passage of time. Ironically, Gatsby's dream of Daisy, associated as it is with the green light

(37) ibid., p. 192.
(* ) see Appendix I for the spelling of 'orgastic' rather than 'orgiastic'.
o f the orga nic future, is also inextricably tied up with the past which must
be recaptured before the future can be realized. The paradox goes deeper than
Gatsby himself, however, for it is deeply ingrained in the American character.

The central paradox of American history, then, has been a belief
in progress coupled with a dread of change; an urge towards the
inevitable future combined with a longing for the irrevocable
past; a deeply ingrained belief in America's unfolding destiny
and a haunting conviction that the nation is in a state of dec­
line. This duality has been marked throughout most of America's
history but seldom has it been more central than during the decade
after the First World War. 33

The green light of the future is implicitly contrasted with the red light of
the past, that which is fixed because it has already happened, unchangeable
because it is no longer available for change, except within the memory or the
imagination. Gatsby's inability or unwillingness to realize this constitutes
his tragic flaw, the source of his own destruction by the end of the novel.

"I wouldn't ask too much of her," I ventured, "You can't repeat the
past!"
"Can't repeat the past?" he cried incredulously. "Why of course you
can!"

He looked around him wildly, as if the past were lurking here in the
shadow of his house, just out of reach of his hand. 39

Longing for the past even as he dreams of the future, Gatsby can bring the two
together in his imagination, but his attempt to do the same in the actual world
is doomed from the very beginning.

In the larger context of Fitzgerald's romantic vision, however, the green
light takes on an added significance in relation to Coleridge's "Dejection: an
Ode". In a sense, the poem is to Coleridge as The Crack-Up is to Fitzgerald,
an account of the loss of creative power connected with personal disillusion­
ment: "A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear, / A stifled, drowsy,
unimpassioned grief, / Which finds no natural outlet, no relief, / In word,
or sigh, or tear". 40 Like Wordsworth in the "Immortality Ode", Coleridge
mourns the loss of the visionary period of youth (he was thirty). Wordsworth

(33) Levine, I., "Progress and Nostalgia: The Self Image of the Nineteen Twenties"
in Bradbury, ed., The American Novel and the Nineteen Twenties, (Stratford

Although the versions of the poem exist, the received text of 189 lines,
a more refined version of the 240 line existent to Sara Hutchinson, is
the only one which Fitzgerald is likely to have known, because the long­
er version was not publicly known until de Selincourt's essay, "Coleridge's
Dejection: an Ode", was published in Essays and Studies XXX in 1937.
thirty-two at the time\(^\ast\), the loss of the intense creative passion which had
yielded "The Ancient Mariner", "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel". A year earlier,
Coleridge had announced that "The poet is dead in me",\(^{41}\) an assertion made
more subtly in "Dejection: an Ode", his last major poetical work.

O Lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle wooded,
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green:
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye!
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now dimmed, but always seen:
Ion crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue,
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are! \(^{42}\)

For publication, Coleridge changed "O dearest Sara" to the more general and
less personally revealing "O Lady", but the sense of personal longing is hardly
diminished in the lines which follow. Unhappily married at the time, Coleridge
was deeply in love with Sara Hutchinson, and the impossibility of realizing
this love deepened the tone of dejection in the poem.

Gazing at "the western sky, / And its peculiar tint of yellow green" (the
sunset is a common romantic metaphor for fading vision), he notes the physical
presence of the clouds and the stars and the moon even as he admits the loss
of visionary power: "I see, not feel, how beautiful they are". Although the mood
here parallels that of Nick at the beginning of The Great Gatsby, a closer
relation is provided symbolically with the "peculiar tint of yellow green"
created by the sunset in the western sky. Like Gatsby, Coleridge is unable to
realize his love of Sara, so he allows the green light of the sunset to serve
as a symbol of his devotion.

My genial spirits fail;
And what can these avail
To lift the smothering weight from off my breast?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze for ever
On that green light that lingers in the west:
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.\(^{43}\)

\(^{42}\) ibid., p. 106.
\(^{43}\) loc. cit.
\(^{\ast}\) the ages are curiously parallel to those of Nick and Gatsby in the novel.
In the longer version of the poem, "Dejection: A Letter", Coleridge capitalized both 'green' and 'light' for further emphasis, and yet there are deeply ironic contrasts between these apparently parallel symbols. Whereas Coleridge already realizes the futility of his love even as he associates it with the green light, Gatsby clings to his dream of Daisy up to the point of his own death. Also, Coleridge, realizing that he can't have the lady, allows the symbol to give a sense of permanence to his emotion, whereas Gatsby gives up the symbol as soon as he has apparently won the lady herself.

"If it wasn't for the mist we could see your home across the bay," said Gatsby. You always have a green light that burns all night at the end of your dock."

Daisy put her arm through his abruptly, but he seemed absorbed in what he had just said. Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one. 44

As the dream is apparently made actual, the symbol of that dream is no longer necessary and its "colossal significance" vanishes forever. Unfortunately for Gatsby, but true to one of the major romantic themes, the realization fails to live up to the imaginative conception, and he ends up by losing everything. Fitzgerald suggests this here with the irony of the mist clouding over the green light, as well as with Gatsby's perceptual error with regard to the apparent closeness of "a star to the moon". Curiously, Coleridge is subject to the same sort of perceptual error when he states that the clouds "give away their motion to the stars" which "glide behind them or between", for the "motion" is an optical illusion, just as no star could ever be close enough to be between the clouds. Similarly, in the case of Gatsby, the moon is not close to the star next to it, it only appears to be, and the green light that he imagines to be "almost touching" Daisy becomes an appropriate symbol for the "deceiving elf" object of his dream.

Furthermore, whereas Coleridge's green light is a symbol derived from a natural phenomenon, Gatsby's green light is merely an artificial warning light set out at the end of Daisy's (and Tom's) dock. This contrast between (44) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Great Gatsby, Scribners, p. 94.
the natural and the artificial also suggests the major theme of east and west in the novel. Nick comes to the East to make his fortune in a modest manner, just as Gatsby had earlier come east in order to amass the immodest fortune necessary for winning Daisy's affection. Gradually, Nick begins to realize that everything about the supposedly 'civilized' East implies a sense of corruption, whether its "the spasms of black dust which drift endlessly" over the valley of ashes," or "the foul dust" which "floated in the wake" of Gatsby's dreams. Even its most beautiful aspects involve "a quality of distortion" when compared with the naturalness of the West. Near the end of the novel, Nick sums up the implications of east and west at some length.

That's my Middle West—not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns, but the thrilling returning trains of my youth, and the street lamps and sleigh bells in the frosty dusk and the shadows of holly wreaths thrown by lighted windows on the snow. I am part of that, a little solemn with the feel of those long winters, a little complacent from growing up in the Carrway house in a city where children are still called through decades by a family's name. I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all—Tom and Gatsby, Daisy, Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life.

Even when the East excited me most, even when I was most keenly aware of its superiority to the bored, sprawling towns beyond the Ohio, with their interminable inquisitions which spared only the children and the very old—even then it had always for me a quality of distortion. West Egg, especially, still figures in my more fantastic dreams. I see it as a night scene by El Greco: a hundred houses, at once conventional and grotesque, crouching under a sul.len, overhanging sky and a lustreless moon. 47

To live in the East is to become associated with its artificiality, its distortion. Tom and Daisy, both Westerners, have adopted the necessary artificialities of eastern life, and this is an important reason why Daisy doesn't live up to Gatsby's dream of her. Gatsby himself succumbs to these artificialities on an even larger scale, however, fostering the "yellow cocktail music" and "prodigious laughter" of his parties, ironically as a means of winning Daisy back to him. Just as the irrevocability of time is against him, these distortions and artificialities are exaggerations of eastern mannerisms which contradict his essentially natural western nature. Nick sums up the final implications on the concluding page of the novel with the comment:

(46) Ibid., p. 2.
(47) Ibid., pp. 177-78.
And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. 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. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.  

Gatsby truly had "come a long way to this blue lawn", for the very blueness of the grass implies a sense of artificiality in direct contrast with the "fresh, green breast of the new world" that had "flowered once for Dutch sailor's eyes". 

Ironically, what is now the East was then the West for these Dutch sailors, and by the time of the novel the "fresh, green breast of the new world has been shifted further west. Gatsby's dream "was already behind him" because its fundamental vision was that associated with the "irresistible gaudiness" of his boyhood "fancies" amid the more natural surroundings "of the dark fields of the republic". He chooses the artificial green light in the east instead of a natural green light in the west because the dream itself had to be distorted once it was shifted to the "perishable breath" of Daisy, an all too human and therefore essentially unidealizable dream object. This artificiality becomes a central aspect, not of the dream itself, but of the attempt to realize it in an Eastern world which is "material without being real". Gatsby lives in an artificial house ("a factual imitation of some Hotel de Ville in Normandy") with a "blue lawn", and he has adopted an artificial identity with his "platonic conception of himself", a sense of self sustained by the gaudy artificialities of his parties, each of which is designed to impress Daisy, should she ever happen to show up at one. To understand the full implications of the distortion of Gatsby's initial vision, however, it is necessary to go back to its early sources.

In "Absolution", a story which Fitzgerald had originally intended to use as a prologue to The Great Gatsby, he traces the theme of an artificial identity imaginatively conceived at its very inception. Rudolph Miller, tending upon adolescence, rejects the actual world in which he finds himself in favor of the more glamorous reality he creates within his own imagination. In order to

[50] ibid., p. 5.
[52] see his letter to Kaywells Perkins dated 2/6/1923: "Absolution...was to have been the prologue of the novel but it interfered with the neatness of the plan".
exist in the world which he himself has created, he also creates a new identity perfectly suited to that world: "When he became Hatchford Samemington a suave nobility flowed from him". He also rejects his parents because they do not fit into this imaginative world, denying that he is their son because their mundane preoccupations are not those of parents who would produce a son as exceptional as Hatchford. Held back by the Catholic beliefs with which he has been raised, Rudolph seeks advice from his priest who, preoccupied with his own corruption of reality, unwittingly sounds a warning to Rudolph even as he is espousing his theory that "When a lot of people get together in the best places things go glimmering". Upset, frightened, and unable to understand the priest's babbling, Rudolph decides that "This man is crazy". Gradually, however, he finds himself thinking of Hatchford Samemington as the priest goes on explaining his eccentric theory, making an implicit connection without realizing it. The boy can't understand the priest's problem and the priest can't understand the boy's problem; although in the process of explaining his own theory, he sounds a warning to Rudolph about the consequences of carrying imaginative fantasies too close to reality.

"Did you ever see an amusement park?"
"No, Father."
"Well, go and see an amusement park." The priest waved his hand vaguely. "It's a thing like a fair, only much more glittering. Go to one at night and stand a little way off from it in a dark place—under dark trees. You'll see a big wheel made of lights turning in the air, and a long slide shooting boats down into the water. Band playing somewhere, and a smell of peanuts—and everything will twinkle. But it won't remind you of anything, you see. It will all just hang out there in the night like a big colored balloon—like a big yellow lantern on a pole."
"Father Schwartz frowned as he suddenly thought of something. "But don't get up close," he warned Rudolph, because if you do you'll only feel the heat and the sweat and the life." Rudolph has never seen an amusement park with its glittering but artificial lights. Seen from far away, the amusement park can become something magical, an imaginative world half created and half perceived, able to be idealized because its realities, "the heat and the sweat" of life, are sufficiently distanced to be beyond perception. In direct contrast with

(51) THE NOVELS OF F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Absolution" (1924), Scribners, p. 163.
(52) Ibid., p. 175.
(53) Ibid., p. 176.
the artificial glamour of the amusement park is the natural sensuality and
simplicity of the West in which Rudolph has grown up.

Outside the window the blue sirocco trembled over the wheat, and girls with yellow hair walked sensuously along roads that
bounced the fields, calling innocent, exciting things to the
young men who were working in the lines between the grain. Logs
were shaped under starchless gingham, and rims of the necks of
dresses were warm and damp. For five hours now hot fertile life
had burned in the afternoon. It would be night in three hours, and
all along the land there would be these blonde Northern
girls and the tall young men from the farms lying out beside
the wheat, under the moon. 54

In the West (which for Fitzgerald was anything west of the Ohio River), the
elaborate social distinctions and arch formality of manners and dress are
replaced by a natural simplicity of "starchless gingham" and the "hot fertile
life" of sensual enjoyment. The very fertility contrasts directly with the
"valley of ashes" in The Great Gatsby, "a fantastic farm where ashes grow like
wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens"55 of utter infertility.

Abandoning the naturalness of life in the West, where his dreams had
flourished, Jay Gatsby comes east in search of the glittering lights, only to
find "a waste land"56 of "soul dust" and eventual destruction. Not only does
Gatsby come too close to the glittering lights of the amusement park; he
creates one in his own back yard (though, ironically, he hardly ever comes
to his own parties).

There was music from my neighbor's house through the summer
nights. In his blue gardens men and girls came and went like
motli among the whisperings and the champagne and the stars.57
At high tide in the afternoon I watched his guests diving from
the tower of his raft, or taking the sun on the hot sand of his
beach while his two motor-boats slit the waters of the Sound,
drawing aquaplanes over cataracts of foam. 57

Suggesting "the foam / Of perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn" in "Ode to a
Nightingale", the artificial world of "the whisperings and the champagne and
the stars" which Gatsby creates in "his blue gardens" is a far cry from the
"hot fertile life" which he had left behind in the West. The very effects of
the parties depend upon a sense of distortion and "willing suspension of

(56) Ibid., p. 28.
(* ) Note also the echo of Eliot's "In the room the women come and go / Talking
of Michelangelo", suggesting the dilettantish futility of "The Love Song
of J. Alfred Prufrock" in the superficialities of the parties.
(57) Ibid., p. 39.
The lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun, and now the orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music, and the opera of voices pitches a key higher. Laughter is easier minute by minute, spilled with prodigality, tipped out at a cheerful word. The groups change more swiftly, swell with new arrivals, dissolve and form in the same breath; already there are wanderers, confident girls who weave here and there among the stouter and more stable, become for a sharp, joyous moment the center of a group, and then, excited with triumph, glide on through the sea-change of faces and voices and color under the constantly changing light. The "lights grow brighter as the earth lurches away from the sun"; a natural light is replaced by the artificiality of "constantly changing light" around Gatsby's 'blue gardens'. As the "orchestra is playing yellow cocktail music", a synesthetic illusion of sight and sound, the sheer "prodigality" of the laughter, the "sea-change of faces" in groups which "dissolve and form in the same breath", combine to suggest an extension of reality which eventually becomes unreal and, at times, grotesque. For Nick, observing the spectacle from the safe distance of his own "cardboard bungalow", the scene retains a sense of magic associated with the illusions involved; but when he finally comes too close to the glittering lights the illusions begin to evaporate.

