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# “Pleasant Episodes” of Gastronomy: Food and Drink in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Beautiful and Damned*

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“Pleasant Episodes” of Gastronomy: Food and Drink in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s

*The Beautiful and Damned*

by

Melissa Faith Dullaghan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
Department of English  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

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## Dedication

I dedicate this work to the people who encouraged and stood by me through thick and thin during the various stages of my academic career: the Inverness Dullaghans, the Tiltens, the New York Dullaghans, Suzanne Desmond, Nancy Fletcher, and the Allings—particularly, and most sincerely, my best friend and kindred companion—Sean.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Chapter One—Introduction .....	1
Critical Consideration of <i>The Beautiful and Damned</i> .....	1
Background and Significance of the Study.....	2
Overview of the Methodology .....	6
Chapter Two—Dining as “Pleasant Episode” for Anthony Patch.....	9
Childhood Experiences .....	10
Affinity for Indulgence .....	11
Interpersonal Relationships.....	16
Rhetoric of Food Choices .....	23
Conclusions about Anthony Patch.....	24
Chapter Three—Dining as “Conspicuous Consumption” for Gloria Patch.....	26
Childhood Experiences .....	27
Affinity for Control.....	27
Interpersonal Relationships.....	29
Rhetoric of Food Choices .....	32
Conclusions about Gloria Patch.....	34
Chapter Four—Conclusion .....	36
Merits of the Food and Drink Motif .....	36
Concessions.....	37

Tension as a Result of Different Gastronomical Approaches.....	38
References.....	41

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the motif of gastronomy in Fitzgerald’s critically undertreated second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*. Within the discussion of the leisure class, Fitzgerald scholars often focus on Jay Gatsby’s parties, but they seem to neglect Anthony Patch and company’s fancy for food and drink in Ivy League supper clubs of Manhattan, vaudeville theaters, and houses of languor in Upstate New York. Building upon George J. Searles’s article “The Symbolic Function of Food and Eating in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Beautiful and Damned*,” this thesis examines the meaning of Fitzgerald’s pervasive “prandial allusions” and character psychology with regard to dining.

Whereas Searles posits that Fitzgerald “employed depictions of food and eating as symbols of his characters’ shallowness and frivolity” (14), this thesis explores the possibility that Anthony Patch craves “pleasant episodes” of dining and specific culinary combinations because he interprets them as the essence of social ritual and corporeal comfort. Because many critics hold that *The Beautiful and Damned* lacks coherence and sputters as a pre-*Gatsby* creation, this thesis suggests that the novel can be read as Anthony’s quest to assert and cling to his own brand of decadence, which is tragically distinct from that of his wife Gloria’s.

## CHAPTER ONE—Introduction

### *Critical Consideration of The Beautiful and Damned*

In past decades, when readers regarded the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, they read *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald's third novel continues to be heralded by academics as the author's *magnum opus*. Critical appreciation for Fitzgerald's second novel, *The Beautiful and Damned*, was scant because scholars considered the work a pre-*Gatsby* exercise in which Fitzgerald merely developed his themes and character types. Mysteriously, critics "victimize" *The Beautiful and Damned*: [b]ecause they are not *Gatsby*, they are failures" (Hook 18-19). However, in his 1980 article for the Fitzgerald issue of *Twentieth Century Literature*, Jackson R. Bryer trumpeted for attention to Fitzgerald's pre-*Gatsby* novels, which had been criticized for "the excesses, the romantic extravagance, the sometimes failed lyricism, the name-dropping and intellectual pretentiousness" (Hook 23). Bryer encouraged scholarship which would employ innovative methodologies, such as short passage explications, in addition to the tracing of image patterns throughout the novels ("Best and Brightest" 263). Fitzgerald scholars began to recognize *The Beautiful and Damned*, and in 1989, Andrew Hook highlighted the fact that Fitzgerald himself conceptualized of each of his novels differently (19). Hook cites a 1933 letter to John Peale Bishop in which Fitzgerald explains that "*This Side of Paradise* and *The Great Gatsby* were 'selective'; *The Beautiful and Damned* and *Tender is the Night* were 'full and comprehensive'" (19). In the final analysis, Hook blames critics for establishing a



“critical tradition of condescension” while simultaneously touting Fitzgerald as one of the most successful modern American writers (20).

In light of this scholarship, which represents just a sampling of what Bryer has called the Fitzgerald Revival, and the founding of the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society and *F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* in 2000, many significant Fitzgerald scholars have reconciled *The Beautiful and Damned* (as well as *This Side of Paradise*) with the Fitzgerald canon. As Hilary K. Justice and Robert W. Trogdon observed in their 2005 Fitzgerald and Hemingway bibliography for *American Literary Scholarship*, scholars seem to have “shrugged off the hint of defensiveness [for these novels] that has characterized even the best [critical] work in the last several years” (202). It is an exciting time to be part of such inquiry because scholars are liberating themselves from the misconception that early Fitzgerald works lack artistic merit and, as a result, encourage studies of the “relatively neglected” works (Prigozy, Bryer, & Margolies xi).

### *Background and Significance of the Study*

The particular criticism that I would like to address, along with Hook, comes from a pre-Fitzgerald Revival assessment of *The Beautiful and Damned* by Bryer. In his 1978 Fitzgerald chapter for *American Literary Scholarship*, Bryer comments that the style of the novel is “strangely sprawling.” When compared with the 180 pages of *Gatsby*<sup>1</sup> then, certainly, the 449 pages of *The Beautiful and Damned*<sup>2</sup> would seem sprawling; furthermore, Fitzgerald himself lamented that he had “‘devoted so much more care...to the *detail* of the book’ than to ‘thinking out the *general* scheme’” (Hook 19). But with

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<sup>1</sup> Scribner Trade Paperback Edition 2004.

<sup>2</sup> First Scribner Paperback Fiction Edition 1995.

Hook, I argue that this extensive detail is not detrimental; on the contrary, I believe that one of the greatest strengths of the novel “lies precisely in its dense accumulation and weight of detail” (19). What Bryer deemed a sprawling prose style seems to mirror the sprawling decadence of Anthony and Gloria Patch, whose goal it is to join the loafing legions of the leisure class. I suggest that one particular category of detail emerges, and that this detail is so integral to the characterization in the novel—and aesthetically pleasing for that matter—that it merits this entire study: gastronomy, or, the art of dining.

Fitzgerald can be categorized as one of the writers whom Margaret Atwood (and I) cherishes as most enjoyable: “those that mention food, indeed revel in it” (“CanLit Foodbook” 51). In her essay for *Literary Gastronomy*, Atwood discusses how readers make connections with food and literature as a result of romantic settings (51). As a young girl reading *Ivanhoe*, Atwood wondered of the tower-imprisoned Rebecca: “but what did she have to *eat*?” (51). Other writers who notably feed their characters include Nikolai Gogol, Marcel Proust, and Virginia Woolf, to name a few. James P. Gilroy provides a particularly useful analysis of gastronomy in Proust, which I will discuss in this study of *The Beautiful and Damned* because, like Anthony Patch, the narrator of *À temps recherché du perdu* appreciates the ritual of dining and its accompanying sensory delights. This narrator basks in what Karl Wilhelmi terms “the comestible transaction” (“Eater Response” 81).

Besides foregrounding Fitzgerald’s mastery of description and literary synesthesia, there are two reasons why an exploration of Anthony Patch’s pursuit of “pleasant episodes” of gastronomy would benefit the revival of Fitzgerald studies: 1) dining scenes involve rhetorical choices, which can provide explanations of character

psychology, and therefore, lead to more well-rounded characters; and 2) dining scenes provide aesthetic pleasure for the reader because they depict an activity that potentially engages and delights all five senses. What characters eat and drink, as well as how, when, and with whom they dine reflects their instinctual behavior and provides the reader with a more satisfying reading experience.

Because of the critical tradition surrounding *The Beautiful and Damned*, a limited variety of scholarship exists, and it is even more difficult for the researcher to find scholarly sources that deal with food and drink in U.S. American literature, let alone Fitzgerald's works. However, Norman Kiell's *Food and Drink in Literature: A Selectively Annotated Bibliography* directed me to George J. Searles's article "The Symbolic Function of Food and Eating in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Beautiful and Damned*." At the time of this study, an advanced search in the *MLA International Bibliography* confirms that Searles's article is the only one to address gastronomy in the works of Fitzgerald, let alone *The Beautiful and Damned*. This article, along with Hook's will serve as the springboards for my study. Many of Searles's gastronomical interpretations stand to reason, such as his theories that "prandial allusions...serve to underscore the characters' ineffectuality and foolishness" (14), and that by the conclusion of the novel, references to food and drink are cast negatively; however, his article is brief—a mere six pages. Because the gastronomy motif pervades so much of *The Beautiful and Damned*, I believe that it warrants deeper consideration.