I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited—they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island, and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby, and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with an amusement park. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission. Close enough to feel "the heat and the sweat and the life", Nick rubs some off his earlier descriptions, concluding with the more mundane sense of an amusement park with tickets of admission rather than invitations. Up close, Nick sees all too clearly the "black rivulets" of mascara down the singer's face, and the final scene of the wrecked car with its "amputated wheel" foreseadows disaster even as Gatsby is left alone on his porch, "his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell". Ironically, Gatsby himself is now too far away to be aware of what is going on below in "his blue gardens".

(59) ibid., p. 41.
(60) ibid., p. 55.
(61) ibid., p. 56.
For much of the novel Gatsby remains a mystery to Nick who, after that early glimpse of his neighbor at the end of Chapter I, must thread his way through a contradictory melange of rumors (Gatsby as a "nephew or cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm's", or as a "German spy", as a bootlegger and as one "who has killed a man"—a dastardly irony considering his war experiences); and yet with his innate tendency to "reserve all judgments, Nick holds out against these implications with the comment: "It was testimony to the romantic speculation he inspired that there were whispers about him from those who found little to whisper about in this world". The comment is infused with an irony directed at the superficial artificialities of Eastern life, and yet Nick never loses sight of the fact that it is precisely this sense of artificiality which Gatsby is appealing to with his parties. Just as the natural phenomenon of Coleridge's "green light" is replaced by the artificial "green light" at the end of Daisy's dock, the "tender" night within the "forest dim" gives way to artificial lights at Gatsby's parties, an irony further enhanced by the fact that the "Queen-Moon" has been supplanted by a "premature moon, produced like the supper, no doubt, out of a caterer's basket". Gatsby's world is literally pre-mature, half real, half unreal; half created, half perceived; until it becomes difficult at times to determine which is which. The parties, with all of their artificiality, are not a part of his dream, but rather a means of achieving it in the real world where Daisy has become its object. As if to emphasize this aspect of the dream-quest, Fitzgerald again draws on Keats for a direct, if ironic, allusion.

On buffet tables, garnished with glistening hors-d'oeuvre, spiced baked hams crowded against salaks of harlequin designs and pastry pigs and turkeys bewitched to a dark gold. In the main hall a bar with a real brass rail was set up, and stocked with gins and liquors and with cordials so long forgotten that most of his female guests were too young to know one from another. The exotic offering spread out before the guests is not as much for their sake as it is for Daisy's, in much the same sense as that which Porphyro spreads out in order to woo Madeline in "The Eve of St. Agnes".

(63) ibid., p. 43.
(64) ibid., pp. 39-40.
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd,
With jellies softer than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tint with cinnamon;
Yamna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Persia, and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to coddred Lebanon.

These delicacies he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver; sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.

Both passages are marked by the sheer luxury of sensual gratification (or
rather potential gratification); a delightful blend of the real and the imagi
inary which helps to show how Fitzgerald had absorbed what he called "the rich
est, most sensuous imagery in English" into his own writing. The irony lies
in the fact that whereas Porphyro’s feast achieves just the sensuous effect
upon Madeline which he desires "in the retired quiet of the night", Gatsby’s
glistening offering is all but lost on his unknowing and uncaring guests,
Daisy included.

Gatsby’s parties, and all of the artificiality which goes with them, are
merely the external or material manifestation of his dream, however, as Nick
eventually realizes once the internal or imaginative aspect emerges. When he
meets Gatsby for the first time at close quarters, Nick fails to recognize
his host and then makes a remark which gives him away. Gatsby’s response is
revealing: "For a moment he looked at me as if he failed to understand. 'I’m
Gatsby', he said suddenly." The suddenness of the reply, indeed the reply itself,
suggest Gatsby’s desperate need to assert a believable identity. Sensing this,
Nick immediately begins to separate the dual identities of his host.

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was
one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it,
that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced—or
seemed to face—the whole external world for an instant, and then
concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It
understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed
in you as you would like to believe in yourself, and assured you
that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you
hoped to convey. Precisely at that point it vanished—and I was look
ing at an elegant young roughneck, a year or two over thirty, whose
elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Some time

(see page 23 above for the full text of the passage on Keats’s poetry).
before he introduced himself I'd got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care. 67

These two aspects of Gatsby's character suggest an almost schizophrenic tension between the natural and the artificial, the reality and the illusion, within Gatsby himself; for the smile, "with a quality of eternal reassurance in it", remains natural in spite of the pretense, whereas the words he speaks with an "elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd". The public Gatsby, which has produced the gaudy artificialities of the parties with money earned as a front man for Wolfshelm's dubious dealings, is little more than a mask which he has adopted in order to 'make it' in Eastern society. Later, when Gatsby seeks to cut through the rumors about his past, Nick believes him up to a point and then finally has to restrain his "incredulous laughter" when Gatsby makes himself out to have been a "Byronic 'young rajah in all the capitals of Europe". As Nick concludes, "The very phrases were so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned 'character' leaping sand at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne". 68 The eccentricities of a turbaned Byron escapading about the capitals of Europe succeeded in the nineteenth century largely because Byron was a Lord to begin with, but the same eccentricities in a Dakota farm boy turned parvenu become little more than absurd and Nick knows it. In spite of the extravagant pretensions, however, Nick remains attracted to Gatsby because of the natural strengths of the dreamer within the private side of his neighbor, the "romantic readiness" and "an extraordinary gift for hope" 69 which finally become the source of his greatness in Nick's eyes.

Ironically, on the eve of his reunion with Daisy, Gatsby suggests to Nick that they go over to Coney Island, the amusement park of amusement parks, but Nick turns him down with the comment "It's too late". 70 Nick has already begun to realize the futility of Gatsby's dream of recapturing the past in order to gain his vision of the future, just as he realizes that it is too late for Gatsby to be participating in the childish illusions of amusement parks at the

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(68) ibid., p. 66.
(69) ibid., p. 2.
(70) ibid., p. 82.
age of "a year or two over thirty". This insistence upon youthful pleasures is a crucial aspect of Gatsby's character, however, just as in Tender Is the Night, "A part of Dick's mind was made up of the tawdry souvenirs of his boyhood", and "somewhat littered Five-and-Ten" full of the attractive baubles of youth, and in The Beautiful and Damned, Anthony Patch retreats to the boyish attractions of his stamp collection at the moment of his personal crisis. Later, Nick realizes the full importance of this obsession with the pleasures of youth when he comments on the change from the mundane James Gatz to the more imaginative Jay Gatsby.

I suppose he'd had the name ready for a long time, even then. His parents were shiftless and unsuccessful farm people—his imagination had never really accepted them as his parents at all. The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty. So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end. 71

Like Rudolph Miller in "Absolution", James Gatz created the alter ego of Jay Gatsby and then went one step further by trying to realize that alter ego in the actual, adult world (Rudolph keeps his imaginative identity of Hatherford Sarnemington within the confines of his own imagination). Passing himself off as Jay Gatsby, a wealthy son of rich parents and an Oxford man, he rejects the realities of his own youth in the West just as he rejects his actual parents. Conceived by a seventeen-year-old boy, however, the conjured up identity of Jay Gatsby embodies both the positive strengths and necessary weaknesses of youth. Needing to amass a fortune in order to give credibility to his adopted identity, Gatsby has placed himself at the "service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty" so closely related to wealth in the novel (similar to the moral corruption associated with wealth in "The Diamond As Big As the Ritz"). Nick's final comment, "To this conception he was faithful to the end", suggests that in spite of the fifteen years which have elapsed since the initial conception, its essential strengths and weaknesses remain those of an adolescent, a blend of ideal and illusion in their most extreme forms of extension and

inherent limitation.

But his heart was in a constant, turbulent riot. The most grotesque and fantastic conceits haunted him in his bed at night. A universe of ineffable gaudiness spun itself out in his brain while the clock ticked on the washstand and the moon soared with wet light his tangled clothes upon the floor. Each night he added to the pattern of his fancies until drowsiness closed down upon some vivid scene with an oblivious embrace. For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing. 72

Like Amory Blaine's early desire "to be a habitue of roof-gardens"73—in love in the lap of luxury, Gatsby's "fancies" of "ineffable gaudiness" and "oblivious" embraces provide an outlet for his youthful imagination; but when he attempts to make them into a way of life in the actual world, their inherent frailty becomes the source of his own destruction in an all too material world.

In spite of Nick's contention early in the novel that Gatsby's "responsiveness had nothing to do with the flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the 'creative temperament'", 74 he is a creator in the sense of having created his own identity. His ultimate failure lies not as much in the original conception as it does in his failure to realize the limitations of such a conception. It is important to note that "the pattern of his fancies" is only an "outlet for his imagination", however, rather than a direct product of the imagination itself (thus suggesting Coleridge's crucial distinction between the 'fancy' and the more deeply creative 'imagination'75). Gatsby's early "reveries" are more associative than truly imaginative, (in much the same sense as Dick Diver's "somewhat littered Five-and-Ten" made up of "the tawdry souvenirs of his boyhood"), and because of this the alter ego of Jay Gatsby never becomes anything more than a mask concealing, rather than replacing, his true or natural, Western identity. Having begun with this "pattern of his fancies", Gatsby embellishes them with his 'imagination' into an approximation of reality, but even the imagination itself has its limitations in the romantic point-of-view. John Keats, who shared many of Coleridge's ideas about the imagination, grappled with the same sort of problem in an often quoted passage from

73 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, p. 30.
74 op. cit., p. 2.
75 see pages 4-5 above for a discussion of Coleridge's distinction on the 'fancy' and the 'imagination'.

a letter to Benjamin Bailey.

I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of the Imagination—what the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth—whether it existed before or not—for I have the same idea of all our Passions as of Love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. In a word, you may know my favorite Speculation in my first Book and the Little song I sent in my last—which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these Matters. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream—he awakes and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how any thing can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning—and yet it must be. 75

The passage is essential to Keats's ideas about the imagination, but it also indicates the source of Gatsby's inherent vulnerability. Anticipating the concluding lines of "Ode on a Grecian Urn", his assertion that "What the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth" is limited to truth within the imagination alone. The example of Adam's dream, which he uses to support his contention, is true only in the sense of Milton's conception of reality within the created world of Paradise Lost, an imaginative speculation rather than an assertion of absolute truth. Keats reluctantly admits this with the final comment, "and yet it must be", before going on to describe a more Wordsworthian sense of the imagination which would "exist partly on Sensation partly on thought" in order to produce the more balanced "Philosophic Mind". 76

By yielding to the imaginative conception of his own identity derived from the early "pattern of his fancies", and then to his dream of Daisy, Gatsby becomes the victim of his own unchecked imagination, unable or unwilling to recognize the necessary vulnerability inherent in such an attitude. Returning to Gatsby's past with Daisy five years before, Nick discovers the point at which Gatsby's "unutterable visions" of unlimited wonder first became compromised.

One autumn night, five years before, they had been walking down the street when the leaves were falling, and they came to a place where there were no trees and the sidewalk was white with moonlight. They stopped here and turned toward each other. Now it was a cool night with that mysterious excitement in it which comes at the two changes of the year. The quiet lights in the houses were humming out into the darkness and there was a stir and bustle among the stars. Out of the corner of his eye Gatsby saw that the blocks of the sidewalks really formed a ladder and mounted to a secret place above the trees—

(76) Ibid., p. 61.
he could climb to it, if he climbed alone, and once there he could
suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder.77

The moment was one of crucial decision for Gatsby—whether to extend his per-
sonal quest for the "incomparable milk of wonder" within his own imagination
or to shift the "ineffable gaudiness" of his visions to the more immediate,
though merely associative charms, of Daisy herself. He chooses the latter,
giving up the infinite in favor of the perishable beauty of the world of time.

His heart beat faster and faster as Daisy's white face came up
to his own. He knew that when he kissed this girl, and forever wed
his unutterable visions to her perishable breath, his mind would
never romp again like the mind of God. So he waited, listening for
a moment longer to the tuning-fork that had been struck upon a
star. Then he kissed her. At his lips' touch she blossomed for him
like a flower and the incarnation was complete.78

Like Anthony Patch and Dick Diver, Gatsby sacrifices his personal dream for
the more immediate dream of a woman and comes to suffer for it in the end.
Unlike the unconsummated love of the lovers on the urn, Gatsby's love for
Daisy, once consummated, comes down to the earthly level of "breathing human
passion" with her "perishable breath", thus becoming subject to the effects
of time in the actual world where beauty is not necessarily truth any longer.
Whereas Anthony Patch finally realizes this, however, ("I learned a little of
beauty—enough to know that it had nothing to do with truth"79), Gatsby's
persistent and extravagant attempt to merge the world of reality with the
world of the imagination eventually brings about his destruction, ironically
enough, in a world which is "material without being real".

Having committed himself to Daisy, however, Gatsby is then separated
from her by the same force that allowed them to come together socially—the
war—and the actual devotion to her becomes abstracted and idealized into a
dream. While he is away at the war, she marries Tom, but this does not dim
his sense of devotion to her; if anything, it enhances it, given the inex-
haustible reaches of his imagination. True, "his mind would never romp again
like the mind of God", but given a specific dream object, he dwells upon it
until it alone becomes the focus of all his imaginative powers and something

(78) loc. cit.
more, for by physically making love to her, "he had committed himself to the following of a grail". Initially, this "grail" was limited to his imaginative devotion to her while overseas, but once he returns, the doomed attempt to bring it into reality begins.

He came back from France when Tom and Daisy were still on their wedding trip, and made a miserable but irresistible journey to Louisville on the last of his army pay. He stayed there a week, walking the streets where their footsteps had clicked together through the November night and revisiting the out-of-the-way places to which they had driven in her white car. Just as Daisy's house had always seemed to him more mysterious and gay than other houses, so his idea of the city itself, even though she was gone from it, was pervaded with a melancholy beauty.

He left, feeling that if he had searched harder, he might have found her—that he was leaving her behind... The track curved and now it was going away from the sun, which, as it sank lower, seemed to spread itself in benediction over the vanishing city where she had drawn her breath. He stretched out his hand desperately as if to snatch only a wisp of air, to save a fragment of the spot that she had made lovely for him. But it was all going by too fast now for his blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever.

Having given up the ideal worlds of his imagination for the actual world of Daisy, Gatsby finds himself "Alone and palely loitering", deserted like the knight in "La Belle Dame sans Merci" in the very "spot that she had made lovely for him". Ironically, Gatsby has not been separated from his "faery's child" (Daisy's maiden name is Fay) by a dream of "Pale warriors, death-pale were they all", but rather by the stark realities of death in an actual war. Just as marriage to Tom has robbed Daisy of her maiden name, it has also taken from her the sense of idealized "incarnation" as her "perishable breath" proves to be all too subject to the "breathing human passion" in the actual world far below the imagination's idealizing capacity.