Gastronomical references abound in the novel because Fitzgerald understands the sensuous power of writing refreshment, and that it is integral to an illustration of decadence. The frequency and richness of Fitzgerald's "prandial allusions"—the novel

contains more than 420 references to food, drink, and dining—demonstrates that for Anthony and Gloria, dining is a social ritual. James L. W. West III notes that “the *ceremonies* of preparation, procurement, consumption, and inebriation are charted with great exactitude” (“Question of Vocation” 55, italics mine). That West, writing a higher-order essay for *The Cambridge Companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald*, devotes time to mention the food references testifies to the importance of such charting. He too interprets that dining represents a ceremony or ritual, as I have called it here. These prandial allusions range from brief mentions of tea times, luncheons, and bar stops, to specific descriptions of food and drink combinations. Fitzgerald also incorporates the use of prandial figurative language, as well as character and place names: Richard Caramel, the town of Rye (*B & D* 173), a man named Barley (181).

It seems clear that gastronomy is assigned a “central” function (Searles 14): the narrator consistently alludes to specific foods, drinks, meal preparation techniques, and attaches these allusions to certain characters, moods, and times of day. For example, Bounds is assigned to stocking a ready supply of sandwiches and the preparation of breakfast, Anthony to comfort foods and dinner time, and Gloria to lighter fare and tea time or luncheon. Food and drinks carry specific social connotations and sensory possibilities, and therefore, are rife for the rhetorical possibility of personalization. Readers can safely interpret food and drink as doing symbolic double duty. Gastronomic references describe cravings and pastimes of the leisure class, but they also present rhetorical statements; Gloria wishes to mediate her social interaction and Anthony wishes to indulge in his.

I suggest that gastronomical references represent more than just aesthetic garnish to Fitzgerald's prose, but that the cataloguing of Anthony and Gloria's food choices and dining episodes to "excess" (Stavola 114) contributes to the depiction of decadence, provides insight into the psychological compositions of their characters, and contributes to the coherence and aestheticism of the novel.

### *Overview of the Methodology*

Of the four articles written about *The Beautiful and Damned* that Bryer mentions in 1980, "Vandover and the Brute and *The Beautiful and Damned: A Search for Thematic and Stylistic Reinterpretations*" by Richard Astro was the only one to avoid treating the novel predominantly biographically. I would like to follow that lead in this thesis, and help guide Fitzgerald studies to a return to formalist appreciation for Fitzgerald's texts and avoid correlation of Anthony and Gloria Patch to Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. For this, I will attempt to be a good mock reader in the New Critic style, to deal only with the text itself and the characters on the fictive plane where they reside. I will freeze-frame scenes which offer particularly descriptive or pervasive food and drink references, and then examine the rhetoric of character menu selections and dining conditions. The chapters most punctuated by prandial references are "Symposium" with 83 references, "Portrait of a Siren" with 45, and "No Matter!" with 62. I believe that an examination of scenes from these chapters will provide a springboard for investigating the characters Anthony and Gloria Patch.

I will focus on what Bryer deems the most "encouraging" critical approaches: 1) explication of short passages in search of symbols; and 2) attention to issues of style.

Bryer applauds F. H. Langman and followers for their observation that “we read *Gatsby* ‘for the sake of its distinctive voice, or voices, for the way it puts things, at least as much as for the significance of the episodes it recounts’” (264). So my aims will be to establish the importance of gastronomical episodes with relation to Anthony and Gloria Patch, and to highlight the style with which these episodes are recounted, namely, the sensory way in which Fitzgerald describes food and drink.

What is equally notable about the prevalence of prandial references in the novel is the way in which they are delivered: via Fitzgerald’s luxuriant brand of literary synesthesia, which readers glimpsed especially powerfully in “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz.” Scholars are no doubt familiar with Fitzgerald’s reflection on the story’s background: “I was in a mood characterized by a perfect craving for luxury, and the story began as an attempt to feed that craving on imaginary foods” (Brucoli 182). These references appeal to readers because they engage all five senses. Due to the constraints of length placed on this study, I will not examine Fitzgerald’s prandial synesthesia in detail. However, I am indebted to Sarah Caroline Harman-Plowden’s dissertation, which expertly demonstrates how Fitzgerald’s synesthetic blending symbolizes Anthony’s compulsion for blending the corporeal and the psychological (“Fitzgerald and Literary Synesthesia” 87-88).

I hope to make apparent that what motivates Anthony to seek “pleasant episodes” of gastronomy (*B & D* 197) are his compulsions for the corporeal and his desire for intimacy. He welcomes the comfort and companionship that accompanies these episodes, whereas Gloria simply tolerates the formality of dining because it satisfies the

prerequisite of “conspicuous consumption,” which Ray Canterbury suggests is prescribed for them by the leisure class (“Damned Thorstein Veblen” 113).

The chapter “Symposium” contains the most potent descriptions and pivotal scene in terms of plot development and theme. In an explication of this pivotal scene, I argue that Anthony finally builds enough strength to confront Gloria’s lackadaisical attitude toward his cherished ritual; whereas Gloria and readers may interpret Anthony’s behavior in this scene as violent, it also demonstrates Anthony’s desperate entreaty that his wife commune with him on his most sensual level. For this reason, the pivotal scene heralds one of the most tragic points in the novel. It signals the destitute and divergent paths that the lovers take as a result of their unbending wills.

## **CHAPTER TWO—Dining as “Pleasant Episode” for Anthony Patch**

In this chapter, I will examine the depiction of Anthony Patch from childhood into adulthood in order to establish his dependence on the corporeal and the pursuit of gastronomic episodes. I argue that what begins for Anthony in childhood as dependence on pleasant sensory perceptions transitions into an affinity for decadence, and deteriorates into alcohol addiction. This process can be observed in Anthony’s childhood experiences with adults, identity formation while attending Harvard, his social behavior after graduating, and his romantic interests with three particular women. Additionally, I will consider particular scenes centered around food and drink in order to highlight the aesthetic value of Fitzgerald’s literary gastronomy and the rhetoric of particular food and drink choices made by Anthony and his acquaintances. From these considerations, I conclude that Anthony delights in the “comestible transaction” (Wilhelmi 81); he respects and longs for “pleasant episodes” (*B & D* 197) of gastronomy.



### *Childhood Experiences*

From the family history presented in Book One, Chapter I, the reader observes that Anthony suffers abbreviated and less than desirable relationships with adults at formative stages in his development. Left alone in his nursery—to catch only “nebulous and musical” glimpses of his mother (*B & D* 6), and tentative, “thick-smelling” hours with his father (6)—Anthony does not experience closeness and guidance from adults, only vague sensory impressions. By age eleven, Anthony experiences the death of his mother, and, while abroad in Switzerland, witnesses the “sweating, and grunting and crying aloud for air” at the death of his father (6). Taken in by his grandfather, Adam J. “Cross” Patch, whose strident sense of discipline overwhelms him, Anthony remains “wedded to a vague melancholy that was to stay beside him through the rest of his life” (5).

Anthony comes to depend on positive sensory perceptions and corporeal indulgence as reactions to the impending “struggle against death” (7)—he reads in bed, sleeps with the lights on, and “untiringly mus[es] on the variety and color of his stamp collection” (7). In his evaluation of Anthony during this stage, John B. Chambers confirms this assertion, stating that “[f]rom the very beginning of *The Beautiful and Damned*, Fitzgerald makes clear that Anthony is profoundly affected by beauty” (72). Furthermore, Chambers suggests that Anthony’s “adherence to the superficially attractive ... suggest[s] that the true meaning of all the action is to be found in the moral perspective which sees that beauty and evil are inseparably linked” (73). So for Chambers, when Anthony retreats into sensory fantasy, such as his stamp collection, or as an adult, the luxurious fluffiness of his bath mat, it represents how “an individual’s evaluative sense is

progressively worsened” (73). In other words, Chambers foresees problems for the individual who operates on this sensory plane.

Leonard A. Podis might agree with Chambers, however, he does not fault Anthony for adopting such sensory dependence. Despite the fact that Anthony falls under the ostensibly “solid moral influence” of his grandfather, Podis reads Anthony as a “moral orphan” because Cross Patch’s “laughable sententiousness and over-zealous chauvinism tend to encourage Anthony’s *carpe diem* lifestyle, not temper it” (144). In similar fashion, Anthony’s European tutor, the only other adult influence that emerges during the formative years, absent-mindedly steers Anthony when the time comes for Anthony to attend college: he convinces Anthony that “Harvard was the thing” (7), that it would provide a “tremendous tonic” for him, intellectually and socially. The word *tonic* fittingly introduces the notion that Anthony will find corporeal refreshment via sophisticated social engagements.

### *Affinity for Indulgence*

As a result of Anthony’s moral orphanhood and dependence on corporeal indulgence, he develops a sense of superiority, which he expresses in terms of gastronomy. For example, Anthony never develops respect for women or people he whom he perceives to be inferior. With Maury, he perceives that the best women are simpletons, and he expresses his low opinion of them in terms of sweetness. Rose Adrienne Gallo suggests that Anthony condescends to his artist friend Dick Caramel in similar fashion; he condenses Dick and his artistry to “something palatable to the public taste—a bon-bon, a caramel” (“By Disaster Touched” 31). Anthony associates Gloria’s

mother with sweetness because he perceives her as religiously fanatic and personally ineffectual: “Mrs. Gilbert’s voice, soft as maple syrup running into a glass container had for him a quality of horror in its single ‘Hello-o-ah?’” (*B & D* 124). Anthony describes couples seated in the Marathon cabaret in this manner as well; he complains of “the women marrying above their opportunities, the men striking suddenly a magnificent opulence: a sufficiently preposterous advertising scheme: a celestialized ice cream cone (71).