For Gatsby, though, this is only the beginning of the grail, the attempt to recapture that elusive moment of the past and to preserve it forever. The difficulty, his tragic flaw, in a sense, is that in order to accomplish this grail, he first has to unite the world of the imagination, of his dream of Daisy, with the actualities of a world "material without being real". As he leaves Louisville, he is heading east, away from the sun as it sets, a premonition, perhaps, of the fading of his own vision of Daisy as "he knew that he

(31) ibid., pp. 152-53.
had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever. In spite of the fact that he has left most of the original vision behind him, in the West, the dream fights on within his own imagination as he sets out on the tireless grail of material accumulation as a means of winning Daisy back.

By the time Nick first sees Gatsby stretching out his arms to the green light at the end of Daisy's dock, the dream, and the grail associated with it, has entered its final stage. Still alone, still palely loitering where no birds sing (they only beat their wings), Gatsby's brief ritual is almost an act of worship, a solemn, trembling recognition of the "colossal significance" of the green light—"which marks the symbolic point of his actual attainment of the dream object at the end of the quest. True to the context of a twentieth-century world which is "material without being real," however, Gatsby's grail is no ceremony of virtuous endeavor, but rather the "service of a vast, vulgar, and moretricious beauty" associated with the avenues to easy money upon which he has embarked. Stripped of his uniform and the social anonymity which had allowed him to come close to Daisy in the first place, Gatsby must acquire wealth in order to 'earn' Daisy's affections. That this is even necessary is an early indication of a serious flaw in the dream object herself, and consequently in the very dream as it moves toward actualization in the external world. Gatsby either does not see or simply ignores this flaw, and eventually pays a high price for the oversight.

The corruption impinging on Gatsby's grail is only hinted at in the novel, but the East-West contrast between the material artificialities and the sensuous world of the imagination is symbolized in the novel by the "desolate area of land" which lies between West Egg and New York.

About half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain area of land. This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens, where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of gray cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak, and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-gray men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud, which screens their obscure operations from your sight. 82

The "impenetrable cloud", the "spasms of black dust" become actual, or seemingly actual manifestations of the "foul dust" which Nick describes as having floated in the wake of Gatsby's dream early in the novel. It is a biting comment on what man has made of "the green breast of the new world"—now become "a new world, material without being real" where Wogsworth's beloved landscapes have become a "valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens" of materialistic perversion, the end product of Blake's "dark Satanic mills" of industrialization. The universal sense of the "unreality of reality" is implied a moment later with an ironic, contrasting reference to two of Fitzgerald's contemporaries as Tom forces Nick off the train to meet his "girl". "The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it, and contiguous to absolutely nothing." 83 The desolate absurdities of T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land are deftly blended with the small town portrayal of Sinclair Lewis's Main Street, as if to suggest just how deeply the illusions of material reality apply to everyday life. Reality becomes unreal, an illusion only, "contiguous to absolutely nothing". The pathos involved in the description of the "valley of ashes" is ironic, echoing "the valley of the shadow of death" in the Bible and yet denying the sense of hope through a faith in God, for here the only the "persistent stare" of "the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg" which "brood on over the solemn dumping ground". George Wilson later attributes the staring eyes to God directly with the comment "God sees everything", just before he sets off to take Gatsby's life. Symbolically, the valley of ashes suggests a sense of death-in-life with its "already crumbling men" and the "spasms of black dust which drift endlessly" over the entire area. Wilson, owner of a garage in the valley and husband of Tom's girl, becomes the agent of Gatsby's death by the end of the novel in spite of the fact that, according to Tom, "He's so dumb he doesn't know he's alive!" 85 Living totally without any imagination, Wilson's appearance itself suggests the pervasive sense of death-in-life: "A white ashen dust veiled

84 ibid., p. 160. (*) see pages 257-58 in The Beautiful and Damned for his satire on the Bible as a work of fiction.
his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity". Myrtle Wilson walks through her husband "as if he were a ghost"; and too "dumb" to "know he's alive", Wilson won't truly come to life until after his wife's death (ironically, a death which results from her own intense "vitality"). Wilson is the last living thing which Gatsby sees in a "new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about...like that ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees". A manifestation of death in the midst of life, Wilson becomes an agent of all too actual death to bring an end of Gatsby and his dream, before he takes his own life in order to find death once and for all.

Throughout the novel, what appears to posit life often becomes death or some aspect of it—Myrtle's vitality, the green light of the orgasmic future which is actually a red light of the 'dead' past, the "green breast of the new world" which has become a "new world, material without being real". Even Gatsby's show-wagon of a car, which Nick hopes will somehow ease the "somber holiday" of the funeral party going past, turns out in the end to be an instrument of death in Daisy's hands.

Disturbed by his visit to the "valley of ashes" and depressed by the banal and sordid atmosphere of Tom and Myrtle's party in New York, Nick turns to drink as a means of escape. "I have been drunk just twice in my life, and the second time was that afternoon; so everything that happened has a dim, hazy cast over it, although until after eight o'clock the apartment was full of cheerful sun". The sense of imaginative escape through drink echoes the desire for "a draught of vintage" in "Ode to a Nightingale" as "That I might drink, and leave the world unseen, / And with thee: fade away into the forest dim". The very world which the speaker is trying to escape has much in common with the dismal, death-in-life world which Nick has just experienced.

Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

(87) ibid., p. 162. (88) ibid., p. 29
The theme of escape through drink appears throughout Fitzgerald's works. In "Eay Day", for example, it offers escape from "boredom, disgust, the monotony of time, the turbidity of events" as the drinker "himself became in a measure symbolic, a type of continent bacchanal, the brilliant dreamer at play". Escape through drink is an artificial escape finally, and when Keats invokes Bacchus in "Ode to a Nightingale", he has already rejected drink as a means of escape in favor of the "viewless wings of Poesy". In The Beautiful and Damned, drink takes on a slightly more sinister aspect as it becomes "a gay and delicate poison", suggesting the "hemlock" or "dull opiate" of the ode's opening stanza, although Anthony sees it as a means of transcending reality to "splendid and significant transactions taking place somewhere to some magnificent and illimitable purpose", before he finally comes down to the more somber realization that "even Gloria's beauty needed wild emotions, needed poignancy, needed death". Mortality and death haunt The Great Gatsby much as they do "Ode to a Nightingale", and in an earlier version of the novel Fitzgerald had had included an even closer parallel.

It was already deep summer on roadhouse roofs and on the dark murmurous little porches and around the garages where new red gas-pumps sat out in pools of light—and summer always promised fulfillment of my childish dreams. I wanted something definite to happen to me, something that would wear me out a little—for I suppose the urge to adventure is one and the same with the obscure craving of our bodies for a certain death.

The use of "murmurous" echoes "the murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves" which introduces the meditation on death in Keats's ode.

Darkling, I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with an easeful Death,
Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Nor more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy.

Nick's "obscure craving" for a "certain death" occurs just after he has returned from Tom and Daisy's party and, ironically, just before he sees Gatsby for the first time. A similar "craving" for death had occurred in Gatsby earlier.

(*) vestiges of the passage remain on page 21 of the Scribners edition.
just after he had been parted from Daisy's "deathless song": "Then came the
war, old sport. It was a great relief and I tried very hard to die, but I seemed
to bear an enchanted life." The enchantment ends at the hands of Wilson, who
accomplishes what three German divisions couldn't accomplish, but the question
remains—would Gatsby have wanted to go on living after the death of his dream
at the very moment which was intended for its realization?

As the effects of Nick's drunkenness wear off, he begins to sense the futility
inherent in the smoke clouded gloom of Tom and Myrtle's party where "People
disappeared, reappeared, made plans to go somewhere, and then lost each other,
searched for each other, found each other a few feet away". Realizing the arti-
ficaility of escape through drink as he watches these purgatorial wanderings,
he longs for another, more natural form of escape as he pauses before the window.

The bottle of whiskey—a second one—was now in constant demand
by all present, excepting Catherine, who felt just as good on noth-
ing at all.... I wanted to get out and walk eastward toward the
Park through the soft twilight, but each time I tried to go I be-
am some entangled in some wild, strident argument which pulled me back,
as if with ropes, into my chair. Yet high over the city our line
of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human sec-
recy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was
him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, sim-
ultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety
of life. 96

Nick's wish to "get out" away from the party to "walk eastward toward the Park
through the soft twilight" suggests the desire for escape in Keats's ode, to
"fade away into the forest dim" with the nightingale, into the "verdurous glooms
and winding mossy ways" where painful existence can be left behind. The final
phrase, "through the soft twilight" anticipates the title of Tender Is the Night
even as it calls up the transcendent, imaginative world of the nightingale,
a world half created, half perceived by the speaker himself. This sense of
imaginative escape parallels that of Anthony Patch on his wedding eve as well,
for when the "ghastly female sound" of laughter from below has "aroused his
old aversion and horror toward all the business of life", Anthony immediately
feels the need "to be out in some cool and bitter breeze, miles above the

(95) ibid., p. 37.
(96) ibid., p. 36.
cities, and to live serene and detached back in the corners of his mind".  

Feeling a similar aversion "toward all the business of life" at the party, Nick longs for an escape eastward (ironically) toward the Park, and yet he can't pull himself away, for he is locked both "within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life".

This sense of balance between the imaginative and the actual suggests a sort of personal duality like that of the Keats who could see something fine about the passions exhibited in a common street brawl even as he was being repelled by the coarser aspects of the scene.

Like Keats, Scott Fitzgerald struggled between 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity', and, again like Keats, he was primarily a 'subjective' writer. After his death several critics began to take this dualism into account. John Dos Passos called his work a 'combination of intimacy and detachment'; Malcolm Cowley, 'a sort of double vision'. But, however they phrased it, the critics agreed that it was the author's ability to participate in his fiction and at the same time to stand aside and analyze that participation that gave his work maturity and power.

Nick wants to get out of the party and yet he can't tear himself away; he wants the mundane reality of being a bond salesman and yet he feels drawn to the power and significance of Gatsby's dream and the "romantic readiness", the "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life" which has brought it into being. Throughout the novel Nick remains both "within and without", torn between contradictory impulses until after Gatsby's death, when at last he commits himself by giving up his job in order to go back home to the West to write the novel and give lasting shape to the blend of imagination and reality through art.

The dilemma of living in the midst of contraries is one which Fitzgerald himself felt acutely, commenting later that "the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still maintain the ability to function", 99 Given the "inexhaustible variety of life", Nick reserves judgment as a means of holding the balance between objectivity and subjectivity within the act of creation (or re-creation) itself. Like Keats, he is not content with the objective details of an event; he must reach deeper into its subjective aspect with the sort of extension

(97) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 150.
which Keats had described in his theory of "Negative Capability", that is, when "a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after facts or reason".\textsuperscript{100} Whereas Gatsby wholly abandons himself to this sort of attitude, however, Nick maintains the balance between the subjective and the objective, recording things the way he sees them but also embellishing them by selection and re-creation through his own imagination for a far deeper perspective. In his notebooks, Fitzgerald had described the "inevitable shallowness that goes with people who have learned everything by experience",\textsuperscript{101} or as he said in a letter to Gerald Murphy:

To me, it is a new phase, or, rather, a development of something that began long ago in my writing—to try to dig up the relevant, the essential, and especially the dramatic and glamorous from whatever life is around. I used to think that my sensory impression of the world came from outside. I used to actually believe that it was as objective as blue skies or a piece of music. Now I know it was within, and emphatically cherish what little is left.

In Nick's case, however, it is the careful balance between the dual aspects of within and without, of objectivity and subjectivity, which allows him a deeper understanding of Gatsby and his dream, as well as of the material world in which he seeks to realize that dream.

In terms of the dream's realization, Chapter V becomes the moment of equipoise in the novel, the point at which the dreamer and the dream object come together in an almost 'breathless' romantic union. Upon arrival at Nick's "Castle Rackrent", Daisy again assumes the role of the nightingale in her cousin's eyes (or ears), with the "exhilarating ripple of her voice" ("I had to follow the sound of it for a moment, up and down, with my ear alone, before any words came through")\textsuperscript{102}. The reunion dissolves into awkwardness as soon as Gatsby and Daisy actually meet, and her attempt at matter-of-factness only increases the inherent irony.

"We haven't met for many years", said Daisy, her voice as matter-of-fact as it could ever be.
"Five years next November."

\textsuperscript{100} The Letters of John Keats, ed. Forman, (Oxford University Press:1935), to George and Thomas Keats, 21/12/1817, p. 72.
\textsuperscript{101} Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Crack-Up, New Directions, p.69.
\textsuperscript{103} Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Great Gatsby, Scribners, p. 86.
The automatic quality of Gatsby's answer set us all back at least another minute. 104

The matter-of-fact tone of Daisy's perfunctory remark suggests a pose even as the "automatic quality" of Gatsby's response indicates how deeply obsessed he is with his dream of her, the dream initiated at that moment four and a half years before. Leaving them alone for half an hour, Nick returns to find them "sitting at either end of the couch, looking at each other as if some question had been asked, or was in the air, and every vestige of embarrassment was gone". 105 Poised apart like the lovers on the urn with the unmasked question "in the air" ("Not to the sensual ear, but...to the spirit"), Gatsby is as close to the realization of his dream as he will come. "He literally glowed; without a word or gesture of exultation a new well-being radiated from him and filled the little room." Delicately poised on the brink of consummation, they are blissfully unaware of the world around them—"all breathing passion far above"—in the momentary sense of being outside of time with a love "For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd". Unfortunately, the moment cannot last, and Nick's return brings them back down to the actual world where beauty cannot last and where illusions evaporate before the harsh realities of material existence.

A moment later the sun comes out and the mood returns to that of the nightingale ode as they cross over to Gatsby's mansion.

With enchanting murmurs Daisy admired this aspect or that of the feudal silhouette against the sky, admired the gardens, the sparkling odor of jonquils and the frothy odor of hawthorn and plum blossoms and the pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate. It was strange to reach the marble steps and find no stir of bright dresses in and out of the door, and hear no sound but bird voices in the trees. 106

Whereas a moment before Daisy's "throat, full of aching, grieving beauty, told only of her unexpected joy", the "enchanting murmurs" she now utters suggest the more temporal image of the "murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves", which follows the catalogue of flowers (and ironically just precedes the death-wish passage) in "Ode to a Nightingale". Once again employing the synesthetic blend of senses in the manner of Keats, Fitzgerald records the "sparkling odor of

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(105) ibid., p. 90.
(106) ibid., p. 92.
jonquils" and the "fothy odor of hawthorn" and even the "pale gold odor of kiss-me-at-the-gate". The absence of sound except for the "bird voices in the trees suggests a deeper irony, but if there is a warning about the mutability of illusions, he ignores it, and inside the house "he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way, as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real". Gradually, however, the very intensity of the dream and its apparent realization exacts a reaction from Gatsby which is the first indication of the inescapable transience of the moment.

He had passed visibly through two states and was entering upon a third. After his embarrassment and his unreasoning joy he was consumed with wonder at her presence. He had been full of the idea so long, dreamed it right through to the end, waited with his teeth set, as to speak, at an inconceivable pitch of intensity. Now, in the reaction, he was running down like an overwound clock.

Like the speaker in "Ode to a Nightingale", Gatsby moves through an initial, actual response to the total imaginative abandonment of "unreasoning joy" in her (the nightingale's) presence, then eventually he becomes "consumed with wonder" at that presence itself. At this stage, Gatsby is totally incapable of seeing through the "deceiving elf" quality of Daisy's beauty, but having passed through the three stages of imaginative commitment, there is already a hint of overextension implicit in the final image, "running down like an overwound clock". An ironic reference to the effects of time, the image also suggests the inevitable collapse of the dream itself by the end of the novel.

Having chosen between the ideal and the actual that last November evening with Daisy (giving up the "incomparable milk of wonder" in favor of her "perishable breath"), Gatsby begins to see the first chinks appearing in the dream object herself, or rather in the imagined and actual dichotomy offer.

As I went over to say good-by I saw that the expression of bewilderment had come back into Gatsby's face, as though a faint doubt had occurred to him as to the quality of his present happiness. Almost five years! There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams—not through her own fault, but because of the colossal vitality of his illusion. It had gone beyond her, beyond everything. He had thrown himself into it with a creative passion, adding to it all the time, decking it out with every bright feather that drifted his way. No amount of fire or freshness can challenge what a man will store up in his ghostly heart.

(108) ibid., p. 93.
As I watched him he adjusted himself a little, visibly. His hand took hold of hers, and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most, with its fluctuating, feverish warmth, because it couldn't be over-dreamed—that voice was a deathless song.\(^{109}\)

Returning to befuddledment, Gatsby begins the descent from the giddy heights of imaginative transcendence to the lowers levels of mere actuality once again. Still, he clings to the dream, for like the nightingale's song, Daisy's voice suggests a sense of immortality directly contrasting her actual "perishable breath", a promise of fulfillment if not a fulfillment in itself. The "colossal vitality" of Gatsby's "illusion" lingers in the gathering gloom of twilight within ("there was no light save what the gleaming floor bounced in from the hall"), that time of day which Nick ironically refers to as the "hour of a profound human change".\(^{110}\) All too human, indeed, in Gatsby's case.

From this point, the dream continues to dissolve with the gradual descent to reality in spite of the fact that Daisy's voice is still "playing murmurous tricks in... her throat".\(^{111}\) Ironically, when she finally comes to one of Gatsby's parties (the last, as it turns out), Daisy is "appalled" by what she sees because, as Nick appropriately points out, "She saw something awful in the very simplicity she failed to understand".\(^{112}\) Basically insincere, Daisy is wholly superficial in her response to anything beyond herself because egotistically, she shuns any competition with her "deceiving elf" nature.

After all, in the very casualness of Gatsby's party there were romantic possibilities totally absent from her world. What was there in the song that seemed to be calling her back inside? What would happen now in the dim, incalculable hours? Perhaps some unbelievable guest would arrive, a person infinitely rare and to be marvelled at, some authentically radiant young girl who with one fresh glance at Gatsby, one moment of magical encounter, would blot out those five years of unwavering devotion.\(^{113}\)

Torn between the safety of her own secure, if hollow, life with Tom and the romantic possibilities of Gatsby's "unwavering devotion", Daisy is frightened by the thought of losing either. At the same time, she realizes that she is no longer the "radiant young girl" who captivated Gatsby five years before, and

\(^{110}\) ibid., p. 96.
\(^{111}\) ibid., p. 105.
\(^{112}\) ibid., p. 108.
\(^{113}\) ibid., p. 110.
that it is only a matter of time before he discovers that "Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes, / Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow". Blinded by the "colossal vitality" of his dream, however, Gatsby clings to the hope of its permanent realization until it is too late.

Even as Daisy betrays that "unwavering devotion" at the crucial crisis scene in New York, Gatsby is only partially aware of the death of his dream.

...he began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made. But with every word she was drawing further and further into herself, so he gave that up, and only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, unp Lopezingly, toward that lost voice across the room.

The voice begged again to go. Like the nightingale, Daisy fades away, withdrawing the "murmurous tricks" of her voice as Gatsby is left "trying to touch what is no longer tangible"--the lost voice itself. There is also a suggestion of "La Belle Dame sans Merci" as Daisy withdraws, leaving the dead dream behind her and the dreamer adrift--"Alone and palely loitering" where "no birds sing". After the accident, Nick suggests that Gatsby himself should "go away", but he flatly refuses to do so, and Nick realizes that "He was clutching at some last hope and I couldn't bear to shake him free". Like Keats's knight, Gatsby cannot leave because of some dim hope that the "fairy's child" might return to him and once again make "sweet moan". Whereas the speaker realizes the illusion inherent in the nightingale's song at the end of "Ode to a Nightingale" ("Adieu! The fancy cannot cheat so well / As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf"), Gatsby's realization, if it comes at all, comes too late, and he dies as he waits for Daisy's telephone call.

I have an idea that Gatsby himself didn't believe it would come, and perhaps he no longer cared. If that was true he must have felt that he had lost the old warm world, paid a high price for living too long with a single dream. He must have looked up at an unfamiliar sky through frightening leaves and shivered as he found what a grotesque thing a rose is and how raw the sunlight was upon the scarcely created grass. A new world, material without being real, where poor ghosts, breathing dreams like air, drifted fortuitously about...like that ashery fantastic figure gliding toward him through the amorphous trees. A romantic in a meretriciously unromantic world, Gatsby had "lived too long with

(115) ibid., p. 148.
(116) ibid., p. 162.
with a single dream" to ever be aware of the material actualities of life around him. Leaves break forth, grow, and fall; just as roses bloom and fade, and laws continue to grow as time passes. Within the dream, as within the imaginative world of the Grecian urn, everything had been frozen upon the brink of consummation. Once the dream is brought towards actualization in the material world, it is destroyed—for the ideal and the actual cannot co-exist. As Anthony Patch states: "I learned a little of beauty—enough to know that it had nothing to do with truth". 117 It doesn't in the material world, whatever approximations to truth it might make within the worlds of the imagination. It is little wonder then, that upon completion of The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald mourned: "That's the whole burden of this novel—the loss of those illusions that give such color to the world that you don't care whether things are true or false as long as they partake of the magical glory". 118

Moving about in a world which is "material without being real", Gatsby's utter preoccupation with the imaginative world of his dream bears a marked resemblance to the romantic visionary celebrated by Wordsworth in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality":

Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realiz'd,
High instincts, before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surpriz'd:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish us, and make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy! 119

Gatsby dies, but his dream does not, for Nick has immortalized it in the telling.

And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. 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. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther...And one fine morning—

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past. 120

Gatsby had come "a long way" east to realize his dream, only to find that it was already behind him in the "dark fields of the republic" rolling out through the West which he had abandoned. Coleridge's dream remained intact because it had never been forced towards actualization, pure because it remained within the limits of the imagination. The artificial green light at the end of Daisy's dock is an appropriate symbol, because at that moment when Gatsby gave up the "incomparable milk of wonder" for the "perishable breath" of Daisy, he set out on a quest to blend the imaginative with the actual, or rather to actualize the imaginative. Such a quest was doomed from the beginning.

The realization which Gatsby fails to make in time is made instead by Nick, who discovers a lasting sense of meaning in the writing out of Gatsby's story after his death. Art becomes a means of extracting both the man and his dream from the irrevocable passage of everything into the past, while also being aware of the actual world in which that art exists. Having come of age at the moment of Gatsby's fall (when he remembers his own thirtieth birthday), Nick has come of age artistically as well with a work which will last through time. For Fitzgerald, who created Nick, The Great Gatsby lives up to all of his ambitions for it and more; for what Archibald MacLeish says of Keats's great odes could also apply here.

To face the truth of the passing away of the world and make a song of it, make beauty of it, is not to solve the riddle of our mortal lives but perhaps to accomplish something more. 121

THE QUEEN MOON

How beautiful the Queen of Night, on high
Her way pursuing among scattered clouds,
Where, ever and anon, her head she shrouds
Hidden from view in dense obscurity.
But look, and to the watchful eye
A brightening edge will indicate that soon
We shall behold the struggling Moon
Break forth,—again to walk the clear blue sky.

Wordsworth, "Last Poems"

Mild Splendour of the various-vested Night!
Mother of wildly-working visions! hail!
I watch thy gliding, while with watery light
Thy weak eye glimmers through a fleecy veil;
And when thou lovest thy pale orb to shroud
Behind the gathered blackness lost on high;
And when thou darest from the wind-rent cloud
Thy placid lighting o'er the awakened sky.

Coleridge, "To the Autumnal Moon"

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,—
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

Shelley, "To the Moon"

And lo! from opening clouds, I saw emerge
The loveliest moon, that ever silver'd o'er
A shell for Neptune's goblet: she did soar
So passionately bright, my dazzled soul
Commingling with her argent spheres did roll
Through clear and cloudy, even when she went
At last into a dark and vapoury tent—

Keats, Endymion
Fitzgerald did not settle upon the title for his fourth novel until literally the very last minute, for even as he notified Maxwell Perkins of the completion of the first two chapters and his expected completion of the first section for serial publication by the following week, he closed the same letter with the comment: "Again thanks for the boost in price and remember the title is a secret to the last".\(^1\) It remained so, for as Arthur Mizener points out:

He got the manuscript of Doctor Diver's Holiday to Perkins in October. He distrusted a title with the word doctor in it because he thought it might frighten readers off, but he did not think of Tender Is the Night until just before the novel began to run in Scribner's Magazine, and even then its adoption was delayed because Perkins thought it had no connection with the story.\(^2\)

Perkins's fears were unnecessary, for in spite of the lateness of the decision to adopt the title, its thematic implications are carefully structured into the work from beginning to end. The relevant passage from "Ode to a Nightingale" reads:

\begin{quote}
Already with thee! Tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Ioon is on her throne,
Clustered around by all her starry fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.\(^3\)
\end{quote}

Enigmatically, Fitzgerald deleted the second and third lines when he quoted the passage as a frontispiece for the novel. The deletion was hardly due to any consideration of their relative unimportance thematically, however, for the moon, one of his favorite romantic symbols throughout the works, dominates the mood of the novel from the very beginning.

It was pleasant to drive back to the hotel in the late afternoon, above a sea as mysteriously colored as the agates and cornelians of childhood, green as green milk, blue as laundry water, wine dark. It was pleasant to pass people eating outside their doors, and to hear the fierce mechanical pianos behind the vines of country estaminets. When they turned off the Corniche d'Or and down to Gauze's Hotel through the darkening banks of trees, set one behind another in many greens, the moon already hovered over the ruins of the aqueducts....\(^4\)

Here, as in The Great Gatsby, the sunset suggests a sense of fading vision, in

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\(^1\) The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald, ed. Turnbull, Penguin, (to MP, 19/10/1933).
\(^4\) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 15.
Dick Diver in this case, just as it also implies the recurring theme of the
delicate division of day and night, two opposing forces momentarily at a state
of equipoise in the uneasy twilight; but the balance is already slipping towards
night as the passage closes with: "the moon already hovered over the ruins of
the aqueducts". The novel opens in the actuality of the "warm South" which Keats
can only allude to in "Ode to a Nightingale", an implication further enhanced by
the reference to the "wine dark sea and to the "darkening banks of trees". Ironi­
cally, in the warm south of the twentieth-century, the song of the nightingale is
replaced by the playing of the "fierce mechanical pianos" which Rosemary finds
so attractive. Once again, there is an air of artificiality in the twentieth-
century manifestation of romantic symbolism, for the natural symbol of the sea
is compared with the green glass of marbles, with "green milk" and the blue of
"laundry water". Whatever external resemblances it may bear in terms of location,
it is certainly not "the true, the blushful Hippocrene" which Keats had dreamed
of in his ode. Ironically, the "moon hovered over the ruins of the aqueducts",
over the decaying artifacts of past glory, a situation which Fitzgerald renders
with even deeper irony later when Rosemary returns to make a film entitled "The
Grandeur that was Rome", though she adds dispassionately at the time—"at least
we think we are; we may quit any day". In the twentieth-century, the "warm South"
becomes little more than a stage set, and a rather questionable one at that; a
source of materialistic exploitation rather than of any true imaginative vision.

If the night is seen as "Tender", however, the day becomes the direct
opposite, as Rosemary discovers early in the novel.

Out there the hot light clipped close her shadow and she retreated—
it was too bright to see. Fifty yards away the Mediterranean yielded
up its pigments, moment by moment, to the brutal sunshine; below the
balustrade a faded Buck cooked on the hotel drive.

In the "brutal sunshine" it is "too bright to see", and even the natural beauty
of the Mediterranean yields "up its pigments, moment by moment" to the sheer
'brutality' of the sun's light. With ironic juxtaposition, the symbol of

(5) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 207.
(6) ibid., p. 4.

(5) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 207.
(6) ibid., p. 4.

(5) The Hippocrene being the spring on Mount Helicon sacred to the muses,
which takes on a deeper irony considering Dick's inability to complete
his research work within the "warm South".
twentieth-century grandeur, the Buick, is already "faded" as it continues to cook in the brutal sunlight. Perhaps another reference to the sense of fading vision, the fading under the sun's light takes on a more sinister overtone later as Dick comments lightly to Rosemary, "I'm going to save your reason—I'm going to give you a hat to wear on the beach". The lightness of the remark only deepens the irony, however, for Dick, a psychiatrist who no longer practices psychiatry, is married to an acute schizophrenic and day by day he dissipates under the strain of the relationship which lurks behind the gay facade of the "warm South".