I believe that my hypothesis regarding Anthony’s compulsion for food and drink as social ritual aligns seamlessly with Thomas J. Stavola’s psychoanalysis of the protagonist: that Anthony fails “to resolve his primary crisis of basic trust, the foundation of identity,” and as a result, exhibits “adult manifestations of orality and nostalgia” (“*Beautiful and Damned: Anthony Patch*” 111). Because his formative experiences with adults are “sparse and comic” (110), Anthony learns no moral code through which he might interpret that life holds meaning. His experience has been to evade the horror of life, to survive in luxury for as long as he can. This comfort most often consists of his conversing (*B & D* 20), eating (197), drinking “quietly and in the proper tradition” (8), lighting cigarettes in solitude (18 & 88), and kissing (92 & 112). Stavola also asserts that Anthony’s moral foundation results in Anthony’s “characteristically passive manner of interacting with the world” (“*Beautiful and Damned: Anthony Patch*” 111). Stavola convinces that “[w]hat he actually longs for is an identity which will heal his divided self” (113). Where I exit from Stavola’s assessment, however, is in his assertion that Anthony’s “losing process” of indulgence is described by Fitzgerald “to excess” (114). Contrarily, I believe that the gastronomic

minutiae provide readers with time and space enough to bask in the luxuries and fantasy along with the characters as they wish for a satisfactory denouement to the Patch story.

Apart from seeking luxuries, one of the main considerations in the novel deals with Anthony's vocation, or as James L. W. West III suggests, the lack thereof. West offers insight regarding why Anthony might seek out leisure in lieu of a vocation: "the futility of effort" ("Question of Vocation" 54). West explains that the only vocation available to Anthony as a result of his college training is writing, but that that profession fails to offer membership, an apprentice system, or financial security (54). Anthony also attempts, and fails, to work as a financial clerk, soldier, and salesman. Interpreting the novel through the lens of Fitzgerald's American moralism, West concludes that without vocation, Anthony's life lacks "direction and consequence" (56). But in his innovative assessment, Stavola counters West's position; he argues that "Anthony's life is far from being directionless. He dearly wants, as a sign of success and identity, what American society offers and his grandfather possesses, a huge accumulation of money" (116). Most critics, especially West, interpret Anthony's "lack of vocation" to be his downfall. But here, Stavola diverges with that assertion in a way that provides a sympathetic view of Anthony. This interpretation offers the view of Anthony that I am inclined to support: that his "vague melancholy" exists because he aches for community and a strong identity. Ironically, Stavola describes Anthony's "fundamental pattern of motivation" as "an extreme *hunger* for a lost paradise of symbiotic fusion..." (117, emphasis mine).

Karl Wilhelmi and James P. Gilroy offer the clearest approaches for linking gastronomy with Anthony's penchant for corporeal indulgence. Wilhelmi discusses what he calls the "comestible transaction" of Eater Response Theory, which posits that eaters

can approach food in two ways: objectively, according to a code—and therefore practically; or subjectively, open to personal interpretation—and therefore sensually (81-2). To illustrate his point, Wilhelmi cites an example of two comestible transactions involving two men eating croissants: both croissants are warm, flaky, and slathered with butter and jam; however, the first man eats his in the car on the way to his night job, while the second man partakes of his in a penthouse restaurant, “surrounded by fine china and beautiful people” (80). Who enjoys their croissant more? The man who treasures every last morsel of his occasional treat, or the man of privilege, who cannot finish his because he is full from the filet mignon?

Wilhelmi also alludes to the work of Louise Raisenbran, who differentiates between *effereant* eating for nourishment and *aesthetic* eating “to recreate an emotional experience” (81). If we pair Anthony’s dining passages from the novel with Podis’s concept of Anthony’s moral orphanhood and Stavola’s suggestion of Anthony’s orality and nostalgia, Anthony clearly emerges as an aesthetic eater. Basic foods such as soup and sandwiches are his dietary staples because they provide positive emotions.

Whereas Wilhelmi’s Eater Response Theory offers the comestible transaction as a means for engaging with Fitzgerald’s writing, Gilroy presents a more poetic interpretation of characters whose perceptions engulf them in the metaphysical beauty of their surroundings. His discussion of Proust’s narrator in *À la recherche du temps perdu* also provides a method for viewing Anthony in a sympathetic light: that Anthony’s deep-seated dependence on the corporeal can be viewed as his being “perceptive enough to discern the essence of things beyond their external covering” (“Food, Cooking, Proust” 98). For Proust’s narrator, “brilliant colors” of asparagus stalks catapult the mind of the

narrator into “wonderment” and “humor” (98). Gilroy addresses the irony in such connections and adds that in addition to foods which evoke “the serious and the comic,” Proust’s narrator likens culinary “achievements” to “artistic ambitions” (98). Perhaps Anthony is more complicated than critics give him credit for.

Gilroy posits that “[f]ood is for Proust an important component of the aesthetic domain and can be enjoyed in that regard like painting, music, and literature” (99). This assumption helps explain Anthony’s predilection for “pleasant episodes” (197) of gastronomy: food is the component of the aesthetic domain in which Anthony takes pleasure; dining is where Anthony spends time with others and attempts to carve out an identity, which Stavola argues he is seeking. We also find Anthony partaking in the other aesthetic delights—music and art in the bathroom, literature in college, his weak decision to write a medieval history, and his haughty assessments with Maury Noble regarding Dick Caramel’s first novel, *The Demon Lover*. But food emerges astonishingly frequently in *The Beautiful and Damned*, and is the comfort to which Anthony repeatedly retreats.

What I would like to highlight most from Gilroy’s assessment of the Proustian catalog is that—as epitomized in the famous madeleine scene in “Combray”—the food and drink motif is so vital to the characterization of Anthony because, as Gilroy explains, “[t]he senses have a more direct link with the soul’s depths than the rational faculties” (101). In other words, I suggest that readers cannot discover the source of Anthony’s psychological composition (or nature of his marital tragedy) unless they engage him through the senses. So rather than approach Anthony as if he were a frustrated loafer, confused about his identity and vocation, perhaps the reader should approach him as

socially stunted, unable to subordinate his affinity for sensory perceptions to a more practical matter of acquiring the means by which to enjoy them.

### *Interpersonal Relationships*

#### Bounds

Additional evidence that the adult Anthony operates according to his senses and appetites is “bound” up in the depiction of Anthony’s 52<sup>nd</sup> Street apartment. Some of the novel’s most indulgent imagery appears in “The Reproachless Apartment” section of Book One, Chapter I. For example, the reader observes “a deep lounge of the softest brown leather with somnolence drifting about it like a haze” (*B & D* 10) and “a rich rug...a miracle of softness, that seemed almost to massage the wet foot emerging from the tub” (11). However, the narrator mentions that the “appointments” of the apartment skirt “decadence” (10); this intentional rejection of the term *decadent* seems to suggest that if these appointments are not luxurious, then they are, at the very least, *comfortable*. Anthony has created a haven from which he can shield himself from unpleasantries.

We are told that breakfast is the only meal Anthony eats at home, and that it is cooked by his English servant, whose “singularly, almost theatrically, appropriate name” is Bounds (12). Bounds also retrieves the mail and tugs at Anthony’s blanket each morning at nine-thirty (12). These details are significant because they demonstrate how Anthony engineers his environment for comfort and leisure. While it may seem an overstatement, the reader could interpret Bounds as a surrogate father figure, one who provides comfort in the forms of little sandwiches, and a gradual contact with the outside world via delivery of the mail. Anthony seems to relish Bounds’ indenture, because it

not only brings him pleasure, but can be dismissed, unlike the trying relationship he maintains with his grandfather. Furthermore, we know that Bounds has a likeable English name; Anthony seems to take a sophisticated comfort in the proper European tradition—Bounds is on schedule, always provides food, and displays mastery of etiquette. We can surmise that Anthony’s “entirely satisfactory” (10) apartment life sets the precedent for how he would like to arrange his social life: in pursuit of luxury and refreshment on his own terms.