In direct contrast with the "brutal sunshine", the "Tender" night offers a sense of imaginative sanctuary closely tied in with the Divers' world "Beyond the inky sea and far up that high, black shadow of a hill...very remote in time and far away". Full of "the diffused magic of the hot sweet South", the Divers themselves are capable of transcendent effects far away from any sense of harsh reality within the "soft-pawed night" in which they hold their parties.

the two Divers began suddenly to warm and glow and expand, as if to make up to their guests, already assured of their importance, so flattered with politeness, for anything they might still miss from that country well left behind. Just for a moment they seemed to speak to everyone at the table, singly and together, assuring them of their friendliness, their affection. And for a moment the faces turned up toward them were like the faces of poor children at a Christmas tree. Then abruptly the table broke up—the moment when the guests had been daringly lifted above conviviality into the rarer atmosphere of sentiment, was over before it could be irreverently breathed, before they had half realized it was there. 9

The Divers allow their guests a momentary, imaginative escape from reality, from "that country well left behind", with the "diffused magic" of an illusion that bears much in common with the "deceiving elf" quality of Keats's nightingale.

The moment cannot last, however, and the guests are brought down from the "rarer atmosphere of sentiment" to the merely material world again before the illusion "could be irreverently breathed, before they had half realized it was there".

Adieu! The fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is famed to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! Thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music... Do I wake or sleep? 10

(8) ibid., p. 40. (9) ibid., p. 34.
The nightingale fades away unseen and the mood of imaginative flight is abruptly ended in the same sense that the magical illusion created by the Divers "was over before it could be irreverently breathed". The magical illusion over, "the diffused magic of the hot sweet South had withdrawn into them--the soft-pawed night and the ghostly wash of the Mediterranean far below--the magic left these things and melted into the two Divers and became a part of them". Abandoned to reality once again, the guests suddenly find themselves sitting around a dinner table firmly rooted to the earth, wondering if it was "a vision, or a waking dream" as they look around for their hosts. "Nicole disappeared and presently Rosemary noticed that Dick was no longer there; the guests distributed themselves in the garden or drifted in toward the terrace".

The "soft-pawed night" has hidden claws, however, for immediately after the descent to reality, Mrs. McKisco feels an insistent need "to go to the bathroom", and in so doing she comes across Nicole suffering a severe schizophrenic breakdown inside the house. While it is capable of lavish imaginative illusions within the "Tender night", the "Queen-Moon" aspect suggests a more sinister quality as well—that of the lunacy which results from the imagination being carried too far beyond reality. Symbol of the imagination, "The Waning Moon" of Shelley suggests a deeper despair than that of merely a fading vision.

And like a dying lady, lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
The moon arose up in the murky East,
A white and shapeless mass-- 12

A further development of the "soft dreams" and "remembered agonies" of the "infantine moon" in his earlier poem, "The Euganean Hills", the image of the "Waning Moon" suggests deeper agonies associated with the imagination in "the insane and feeble wanderings of her fading brain" as she "totters forth".

In the early sonnet, "To the Autumnal Moon", Coleridge celebrates the moon as

(11) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 35.
(13) ibid., "The Euganean Hills", lines 320-34, p. 369.
(*) Fitzgerald included the poem on the list of Shelley's poems which he made up for Sheilah Graham. See College of One, p. 102.
the "Mother of wildly-working visions", but later, in the moonlit despondency of "Dejection: an Ode", the "shaping spirit of Imagination" becomes clouded over by "viper thoughts, that coil around my mind, / Reality's dark dream!". This theme of the dangers inherent in the over-extension of the imagination is one which Keats developed throughout his works with a probing thoroughness.

In his 'Epistle To John Hamilton Reynolds', for example, Keats takes up the issue of the "imagination brought / Beyond its proper bound", and the necessary, if ironic, consequences of such a situation.

Oh, that our dreamings all of sleep or wake
Would all their colours from the sunset take,
From something of material sublime,
Rather than shadow our own soul's daytime
In the dark void of night. For in the world
We jostle...but my flag is not unfurled
On the admiral staff—and to philosophize
I dare not yet. Oh, never will the prize,
High reason and the lore of good and ill,
Be my award. Things cannot to the will
Be settled, but they tease us out of thought.
Or is it that imagination brought
Beyond its proper bound, yet still confined,
Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind,
Cannot refer to any standard law
Of either earth or heaven?

In happiness to see beyond our bourn--
It forces us in summer skies to mourn;
It spoils the singing of the nightingale.

Keats suggests the dangers involved in the attempt "to see beyond our bourn" by delving too deeply into the imaginative mysteries of the "dark void of night". The passage also forshadows the conclusion of "Ode on a Grecian Urn", however, with the sense of the imagination carried beyond its "proper bound" being capable of teasing "us out of thought" ("Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought / As doth eternity"). Beauty is truth within the imagination, but the same does not hold within the actual world, as Gatsby painfully discovered too late as he floated, still dreaming, on the surface of the swimming pool. Ironically, Gatsby's "flaw" lies in that very attempt "to see beyond our bourn", for truly, in his case, "It forces us in summer skies to mourn; / It spoils the singing of the nightingale". To become too enraptured with the song of the

(15) ibid., pp. 107-108.
nightingale is to become vulnerable to a dangerous dissociation from reality, which can, if carried far enough, end in lunacy within the too tender night.

Fitzgerald also suggests the dangers inherent in the attempt, usually at night, "to see beyond our bourn", to extend the imagination beyond the individual's own control. For example, after returning from the Divers' magical dinner party, Rosemary finds it difficult to sleep in the "erotic darkness" of a "limpid black night" and instead lies awake, "suspended in moonshine". Her attention drawn to the open window by "secret noises in the air" and the "ill-natured triumph" of an "insistent bird" (the effect which Abe North describes as being "plagued by the nightingale" a moment later), Rosemary shifts her interest to the scene of imaginative transcendence earlier in the evening.

Beyond the inky sea and far up that high, black shadow of a hill lived the Divers. She thought of them both together, heard them still singing faintly a song like rising smoke, like a hymn, very remote in time and far away. Their children slept, their gate was shut for the night.

For Rosemary, who still hovered delicately on the last edge of childhood, the moment becomes an imaginative extension of the "magic" transcendence earlier, and she is enraptured in much the same manner as the speaker is in "Ode to a Nightingale", except that in her case the "ill-natured triumph" of the actual bird is superseded by the "song like rising smoke, like a hymn, very remote in time and far away", which she imagines the Divers to be singing. Lingering imaginatively in the "rarer atmosphere of sentiment" which the Divers had created earlier, Rosemary idealizes the situation which she can only imagine. In actual fact, however, Nicole has just suffered a severe schizophrenic breakdown within that apparently magical villa "far up that high, black shadow of a hill", and the downward spiral of the Divers' imaginative world has already begun. This is no mere coincidence, however, for just as the moonshine of the "Tender" night can foster innocent illusions, it also has the power to project the more sinister delusions of lunacy.

Ironically, Dick and Nicole's 'Villa Diana' derives its name from the

(18) ibid., p. 40.
(19) ibid., p. 4.
the goddess of women and wild animals (Nicole ironically refers to herself as a "huntress of corralled game") later in the novel, a deity symbolized by the moon in the sense which Shakespeare alludes to in Henry IV, Part I: "Let us be Diana's foresters, gentlemen of the shade, minions of the moon" (I,ii,26). Wordsworth makes a similar link between the goddess and the moon in his short poem beginning "With how sad steps, O Moon thou climbi'st the sky", though in this case he employs the alternative name of Cynthia.

Had I

The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
And all the Stars, now shrouded up in heaven,
Should sally forth to keep thee company.
What strife would then be yours, fair Creatures, driv'n
Now up, now down, and sparkling in your glee!
But, Cynthia, should to Thee the palm be giv'n,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty. 21

In the same sense, Nicole, the "huntress" of Villa Diana, becomes symbolically associated with the moon throughout the novel. Early in the opening section, as Dick is looking through a telescope down across the garden, "Nicole swam into his vision"—a figure of speech taken from Keats's "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" ("Then felt I like some watcher of the skies / When a new planet swims into his ken") 22. Fitzgerald uses the same image twice more in the novel, but here it takes on a particular sense of irony, for Nicole is hardly a "new planet" in his life, but rather the "Queen-Moon" who has swum through his visions since their first encounter. Ironically, this takes place in the asylum where she is being treated, and shortly afterwards she writes in a letter to him: "I've thought a lot about moonlight too, and there are many witnesses I could find if only I could be out of here". 23 Dick himself becomes the means of this escape, sadly, in the end, only to allow her to "Break forth,—again to walk the clear blue sky". 24

In the early stages of their relationship, however, there is another, more appealing aspect to the young and apparently innocent Nicole, as Dick

(20) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 300.
(23) op. cit., p. 122.
(24) op. cit., Wordsworth, "Last Poems", p. 325. (see frontpiece to this section).
himself comments after taking up her case: "That was a tragedy out there, in the February day, the young bird with its wings crushed somehow". The reference to the "young bird" suggests Nicole's idealized, 'nightingale' aspect (which has much in common with Daisy's 'nightingale' manifestation); an impression which is strengthened shortly afterwards.

Her hair drawn back of her ears brushed her shoulders in such a way that the face seemed to have just emerged from it, as if this were the exact moment when she was coming from a wood into clear moonlight. The unknown yielded her up; Dick wished she had no background, that she was just a girl lost with no address save the night from which she had come.

Directly paralleling the passage in "Ode to a Nightingale" from which the novel takes its name, Nicole 'emerges' into the moonlight "from a wood" within the "Tender" night. Ironically, the moment occurs just as Dick is falling under the nightingale illusion, whereas when the speaker in the ode emerges from the wood he has already seen through the "deceiving elf" quality of the illusion. Nicole's idealized aspect becomes associated with the imagery of the nightingale, while her other, irrational aspect is reflected in moon imagery, with its implications of 'lunacy'.

A 'schizophrène' is well named as a split personality—Nicole was alternately a person to whom nothing need be explained and one to whom nothing could be explained. It was necessary to treat her with active and affirmative insistence, keeping the road to reality always open, making the road to escape harder going.

Craving escape from reality through illusions, Nicole's madness has much in common with Keats's "Imagination brought / Beyond its proper bound", the very attempt to "see beyond our bourn" which, when carried too far, inevitably, ironically, "spoils the singing of the nightingale".

Resorting first to playing records of songs for Dick (another twentieth-century "mechanical" manifestation of the nightingale's singing), the young Nicole then sings to him and pauses ("On the pure parting of her lips no breath hovered"), before finishing the song with an enchanting imaginative effect.

She smiled at him, making sure that the smile gathered up everything inside her and directed it toward him, making him a profound

(26) ibid., p. 135.
(27) ibid., p. 191.
promise of herself for so little, for the beat of a response, the
assurance of a complimentary (sic) vibration in him. Minute by min-
ute the sweetness drained down into her out of the willow trees,
out of the dark world. 23

The "dark world" is Nicole's domain, whether it is in the idealized aspect of
the nightingale or the more sinister manifestation of the moon, and the com-
plementary (or "complimentary") vibration which she elicits is hardly that
which one would expect from a psychiatrist towards his patient: "the impression
of her youth and beauty grew on Dick until it welled up inside him in a compact
paroxysm of emotion".29 Like Fitzgerald's earlier heroines, Nicole appeals to
the vulnerable spot of his imagination, to "that part of him that cherished
all beauty and all illusion", in order to render the psychological transference
mutual, a trap into which he all to easily falls. Like the speaker in "Ode to
a Nightingale", Dick is imaginatively transported as the "sweetness drained
down into her out of the willow trees, out of the dark world". Caught up in
this "compact paroxysm of emotion", Dick abandons his rational detachment in
favor of the more imaginative, nebulous world of emotion. The roots of this
go back to his student days, however, to his disposition to be a "romantic
philosopher"31 as well as a scientist, and then beyond even that.

In the dead white hours in Zurich staring into a stranger's pan-
try across the upshine of a street-lamp, he used to think that he
wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave
and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved,
too, if he could fit it in. 32

Torn by the conflicting impulses to "be wise" and to "be loved", Dick displays
an essential vulnerability, a tragic flaw which allows him to become emotion-
ally involved with Nicole, and then even to marry her, with all the disastrous
consequences which that entails.

Later in the novel, after Nicole's second severe schizophrenic breakdown,
Dick begins to realize the full gravity of his error with her as he escapes,
temporarily, from the rational-emotional tangle in which he has become enmeshed.

(29) ibid., p. 134.
(30) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Beautiful and Damned, Scribners, p. 73.
(31) op. cit., p. 117.
(32) ibid., p. 133.
(*) it is conceivable that Fitzgerald intended 'complimentary' in the sense of
flattery, but it seems more likely that 'complementary' was intended.
In Zurich the next week Dick drove to the airport and took the big plane for Munich. Soaring and roaring into the blue he felt numb, realizing how tired he was. A vast persuasive quiet stole over him, and he abandoned sickness to the sick, sound to the motors, direction to the pilot. 33

Ironically, Dick's "flight" is literal as well as imaginative, made upon yet another twentieth-century 'mechanical' device—the airplane, and yet the effect is still, emotionally at least, similar to that of Keats's speaker in "Ode to a Nightingale".

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk. 34

Feeling 'numb', 'drowsy' with fatigue, Dick "abandoned sickness to the sick" in a "Lethe-wards" forgetfulness of the pain and suffering of the real world in what Franz, his partner in science, ironically describes as "a real leave of abstinence", 35

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs;
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow. 36

For Dick, however, imaginative escape isn't enough, and unable to abandon "sickness to the sick" for long, his rational side draws him back to the sanitarium; not only for Nicole's sake, but to help the "scabbed anonymous woman-artist he had come to love". Once again becoming too emotionally involved, Dick tries to "throw as much wan light as he could into the darkness ahead", the darkness of death, which she at last succumbs to once the "heart quit". 37

Ironically, the "woman-artist" had been suffering from what Franz coldly categorizes as "neuro-syphilis", a disease of both the mind and the emotions, through the nervous system, acquired through the physical contact of sexual

(33) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 194.
(35) op. cit., p. 194.
(36) op. cit., pp. 526-527.
(37) op. cit., p. 242.
intercourse. Visiting her earlier, before his "leave of abstinence", Dick had found that, in spite of the severity of the disease, she could speak in "a strong, rich, deep, thrilling voice", a voice full of nightingale-like promise which leads him to a conclusion about her which also serves as a warning to himself.

"I am here as a symbol of something. I thought perhaps you would know what it was."
"You are sick," he said mechanically.
"Then what was it I had almost found?"
"A greater sickness."
"That's all?"
"That's all." With disgust he heard himself lying, but here and now the vastness of the subject could only be compressed into a lie. "Outside of that there's only confusion and chaos. I won't lecture to you—we have too acute a realization of your physical suffering. But it's only by meeting the problems of every day, no matter how trifling and boring they seem, that you can make things drop back into place again. After that—perhaps you'll be able again to examine—"

He had slowed up to avoid the inevitable end of his thought: "the frontiers of consciousness." The frontiers that artists must explore were not for her, ever. She was fine-spun, inbred—eventually she might find rest in some quiet mysticism. Exploration was for those with a measure of peasant blood, those with big thighs and thick ankles who could take punishment as they took bread and salt, on every inch of flesh and spirit. 39

Rendered physically helpless and mentally fading by her illness, the "artist-woman", heavily bandaged, ends by hopelessly "searching the vacuity of her illness and finding only remote abstractions". Physically as well as mentally, she becomes an almost literal manifestation of Shelley's "The Waning Moon".