### Maury Noble

Maury Noble emerges as one of Anthony’s “most frequent” dinner companions (*B & D* 17) because he achieves the life of leisure that Anthony wants for himself. Assuming Stavola’s assessment that Anthony’s vocation is to discover his identity and become rich (116), then a passage in Book One, Chapter II, entitled “A Lady’s Legs” confirms that Maury sets the standard. He possesses “a surprising and relentless maturity of purpose (43): namely, “to use three years in travel, three years in utter leisure—and then to become immensely rich as quickly as possible” (43). Anthony especially admires Maury’s self-acquired drinking skills because they reflect his psychological tendency to value decadent sensory perceptions: that drinking “would be the gateway to a wealth of new sensations, new psychic states, and new reactions in joy or misery” (43). In this passage, moreover, the narrator suggests that Anthony maintains a simple, child-like excitement over his having discovered Maury home on a Saturday night:

His spirits soared faster than the flying elevator. This was so good, so extremely good, to be about to talk to Maury—who would be equally happy at



seeing him. They would look at each other with a deep affection just behind their eyes which both would conceal beneath some attenuated raillery. Had it been summer they would have gone out together and indolently sipped two long Tom Collinses, as they wilted their collars and watched the faintly diverting round of some lazy August cabaret. But it was cold outside...so better far an evening together under the soft lamplight and a drink or two of Bushmill's, or a thimbleful of Maury's Grand Marnier, with the books gleaming like ornaments against the walls, and Maury radiating a divine inertia as he rested, large and catlike, in his favorite chair (44).

This passage seems to indicate that Anthony chooses, and delights in, companions who have a penchant for luxury and gastronomical pleasure. Additionally, Anthony extracts a sense of belonging, or more correctly, superiority over Dick Caramel, Joseph Bloeckman, and "any one else he knows" (1). George J. Searles argues that Anthony's eating with people he dislikes can be interpreted as a form of "self-delusion" (16); I agree with this statement, however, not in the way that Searles suggests. Rather than testifying to Anthony's being "a rather hollow young man" (14), I believe that this practice indicates Anthony's fear of loneliness. He uses it in a passive manner. Contrary to Searles's opinion that Fitzgerald employed food and eating to symbolize and indict the decadence of "unmerited riches" to underscore the characters' "ineffectuality and selfishness" (14), I believe he used it in order to give readers sensual variety and comment on Anthony's desire for interpersonal connection. Anthony does not seem bent on wasting food like the decadent guests at Gatsby's dinner parties; rather, Anthony craves food, favorites which

he consistently requests: sandwiches from Bounds, crisp bacon with friends while in drunken stupors, and egg nogs with Dick at the Plaza (33-4).

At Harvard, Anthony and Maury “drank in the proper tradition” (8), so we can surmise that imbibing is a staple in their relationship, the activity over which they commune. They also take the appropriate courses at the dinner table, and curb their conversations when food and drinks arrive; when the soup arrives, “what Maury said was lost for all time” (24). Maury’s words are lost because, for Anthony, they do not matter. Much more important are the companionship and communion which accompany the comestibles. Maury detects this penchant for gastronomy in his friend and gives Anthony a drinking set at his wedding to Gloria. Gilroy posits that “pleasure derived from good food can be enhanced by the beauty of the receptacle in which it is served” (99), and we can assume that such finery will not go unnoticed or unappreciated by Anthony because in pensive moods, Anthony notices things like the “gradually diminishing wisp of steam” from the coffee cup at his elbow in Child’s diner (117).

### Geraldine Burke

This identification with Maury carries over into Anthony’s assessment of quality female companionship. Just as Anthony finds “peace” for his “restless soul” in the presence of Maury, in “A Lady’s Legs,” he finds that a “stupid woman” such as Geraldine Burke provides the same effect (*B & D* 45). Geraldine “fascinates” Anthony because she is “company, familiar and faintly intimate” (45); she contrasts sharply with Gloria Gilbert. In fact, Anthony chuckles uncontrollably over Maury’s description of tea with the “tremendously alive...nervous” yet “eternally old” Gloria (48-51). This scene

underscores Anthony's preference for the simple luxury that a woman like Geraldine provides; we know that stupid women soothe him, and that Anthony likes Geraldine because she demanded so little that he like her" (86). Anthony easily woos Geraldine with music, an erotic fable about his fictitious hero, the Chevalier O'Keefe, and "vermouth, gin, and absinthe for a proper stimulant" (86). Moreover, when she becomes too conversant for his liking, Anthony prompts, "My dear Geraldine...do have another cocktail" (88). Anthony seems to have an affinity for a specific type of woman—a sensory companion—and I believe that in choosing Gloria as his mate, Anthony compromises his sense of self.