And like a dying lady, lean and pale,
Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
Out of her chamber, led by the insane
And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
The moon arose up in the murky East,
A white and shapeless mass. 40

Having tried to extend too far through the imagination, the artist-woman is broken finally, both physically and mentally, for she is too "fine-spun" to stand the strain. Like her, Dick has extended too far beyond the "proper bound" in the attempt to "see beyond our bourn", becoming far too emotionally and imaginatively involved to see his own situation clearly. Lacking the cold, almost callous, detachment of Franz, Dick is unable, finally, to detach either the

(38) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 184.
(39) Ibid., p. 185.
rational or professional attitude necessary to fully function as a psychiatrist.

With Nicole, as with the artist-woman, Dick is too close to see things clearly, and the tangle of rational and emotional attitudes becomes an essential aspect of his own downfall throughout the rest of the novel.

In an attempt to come to terms with the problem, Dick takes advantage of the necessary detachment afforded by his "leave of abstinence" in order to go back to its source.

Despite the overhanging mountains Switzerland was far away, Nicole was far away. Walking in the garden later when it was quite dark he thought about her with detachment, loving her for her best self. He remembered once when the grass was damp and she came to him on hurried feet, her thin slippers drenched with dew. She stood upon his shoes nestling close and held up her face, showing it as a book open at a page.

"Think how you love me," she whispered. "I don't ask you to love me always like this, but I ask you to remember. Somewhere inside me there'll always be the person I am to-night."

But Dick had come away for his soul's sake, and he began thinking about that. He had lost himself—he could not tell the hour when or the day or the week, the month or the year. Once he had cut through things, solving the most complicated equations as the simplest problems of his simplest patients. Between the time he found Nicole flowering under a stone on the Zürichsee and the moment of his meeting with Rosemary the spear had been blunted.

Still "loving her for her best self", her idealized, nightingale self of "the young bird with its wings crushed" which had captivated him in those early encounters, Dick also realizes just how "he had lost himself", through that captivation, to her other, moon-like self. His "spear had been blunted", his rational ability to "cut through things" had diminished day by day in his reason-denying, Lamia-like relationship with her. It is appropriate that the realization is made in the darkness of a garden, for Nicole's appeal to him is associated with gardens throughout the novel, just as it is here with his memory of her coming up to him "when the grass was damp" with dew.

In Zurich, their early encounters are almost always outside in the sanitarium gardens where, diverted by the attractions of her nightingale self, he fails to take into account that other self which is lurking in the background.

The veranda of the central building was illuminated from open French windows, save where the black shadows of stripling walls and the fantastic shadows of iron chairs slithered down into a gladiola bed. From the figures that shuffled between the rooms

(41) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, pp. 200-201.
Miss Warren emerged first in glimpses and then sharply when she saw him; as she crossed the threshold her face caught the room's last light and brought it outside with her. 42

The phrasing here, "save where the black shadows", suggests that which occurs just after the appearance of the "Queen-Moon" in "Ode to a Nightingale"; "But here there is no light, / Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown / Ironic a lly, in the ode, the Queen-Moon is a positive force, rendering the night "Tender" with its light just before the speaker becomes lost within the "embalmed darkness" of the verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways" within the forest itself. Like the moon emerging from evening clouds along the horizon, Nicole emerges "first in glimpses and then sharply"; and also like the moon, she has the ability to reflect light into the darkness of night: "her face caught the room's last light and brought it outside with her". The moon has a more sinister aspect as well, however, as reflected in its relation to the 'huntress' and to the delusions of lunacy. As a trained psychiatrist, Dick realizes the clinical aspects of her schizophrenia, and of her emotional transference to him, and yet the involuntary "paroxysm of emotion" which he feels in her presence renders him helpless within the tangle of rational and emotional considerations.

Her face, ivory gold against the blurred sunset that strove through the rain, had a promise Dick had never seen before: the high cheek-bones, the faintly wan quality, cool rather than feverish, was reminiscent of the frame of a promising colt--a creature whose life did not promise to be only a projection of youth upon a grayer screen, but instead, a true growing; the face would be handsome in middle life; it would be handsome in old age: the essential structure and economy were there. 44

In this instance, Nicole's "ivory gold" face appears like a premature moon, drawing light from the fading sun, and "cool rather than feverish", "faintly wan". ("With how sad steps, 0 Moon thou climb's the sky, / How silently and with how wan a face!"45) Deeply moved by her young and almost breathless

(42) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 133.
(44) op. cit., p. 141.

(*) See page 89 above for other examples of Fitzgerald's use of the same image from Keats, for it was a favorite of his.
beauty, Dick fails to spot the more sinister implications of the moon-like aspect within. When she breaks into this meditation on her beauty to ask, "What are you looking at?" he can only answer with reference to his own captivation by her nightingale aspect—"I was just thinking that you're going to be rather happy". 

"'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot, / But being too happy in thine happiness."

When Dick leaves Nicole after their early encounters at the sanitarium, in an attempt to break the increasing emotional involvement, Franz sums up her reaction to the break with unconscious irony: "She seemed a little abstracted and in the clouds". The cliché takes on another connotation considering her moon associated lunacy, an implication reinforced shortly afterwards when Franz repeats the phrase: "It was the best thing that could have happened. She doesn't seem over-agitated—only a little in the clouds".

That orb'd maiden with white fire laden, 
Whom mortals call the Moon, 
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor, 
By the midnight breezes stream.

Even as he leaves her, however, Dick begins to realize "how far his own emotions were involved", and her image remains "glimmering" in the background of his mind even as he seeks to forget her. Reassured by the more professional and detached Franz that he has done the right thing by leaving, and certain of the same from his own rational knowledge of psychiatry, Dick is still plagued by doubts: "Nicole's emotions had been used unfairly—and what if they turned out to be his own?". This increasing sense of reverse transference, of identification with her emotions, takes him beyond the "proper bound" of psychiatry until, against all of his rational inclinations, he succumbs to her emotionally and they are married, withdrawing from the rational world of the sanitarium in Switzerland to the more emotionally evocative "hot sweet South" of France.

(48) op. cit., p. 145.
(49) loc. cit.
(51) op. cit., p. 145.
Ostensibly, the move to Villa Diana is made to provide Nicole with a more suitable environment in which to readjust to the real world as well as to give Dick the peace and quiet necessary to complete his psychiatric research; but even as the shift is taking place, Nicole sounds an ominous warning for him: "You are no longer insulated; but I suppose you must touch life in order to spring from it". The vulnerability had existed within Dick long before that, however, for in his student days, Dick had espoused the belief that theoretical knowledge is not enough, that there were further, graver risks to be taken.

"...and Lucky Dick can't be one of these clever men; he must be less intact, even faintly destroyed. If life won't do it for him it's not a substitute to get a disease, or a broken heart, or an inferiority complex, though it would be nice to build out some broken side till it was better than the original structure."

He mocked at his reasoning, calling it specious and "American"—his criteria of uncerebral phrase-making was that it was American. He knew, though, that the price of his intactness was incompleteness.

The theoretical must be balanced by the actual; insulation isn't enough if it means incompleteness, even if the outcome proves to be some form of personal destruction. Contradicting the advice he gives to the "anonymous scabbed woman" later, Dick feels that he must take some risks if he is to become complete, if he is to press against the "frontiers of consciousness" in order to accomplish something beyond the ordinary. He takes the risk and fails finally, becoming more than "faintly destroyed" by the end of the novel; for in 'touching' life "in order to spring from it", he discovers just how severely life can touch him back in the harsh world which exists outside of any theoretical considerations or enticing imaginative visions.

However enticing the "hot sweet South" appears to be on the surface, there is also an element of deception in its 'softening' effect, an effect capable of blurring and blunting Dick's sharp edges with its illusory significance. Diverted from his work, he becomes increasingly involved in a life-style of charm and social graces, a glamorous world of "diffused magic" and "soft-pawed nights" like that graphically depicted in the opening section of the novel. As Henry Dan Piper points out, however, the vulnerability lies within, "Dick is the

(52) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 160.
(53) ibid., pp. 116-117.
creator of the glamorous world he inhabits as well as its most poignant victim: the measure of its moral worth." Just as he succumbs to the attractions of Nicole against the rational awareness that it is wrong to do so, he allows the immediate attractions of a hedonistic life in the "warm South" to overshadow the importance of the psychiatric work that he had come there to accomplish. "The Diver's day was spaced like the day of older civilizations to yield the utmost from the materials at hand, and to give all transitions their full value." Dick retreats from the present, from the pressing concerns of his research, to the more sensual pleasures "of older civilizations", teased "out of thought" by the idealization of the immediate and the illusion of its apparent permanence. Like the speaker in "Ode to a Nightingale", who creates an imaginative, emotional world while enraptured by the bird's song, Dick creates a way of life out of a complex of illusions, only to become a victim of his own creation by the end of the novel.

But to be included in Dick Diver's world for a while was a remarkable experience: people believed he made special reservations about them, recognizing the proud uniqueness of their destinies, buried under the compromises of how many years. He won everyone quickly with an exquisite consideration and a politeness that moved so fast and intuitively that it could be examined only in its effect. Then, without caution, lest the first bloom of the relation wither, he opened the gate to his amusing world. So long as they subscribed to it completely, their happiness was his complete preoccupation, but at the first flicker of doubt as to its all-inclusiveness he evaporated before their eyes, leaving little communicable memory of what he had said or done.

Identifying with the nightingale aspect of Nicole, Dick himself becomes a sort of "deceiving elf", creating an "amusing world" of illusion which, ironically, becomes his "complete preoccupation". At "the first flicker of doubt" however, "he evaporated before their eyes", leaving them in a nether state between illusion and reality and wondering, "Was it a vision, or a waking dream?". Later, in a moment of forlorn realization, he admits that "he had made his choice, chosen Ophelia, chosen the sweet poison and drunk it. Wanting above all to be brave and kind, he had wanted, even more than that, to be loved. So it had been. So it would ever be..." Having drunk the "sweet poison" (as

(56) ibid., pp. 27-28.
(57) ibid., p. 302.
though of hemlock I had drunk"), he had also given in to the "dull opiate" of
an imaginative, illusory existence of pleasant deterioration in the "hot sweet
South" with the nightingale-like Nicole. The "magic" dinner party of the open­
ing section is the zenith of this illusory way of life (at least up until
Nicole's schizophrenic breakdown), and Dick's request that his children sing
"That song about 'Non Ainsi Pierrot'" to the gathered guests takes on a deepening
sense of irony in the light of subsequent events.

"Au clair de la lune
Non Ainsi Pierrot
Preste-moi ta plume
Pour ecrire un mot
Ma chandelle est morte
Je n'ai plus de feu
Ouvre-moi ta porte
Pour l'amour de Dieu."58

The song suggests Nicole's appeal to him for help in their early encounters
at the sanitarium (her letters to him are the first stage of her recovery),
for certainly her "chandelle est morte" in that dark world. There is also a
deep irony in the first line, however, for caught up in the light of the moon,
in lunacy, her appeal to him is also an appeal against his own rationality.
By marrying her, he has also become linked with her moon-like aspect, and under
this influence he is unable to write anything of any importance; instead, he
finds himself engaged in a desperate and eventually unsuccessful struggle to
"keep alive the low painful fire of intelligence"59("Je n'ai plus de feu").
The more he involves himself in the sensual world of the "warm South", the
less he accomplishes in any lasting sense.

After the emotional shock of the shooting in the Gare Saint Lazare in
Paris, Dick begins to recognize the first signs of his own dissipation: "he
was profoundly unhappy and the subsequent increase of egotism tended moment­
arily to blind him to what was going on round about him, and deprive him of
the long ground-swell of imagination that he counted on for his judgments".60

The "long ground-swell of imagination" suggests the "romantic philosopher"
more than the scientist, a disposition which has developed out of all prop-

(58) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 29.
(59) ibid., p. 196.
(60) ibid., p. 86.
ortion to his rational side since his marriage to Nicole, itself an 'imaginative' judgment from which he will never fully recover: "when he left her outside the sad door on the Zurichsee and she turned and looked at him he knew her problem was one they had together for good now". Having failed to maintain the balance between the two sides of his own nature, Dick has slipped day by day into a deepening dissociation from reality while attempting to help Nicole gradually regain her own sense of that reality at Villa Diana. In effect, as she gains, he loses, and the steep descent of his own dissipation has already begun.

On the telephone to Rosemary (herself a secondary manifestation of nightingale-like promise), Dick finds himself staring "at a shelf that held the humbler poisons of France--bottles of Otard, Rhum St. James, Marie Brizard, Punch Orangeade, André Fernet Blanco, Cherry Rochet, and Amagnac". These "humbler poisons" are of a different order from the "sweet poison" mentioned earlier, for they imply a more gradual, faint destruction than the "hemlock" of Keats's opening stanza. A closer comparison is found in the stanza that follows.

Oh, for a draught of vintage that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-dug earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
Oh, for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stained mouth,
That I might drink and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim--

Increasingly distressed by his inability to work within the numbing world of the "warm South" (ironically, a world of "Provençal song" and "sunburnt mirth" which he himself has created), Dick gradually turns to drink as a means of consolation, a course which only carries him further from his "serious self". Unwilling or unable to take cognizance of Abe North's dissolution in drink, he finds himself deviating further and further from the direction that he consciously wants to take, fading into the "forest dim" from which Nicole,

(62) ibid., p. 94.
metaphorically at least, had emerged at the sanitarium.

On the brink of Nicole's second schizophrenic breakdown in Paris, the dissipated spectre of Abe North offers an ominous warning to Dick.

"Could I annoy you for a drink?"
"There's not a thing up here," Dick lied.

Resignedly Abe shook hands with Rosemary; he composed his face slowly, holding her hand a long time and forming sentences that did not emerge.

"You are the most—one of the most—"
She was sorry, and rather revolted at his dirty hands, but she laughed in a well-bred way, as though it were nothing unusual to her to watch a man walking in a slow dream. Often people display a curious respect for a man drunk, rather like the respect of simple races for the insane. Respect rather than fear. There is something awe-inspiring in one who has lost all inhibitions, who will do anything. Of course we make him pay afterward for his moment of superiority, his moment of impressiveness.

Abe's pathetic attempt at "forming sentences that did not emerge" implicitly parallels Dick's own inability to form the words required for his research, and his appearance as "a man walking in a slow dream" serves as a premonition of Dick's subsequent decline. Abe remains almost "awe-inspiring", however, as one "who has lost all inhibitions", as one who, regardless of rational considerations, "will do anything". There is an even deeper irony in Rosemary's cautious respect for the drunken Abe, "rather like the respect of simple races for the insane", for the final phrase echoes a romantic theme most directly stated by Wordsworth in a letter to John Wilson in June, 1802.

I have often applied to idiots, in my own mind, that sublime expression of Scripture, that their life is hidden with God. They are worshipped, probably from a feeling of this sort, in several parts of the East. Among the Alps, where they are numerous, they are considered, I believe, as a blessing to the family to which they belong. I have, indeed, often looked upon the conduct of fathers and mothers of the lower classes of society towards idiots as the great triumph of the human heart. It is there that we see the strength, disinterestedness, and grandeur of love; nor have I ever been able to contemplate an object that calls out so many excellent and virtuous sentiments without finding it hallowed thereby, and having something in me which bears down before it, like a deluge, every feeble sensation of disgust and aversion.

Both Dick and Rosemary feel a curious respect for Abe, in spite of the initial revulsion at his appearance. Dick's "disinterestedness", never his strongest attribute, is rapidly deserting him, however, and all too soon he will follow

(64) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, pp. 107-108.
the ominous pattern of dissipation established by the drunken Abe, a condition itself akin to insanity eventually.

Stemming from the situation of reverse-transference early in the relationship with Nicole, Dick's problem is essentially one of identification, first with the nightingale aspect of Nicole, and then with the more sinister moon aspect and its inherent 'lunacy'. "Nicole's emotions had been used unfairly--what if they turned out to be his own?" Unfortunately they do, finally. In "Handle With Care", his autobiographical essay published two years after Tender Is the Night, Fitzgerald revealed a parallel development in his own life.

One harassed and despairing night I packed a brief case and went off a thousand miles to think it over. I took a dollar room in a drab little town where I knew no one and sunk all the money I had with me in a stock of potted meat, crackers and apples. But don't let me suggest that the change from a rather overstuffed world to a comparative asceticism was any Research Magnificent--I only wanted absolute quiet to think out why I had developed a sad attitude toward sadness, a melancholy attitude toward melancholy and a tragic attitude toward tragedy--why I had become identified with the objects of my horror or compassion.

Does it seem a fine distinction? It isn't; identification such as this spells the death of accomplishment. It is something like this that keeps insane people from working. 67 (italics in text)

Dick's identification with Nicole in the "warm South" (they even sign letters 'Dickoole') is one which involves "horror" as well as "compassion", and certainly, in his case, "identification such as this spells the death of accomplishment" in any lasting sense. Later in the novel, Dick describes his love for Nicole as "a wild submergence of soul, a dipping of all colors into an obscuring dye", to which he then adds: "Certain thoughts about Nicole, that she should die, sink into mental illness, love another man, made him physically sick". 68 This self-obscuring, "wild submergence of soul" brings Dick into Nicole's "dark world", physically as well as psychologically, and "spells the death of accomplishment", for, as his author was later to point out, "It is something like this that keeps insane people from working".

As Dick's decline continues, his increasing despair fosters an "increase in egotism" in the negative sense, an emotional "embalmed darkness" which haunts

(66) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 145.
(68) op. cit., p. 217.
the reunion with Rosemary in Rome.

"Oh, such a shame. What's it all about anyhow?"
"I've wondered for a long time."
"But why bring it to me?"
"I guess I'm the Black Death," he said slowly. "I don't seem to bring people happiness any more." 69

His early promise as an emotional and psychological healer having faded away, Dick cannot even muster the "exquisite consideration" and charming "politeness" which had characterized the "diffused magic" of his life-style in the "warm South", when "to be included in Dick Diver's world for a while was a remarkable experience". 70 Nine years earlier Fitzgerald had said of the Riviera: "the whole world has come here to forget or to rejoice, to hide its face or to have its fling, to build white palaces out of the spoils of oppression or to write the books which sometimes batter those palaces down". 71 Dick had come to the "hot sweet South" for the latter reason, only to end up following the former almost without being aware of it.

Naturally Nicole, wanting to own him, wanting him to stand still forever, encouraged any slackness on his part, and in multiplying ways he was constantly inundated by a trickling of goods and money. The inception of the idea of the cliff villa which they had elaborated as a fantasy one day was a typical example of the forces divorcing them from the first simple arrangements in Zurich.

"Wouldn't it be fun if—" it had been; and then, "Won't it be fun when—"

It was not so much fun. His work became confused with Nicole's problems; in addition, her income had increased so fast of late that it seemed to belittle his work. Also, for the purpose of her cure, he had for many years pretended to a rigid domesticity from which he was drifting away, and this pretense became more arduous in this effortless immobility... 72

Following the pattern of "older civilizations", Nicole desires a world of "effortless immobility" where everything, Dick included, can be made to "stand still forever" in the manner of the Grecian Urn. Villa Diana, their "white palace" acquired "out of the spoils of oppression" (the "oppression" associated with Nicole's wealth, the exploitation of "the people who gave a tithe to Nicole", is graphically described earlier in the novel 73), becomes a turning

(70) ibid., p. 27.
(72) op. cit., p. 170.
(73) ibid., p. 55.
point in their relationship. To fantasize about an idealized existence in a
cliff villa is one thing, but to attempt to realize that idealized existence
in an actual, physical place is quite another. The necessary consequence is
disillusionment (literally), and in Dick's case, gradual dissipation in a sen-
suous but eventually insignificant existence.

The evening after his disastrous reunion with Rosemary in Rome, Dick, who
has been drinking heavily, muses upon his own romantic vulnerability with a
direct reference to the example of Keats.

Dick evoked the picture that the few days had imprinted on his
mind, and stared at it. The walk toward the American Express past
the odorous confectionaries of the Via Nationale, through the foul
tunnel up to the Spanish Steps, where his spirit soared before the
flower stalls and the house where Keats had died. 74

The moment represents the culmination of an imaginative pilgrimage which
Fitzgerald had touched upon from time to time throughout his works, a thematic
development which forms an essential core of his romantic vision. Just as Keats
had dreamed of the "warm South" in "Ode to a Nightingale", only to lose his imagi-
inary idealization of it when he went there to die a slow and painful death;
Fitzgerald (through Dick) finds the actuality of the shrine at the center of
his own imaginative vision of the "warm South" through the "foul tunnel" of
merely material existence, an existence all too involved in the "heat and the
sweat and the life". 75 Amory Blaine had dreamed of an emotional paradise far
away where he might "deteriorate pleasantly"; Anthony Patch had seen it as "a
land where the intolerable anxieties of life would fall away like an old gar-
ment"; 77 Daisy had idealized it as the romantic land of nightingales, but Dick
is the only one who undergoes the final disillusionment of trying to actualize
these imaginative visions.

Significantly, the moment occurs at the crisis point of Dick's personal
deterioration. The reunion with Rosemary had been a last attempt to salvage
something from the remnants of his own sense of self, and even that had been
a miserable failure. ("Rome was the end of his dream of Rosemary". 78) The

(74) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 220.
(76) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, This Side of Paradise, Scribners, pp. 235-36.
(78) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 74.
reference to Keats at this critical stage suggests another aspect of Fitzgerald’s romantic vision, however, for immediately after taking up the problem of "why I had become identified with the objects of my horror or compassion" in "Handle With Care", he looks back to two of his favorite romantic poets for a possible antidote.

It was a dangerous mist. When Wordsworth decided that "there had passed away a glory from the earth", he felt no compulsion to pass away with it, and the Fiery Particule Keats never ceased his struggle against t.b. nor in his last moments relinquished his hope of being among the English poets. 79

The problem of identification with horror or despair, as Fitzgerald himself points out in the same context, "was very distinctly not modern"; in addition to Wordsworth and Keats, there is also Coleridge's "Dejection: an Ode" and the opium vision of "Kubla Khan", as well as that most famous of all confessional accounts of "self immolation" — De Quincey's Confessions of an English Opium Eater. If these examples from the past offered any consolation to Fitzgerald, though, there is little evidence that any of them, including Keats's unceasing "struggle against t.b.", provides Dick with any means of resisting his own "dangerous mist". Instead, he allows himself to get drunk, to flirt with an English girl (ironic considering Keats's romantic failures with women), and finally to become involved in a brawl with Italian taxi drivers which lands him in jail. Beaten up by the police and thrown into a cell, Dick finds himself ominously, inescapably, sunk into and shrouded by that "dangerous mist". "Still he was dragged along through the bloody haze, choking and sobbing, over vague irregular surfaces into some small place where he was dropped upon a stone floor. The men went out, a door clanged, he was alone". 81

Nicole's sister, Baby Warren, comes to his rescue (ironically, in her attempt to find the jail, she passes through the Piazzo d’Espagna, but too materialist to care anything about Keats, "her heart lifted at the word 'American' on the sign" of the American Express Company), but not before Dick has made a despairing realization at the darkest depths of his personal decline and fall.

(80) loc. cit.
(81) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 231.
(82) ibid., p. 233.
Dick's rage had retreated into him a little and he felt a vast criminal irresponsibility. What had happened to him was so awful that nothing could make any difference unless he could choke it to death, and, as this was unlikely, he was hopeless. He would be a different person henceforth, and in his raw state he had bizarre feelings of what the new self would be. The matter had about it the impersonal quality of an act of God. No mature Aryan is able to profit by a humiliation; when he forgives it has become part of his life, he has identified himself with the thing which has humiliated him—an upshot that in this case was impossible. 83

Once he has "identified himself with the thing which has humiliated him", Dick realizes that he has dropped too far too fast, and that a full recovery to his former self is impossible. "He would be a different person henceforward, and in his raw state he had bizarre feelings of what that new state would be". By becoming "identified" with the objects of his "horror"and "compassion", he also makes the final, implicit realization that "identification such as this spells the death of accomplishment" in any real sense, for, ironically: "It is something like this that keeps insane people from working". 84

Although he is able to put up a facade of recovery temporarily, Dick's return to psychiatry has a pervading hollowness about it, a hollowness which he himself is aware of even as he lies to the scabbed anonymous woman he has come to love. When Nicole chides him for his drinking and social carelessness with the remark: "Dick, this isn't faintly like you", he can only answer ironically, "I'm not much like myself any more". 85 His return to psychiatry ended finally because of his alcoholism, Dick leaves the sanitarium for the last time, retreating once again to the "warm South" with Nicole, although by this time he has no illusions about what it has to offer. Later, Rosemary comes to visit him there.

"The first drink I ever had was with you," Rosemary said, and with a spurt of enthusiasm she added, "Oh, I'm so glad to see you and know you're all right. I was worried—" Her sentence broke as she changed direction "that maybe you wouldn't be."

"Did you hear I'd gone into a process of deterioration?"

"Oh, no. I simply—just heard you'd changed. And I'm glad to see with my own eyes it isn't true."

"It is true," Dick answered, sitting down with them. "The change came a long way back—but at first it didn't show. The manner remains intact for some time after the morale cracks."

83 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 233.
84 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, The Crack-Up, New Directions, p. 81.
85 op. cit., p. 260.
"Do you practise on the Riviera?" Rosemary demanded hastily.
"It'd be a good ground to find likely specimens." He nodded here and there at the people milling about in the golden sand. 86

The encounter occurs just after Dick has failed several times to do the surfboard trick he had formerly done with ease, with the sense of physical decline paralleling the moral and spiritual "deterioration" which he has been through. Rosemary's remark about his connection with her "first drink" is deeply ironic considering his own alcoholism, but with none of the romance of their earlier encounters, they have little to talk about other than Dick's decline from the "ideal" she had previously associated him with. She is worried, but afraid to admit it, while he has shirked pretense to admit the "process of deterioration" which he has been through. Dick looks the same, but the change has come within, in his own sense of self, for "the manner remains intact for some time after the morale cracks". When Rosemary tries to change the subject by asking if he practises on the Riviera, she only deepens the irony which his apparently light-hearted reply does little to diminish, for Doctor Diver no longer practises on anyone, not even Nicole.

It seems curious that so many critics have accepted Nicole's apparent recovery from schizophrenia during, and contrasted with, Dick's "process of deterioration", for there is little evidence, medically or thematically, that her recovery is final. Dick does comment that "The case was finished" near the end, but this seems to imply more that it was "finished" for him than that it was finished for her in any lasting, psychiatric sense. Surely from his own experience with Zelda and from the medical research that he did while writing the novel, Fitzgerald had no illusions about a cure for schizophrenia, particularly after there had been three severe relapses. Similarly, there is little thematic grounds for assuming that her recovery is in any sense final, for even as she makes the break from Dick, there are lingering implications of her more sinister aspect.

(87) ibid., p. 302.
(∗) Remembering five years before, Rosemary ironically recalls the joint nightingale effect of Dick and Nicole: "You could always make me feel some you know, kind of, you know, kind of happy way— you and Nicole." (p. 282).
In the bathhouse, she changed to pajamas, her expression still hard as a plaque. But as she turned into the road of arched pines and the atmosphere changed,—with a squirrel's flight on a branch, a wind nudging at the leaves, a cock splitting distant air, with a creep of sunlight transpiring through the immobility, then the voices of the beach receded—Nicole relaxed and felt a sense of being cured and in a new way. Her ego began blooming like a great rich rose as she scrambled back along the labyrinths in which she had wandered for years. She hated the beach, resented the places where she had played planet to Dick's sun. 88

The description is deceptive, for it presents Nicole's own desire for recovery under the surface appearance "hard as a plaque". The danger is still there, and she knows it: "she knew at last the number on the dreadful floor of fantasy, the threshold to the escape that was no escape; she knew that for her the greatest sin now and in the future was to delude herself". 89 Is she cured? Or is she simply thinking, hoping that she is? She hates the beach because it is where "she had played planet to Dick's sun" in the moon aspect of her lunacy, but also, ironically, because sunlight (as opposed to moonlight), suggests the rational sense of reality. For all her protests, Nicole is still caught up in the illusions of the "warm South", in "the threshold to escape that was no escape". Once she is within the dark shade of the pine trees, within the "changed" atmosphere "with a creep of sunlight transpiring through the immobility" ("But here there is no light, / Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown / Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways."), Nicole once again feels at ease, for she is still part of the "dark world" of both the nightingale and the moon.

Throughout the novel, Tommy Barban is attracted to Nicole (as Dick was) by her idealized nightingale aspect, which allows her to "tease" her admirers out of thought. Walking in her garden of "verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways" at Villa Diana early in the novel, Nicole follows "a walk marked by an intangible mist of bloom" as she makes the realization that "she liked to be active, though at times she gave an impression of repose that was at once static and evocative. This was because she knew few words and believed in none, and in the world she was rather silent, contributing just her share of urbane

(89) ibid.
humor with a precision that approached meagreness."Preferring to remain
"static and evocative" in the "fuzzy green light" of the garden, Nicole's
idealized aspect has the ability to "tease us out of thought" with its night-
ingale-like "deceiving elf" quality. She does just enough to draw attention to
herself without seeming to be actively seeking it, creating an evocative pres-
ence which is "adequate and something more".

As Dick found out to his own sorrow, however, there is another, more act-
ive aspect beyond this "static" one, which Tommy only begins to recognize after
it is too late.

"Do you like what you see?"
He pulled her closer.
"I like whatever I see about you." He hesitated. "I thought I
knew your face but it seems there are some things I didn't know
about it. When did you begin to have white crook's eyes?"
She broke away, shocked and indignant...

Nicole's shocked indignation arises out of more than a mere sense of insult;
she is upset because for the first time, Tommy has seen beyond her static and
evocative beauty to the more sinister "deceiving elf" quality it covers up, and
then beyond that even to the "white" moon aspect which lurks within. When Tommy
says that she is "a little complicated after all" a moment later, she hastily
assures him: "No, I'm not really--I'm just a--I'm just a whole lot of different
simple people". Discomforted by his gentle probing, Nicole admits to a sense
of division within her inner self which she had begun to hope wasn't there any
more. Significantly, when they make love shortly afterwards, it is in a room
shuttered from the sunlight, but when Tommy gets up and opens a shutter, he
makes a further discovery about her.

Nicole flung her arms wide on the bed and stared at the ceiling;
the powder had dampened on her to make a milky surface. She liked
the bareness of the room, the sound of the single fly navigating
overhead. Tommy brought the chair over to the bed and swept the
clothes off it to sit down; she liked the economy of the weight-
less dress and espadrilles that mingled with his ducks upon the
floor.
He inspected the oblong white torso joined abruptly to the
brown limbs and head, and said, laughing gravely:

(91) ibid., p. 292.
(92) loc. cit.
"You are all new like a baby."
"With white eyes."
"I'll take care of that."
"It's very hard taking care of white eyes—especially the ones made in Chicago."
"I know all the Languedoc peasant remedies." 93

The "milky surface of damp powder" heightens the whiteness of the more sensual parts of her body which have not been reached by the sun on the beach, parts which Tommy is viewing for the first time (having only seen the "brown limbs and head" before). The whiteness of her eyes becomes even more significant in this context, and Tommy's promise to "take care of that" suggests a further irony, for there is little reason to believe that the "old Languedoc peasant remedies" will succeed where all of Dick's psychiatric training has failed. As Nicole herself points out, "It's very hard taking care of white eyes—especially the ones made in Chicago".

After dinner at Monte Carlo, they go for a swim "in a roofless cavern of white moonlight" (a sort of photographic negative of Coleridge's "sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice"), and Nicole finds that "tangled with love in the moonlight she welcomed the anarchy of her lover".94 The effect does not last, however, and they awake to find the "moon gone down and the air cool" as Nicole ironically remarks: "I've got to roll in before daylight". Nicole's enchanting effects, for Tommy as for Dick, are a part of the "dark world" to which she still inwardly belongs.

As they got into the car with their heads still damp, their skins fresh and glowing, they were loath to start back. It was very bright where they were and as Tommy kissed her she felt him losing himself in the whiteness of her cheeks and her white teeth and her cool brow and the hand that touched his face. Still attuned to Dick, she waited for the interpretation or qualification; but none was forthcoming. Reassured sleepily and happily that none would be, she sank low in the seat and drowsed until the sound of the motor changed and she felt them climbing toward Villa Diana. 95

After Tommy's gentle interrogations earlier, Nicole is on her guard in case they should surface again to prevent him from losing himself in the whiteness of her cheeks and her white teeth and her cool brow. The illusions involved in the

(93) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 295.
(94) ibid., pp. 297-98.
(95) ibid., p. 298.
whiteness of her beauty captivate him completely once he has stopped trying
to analyse their effect or to locate their source, and Nicole is reassured by
the failure of his insight all the way back to Villa Diana, the natural home
of her moonlit beauty as well as of her more sinister 'lunacy'. When Nicole
sums up her emotional break from Dick the following day with the comment that
"no longer was she a huntress of corralled game", she acknowledges this moon
aspect within herself, but she has hardly ceased to play the huntress, as Tommy
will discover all too soon.

She wandered about the house rather contentedly, resting on her
achievement. She was a mischief, and that was rather a satisfaction;
no longer was she a huntress of corralled game. Yesterday came back
to her now in innumerable detail—detail that began to overlay her
memory of similar moments when her love for Dick was fresh and in­
tact. She began to slight that love, so that it seemed to have been
tinged with sentimental habit from the first. With the opportunist­
ic memory of women she scarcely recalled how she had felt when she
and Dick had possessed each other in secret places around the corn­
ers of the world, during the month before they were married. Just
so had she lied to Tommy last night, swearing to him that never be­
fore had she so entirely, so completely, so utterly...

Sharing something of the Belle Dame nature of Fitzgerald's earlier heroines,
Nicole understates her "deceiving elf" achievement with the simple comment,
"She was a mischief". She is more than that, for casting Dick aside with a
delusion of memory, she sets off with Tommy on the basis of a far more delib­
erate deception, lying to herself as well as to him. There is little reason
to think that once her love for Tommy has lost its freshness and intactness,
she will not fade away from him to create the same illusions of idealization
and whiteness for someone else.

Thus, in the final stages of his "process of deterioration", Dick is
not even allowed the satisfaction of having cured her in any lasting sense,
and stripped of his relationship with her, he clings briefly to that last
remaining sense of accomplishment—his children: "He was not young any more
with a lot of dreams to have about himself, so he wanted to remember them
well". The loss of his children marks the final end of his early promise.

(96) Fitzgerald, F. Scott, Tender Is the Night, Scribners, p. 300.
(97) ibid., p. 311.
for he has lost interest in his work, in himself, and in all others as he fades away from view in a manner still ironically identified with the nightingale of Keats's Ode.

Dick opened an office in Buffalo, but evidently without success. Nicole did not find what the trouble was, but she heard a few months later that he was in a little town named Batavia, N.Y., practising general medicine, and later that he was in Lockport, doing the same thing. By accident she heard more about his life there than anywhere: that he bicycled a lot, was much admired by the ladies, and always had a big stack of papers on his desk that were known to be an important treatise on some medical subject, almost in the process of completion. He was considered to have fine manners and once made a good speech at a public health meeting on the subject of drugs; but he became entangled with a girl who worked in a grocery store, and he was also involved in a lawsuit about some medical question; so he left Lockport. 98

Having given up psychiatry, Dick resorts to general medicine, a less rarified mode of existence as he drifts from town to town. (He had earlier described himself as one of those "who do much of the world's rarest work". 99) His activities in Lockport are full of irony, for it was on a cycling tour of the Alps that he finally gave in to his love for Nicole, and his "important treatise on some medical subject" remains forever poised "almost in a process of completion". Similarly, his speech on drugs suggests the "dull opiate" of "Ode to a Nightingale" even as he wanders from one place to another, fading deeper and deeper into his own process of deterioration as he drifts out of sight: "his latest note was post-marked from Hornell, New York, which is some distance from Geneva and a very small town; in any case he is almost certainly in that section of the country, in one town or another". 100

(99) ibid., p. 133.
(100) ibid., p. 315.
EPILOGUE

Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music...Do I wake or sleep?
Having begun with the story of his own representative life in the early novels, Fitzgerald's romantic vision became refined and shaped to perfection in *The Great Gatsby*, and the pervading sense of irony carries over to *Tender Is the Night* with a depth and consistency which overrides the novel's occasional structural weaknesses. The latter work was completed against great odds (the problems weighing down on him at the time of its creation are chronicled with a painful thoroughness in *The Crack-Up*) and, ironically, its conclusion foreshadowed the pattern of his final years. His screenplays were rejected one after another by the moguls of Hollywood, he lost Zelda through her final collapse into acute schizophrenia, and his last novel, *The Last Tycoon*, was poised "almost in the process of completion" at the time of his death from a heart-attack in 1940. Like Keats, he must have wondered if any of his works would survive long after his death, and yet, also like Keats, he never relinquished his hope of being included among the great figures of English Literature. The works have survived, and more than that, they have increased in stature with the passage of time. Since he left no epitaph, perhaps this will suffice.

The world washed in his imagination,
The world was a shore, whether sound or form

Or light, the relic of farewells
Rock, of valedictory echoings,

To which his imagination returned,
From which it sped, a bar in space,

Sand heaped in the clouds, giant that fought
Against the murderous alphabet:

The swarm of thoughts, the swarm of dreams
Of inaccessible Utopia.

A mountainous music always seemed
To be falling and to be passing away.

—Wallace Stevens,
"The Man with the Blue Guitar"
APPENDIX I

Orgastic or Orgiastic?

The critical debate about whether the receding future at the end of The Great Gatsby is 'orgastic' or 'orgiastic' has produced a variety of arguments on either side, and a considerable number of interpretations of the novel have been based upon one spelling or another. With the publication of Fitzgerald's letters in 1963, the mystery should have been solved once and for all. The word was distinctly stated to be 'orgastic' by Fitzgerald himself in a list of corrections sent to his editor, Maxwell Perkins, on January 24, 1925.

Under separate cover I'm sending the first part of the proof. While I agreed with the general suggestions in your first letters I differ with you in others. I want Myrtle Wilson's breast ripped off—it's exactly the thing, I think, and I don't want to chop up the good scenes by too much tinkering. When Wolfsheim says 'sid' for 'said', it's deliberate. 'Orgastic' is the adjective for 'orgasm' and it expresses exactly the intended ecstasy. It's not a bit dirty. I

Unfortunately, the adjective for 'orgasm' is 'orgasmic' rather than 'orgastic', but at least Fitzgerald's intention is made clear in these instructions. The original Scribners edition printed the word as 'orgastic', and it remained so until it was changed to 'orgiastic' in the early fifties. Although both the Bodley Head and Penguin editions retain the spelling, 'orgastic', the Scribners edition continues to print the erroneous spelling, 'orgastic', thus mistakenly implying that Gatsby's vision of the future was one of merely passionate orgies rather than imaginative 'orgasms' of ecstasy.

Appropriately, Fitzgerald once remarked, with reference to Keats's error of Cortez for Falboa in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer", that when a great writer makes a mistake like that it becomes immortal. The substitution of 'orgasmic' for 'orgastic' at this stage would not do justice to Fitzgerald's original intention, for the word which he had insisted upon derives its meaning from the immediate context in which it appears.

Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther...and one fine morning—

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne ceaselessly into the past. 2

(†) see Sheilah Graham's College of One.
THE SHELLEY POEMS LISTED IN COLLEGE OF ONE:

"Ariel to Miranda"
"To the Moon"
"Best and brightest come away"
"To a Skylark"
"The Indian Serenade"
"I dreamed that as I wandered by the way"
"Ozymandias"
"Many a green isle needs must be"
"Music, when soft voices die"
"Now the last of many days"
"A Lament"
"One word is too often profaned"
"To Night"
"Love's Philosophy"
"The sun is warm, the sky is clear"
"When the lamp is shattered"
"Come into the garden Maud" (actually by Tennyson)
and
"Ode to the West Wind"
Quotations from the short stories are taken from the standard Scribners' edition, The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, edited by Malcolm Cowley. ("The Cut-Glass Bowl" is an exception in that it was not included in the Cowley collection.) The stories cited in the text of this study are listed below under the title of the collection in which they originally appeared (the dates after the stories refer to initial magazine publication):

**Flappers and Philosophers (1920):**
- "The Cut-Glass Bowl" (1920)
- "The Ice Palace" (1920)

**Tales of the Jazz Age (1922):**
- "May Day" (1920)
- "The Diamond as Big as the Ritz" (1922)

**All the Sad Young Men (1926):**
- "Winter Dreams" (1922)
- "Absolution" (1924)

**Taps at Reveille (1935):**
- "Babylon Revisited" (1931)
PRIMARY SOURCES
Works by F. Scott Fitzgerald:

This Side of Paradise (1920), Scribners, NY: 1970.
The Beautiful and Damned (1922), Scribners, NY: 1968.
Tender is the Night (1934), Scribners, NY: 1962 (alternate version, 1952).
The Diamond as Big as the Ritz and Other Stories, Penguin, Harmondsworth: 1962.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Emerson, R.W., Essays (Volume VI of The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson), Grant Richards, London: 1904.
SECONDARY SOURCES

Prigozy, R., "The Unpublished Stories: Fitzgerald in His Final Stage", Twentieth Century Literature, Volume 20, number 2, April, 1974.
Shelley, Mary, Frankenstein or, the Modern Prometheus, Dell, NY: 1971.
Vaughan, C.B., English Literary Criticism, Blackie & Son, Glasgow: 1922.
This study consists of a systematic study of the romantic themes used by F. Scott Fitzgerald throughout his works. Although reference is occasionally made to other romantic influences, the central emphasis is that of the influence of the major English Romantic poets—Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. This influence ranges from direct quotation to direct and indirect allusion, as well as to implicit and at times unconscious inference. The major themes examined are as follows:

The youthful dream of an imaginative paradise
The inability of reality to live up to the imaginative conception of it
The beautiful lady without mercy
The permanence of art set against the mutability of actual existence
The painful consequences of an overextension of the imagination
The thirst for sensation rather than thought

These themes are examined in relation to the author's major works so as to show the thematic unity and progressive development throughout.

The emphasis here is upon the novels, although individual stories are discussed when they shed additional light on the theme or themes being discussed at any given point. Similarly, the autobiographical writings and aspects of the author's life are discussed only when they have a particular significance with relation to the themes being examined.

Section by section, the thesis is broken down as follows:

I. 'A High Romance':
(The historical interpretation of what is meant by 'romantic' in literature, as well as a discussion of Fitzgerald's own attitude to the term in an aesthetic context.)

II. Of Clocks and Calendars:
(Fitzgerald's romantic sense of time throughout the works.)

III. The Romantic Exoticist In Search of Paradise:
(The inability to realize the youthful dream of paradise in real life.)

IV. The Beautiful Lady Without Mercy:
(The belle dame or femme fatale qualities of women in the early novels and stories.)

V. 'Beyond the Shadow of a Dream':
(A detailed study of the multiplicity of romantic themes in The Great Gatsby, and the interrelation of these with the other works.)

VI. The Queen Moon:
(A study of the psychological and emotional consequences of an overextension of the imagination.)