### Gloria Gilbert-Patch

In terms of gastronomy, Anthony's decision to couple with Gloria represents a disastrous compromise of self. Whereas early in the marriage, Anthony and Gloria seem socially on par—Dick assures Anthony that "Gloria's darn nice—not a brain in her head" (*B & D* 35)—gastronomically they are incompatible. Throughout the novel, Anthony desires that his dining experiences be pleasant: he grows impatient when Dick runs late for dinner and ceases to talk when the soup arrives in the section entitled "Three Men" (20). He refuses to take Gloria to "a certain tough café" while on their honeymoon (151), and he generously offers to summon the waiter for correction despite Gloria's tantrum over having been served a tomato stuffed with chicken salad instead of celery (161-2). This dining scene, part of "The Radiant Hour" section, is pivotal in terms of gastronomy because it illustrates the differing ways that Anthony and Gloria approach food and eating. Whereas Anthony desires pleasant company and refreshment, Gloria seems

indifferent, preferring to indulge in her mood over her meal. Anthony tries to assuage his new bride:

“Well, it isn’t the hotel’s fault. Either send it back, forget it, or be a sport and eat it.”

“Shut up!” she said succinctly.

“Why take it out on me?”

“Oh, I’m *not*,” she wailed, “but I simply *can’t* eat it.”

Anthony subsided helplessly.

“We’ll go somewhere else,” he suggested.

“I don’t *want* to go anywhere else. I’m tired of being trotted around to a dozen cafes and not getting *one thing* fit to eat.”

“When did we go around to a dozen cafes?”

“You’d *have* to in *this* town,” insisted Gloria with ready sophistry.

Anthony, bewildered, tried another track.

“Why don’t you try to eat it? It can’t be as bad as you think.”

“Just—because—I—don’t—like—chicken!”

She picked up her fork and began poking contemptuously at the tomato, and Anthony expected her to begin flinging the stuffings in all directions (162).

But Gloria does not fling the food; to Anthony’s surprise, she eats it. Here the reader might clearly observe what “baffled, irritated, and depressed” (163) Anthony in terms of Gloria’s finicky eating habits. The ritual of dining, which pleases and comforts Anthony most, sustains a blow from the fist of Anthony’s most intimate companion. This scene

also foreshadows the pivotal scene in “Symposium” wherein Gloria indulges in another, more catastrophic tantrum.

The reason for the Patches’ gastronomic incompatibility can also be explained in terms of Wilhelmi’s notion of the “comestible transaction” (81). Despite the fact that Wilhelmi discusses this theory in the context of writing pedagogy, it provides valuable insight for decoding the psychological compositions of Anthony and Gloria. If we compare the croissant scenario with the comestible transactions of Anthony and Gloria in “The Radiant Hour” scene, I believe that Anthony emerges as the *aesthetic* eater, or, one who eats in order “to recreate an emotional experience” (81). His moral orphanhood and search for identity provide the motivation for his seeking pleasurable eating experiences; conversely, Gloria’s indifference to eating suggests that she can obtain (and squander) the croissant/attention/male companionship/etc. that she desires simply by throwing a tantrum.

### Dorothy Raycroft

Anthony’s other minor love interest is with Dorothy “Dot” Raycroft during his stint in the army. Whereas Anthony does not enjoy many dining episodes with Dot, this portion of the novel represents Anthony’s return to a dependence on corporeal perceptions. The weather-beaten Anthony experiences a reinvigoration from exercise, routine, and strolls with Dot in the mugginess of southern evenings: “...Anthony found himself increasingly glad to be alive. Renewed strangely through his body, he worried little and existed in the present with a sort of animal content” (*B & D* 332). The reader observes this “animal existence” in some of Anthony’s friends at Sammy’s bar in the “No

Matter” chapter Book Three (415), where Anthony retreats from his marital stress and financial decline.

Like the simpleton Geraldine, Dot provides the “peace” which Anthony craves in order to stave off the horrors of life: “After all, this was peace—the quiet room with the mingled scent of women’s powder and perfume, Dot’s hand soft as a warm wind upon his hair, the rise and fall of her bosom as she took breath...as though he were at rest in some sweeter and safer home than he had ever known (349).

Anthony continues his dependence on alcohol during his courtship with Dot, and as a result of a drinking binge in the rain, falls sick. However, Anthony takes comfort in the ability of his body to overtake his existence: “He was aware that his sickness was providential. It saved him from a hysterical relapse...” (352). In this portion of the novel, we can detect echoes of the “Past and Person of the Hero” section of Book One, Chapter I, in that Anthony succumbs to his “nebulous” (352) sensory perceptions.

### *Rhetoric of Food and Drink Choices*

Throughout the novel, Anthony chooses foods that might be described as simple, hearty, wholesome, or rich. Some of these foods, such as sandwiches, bacon, and egg, could be called comfort foods. In “The Three Men” dining scene with Maury and Dick, they have ordered soup, which can signify comfort, soothing sensations, and the etiquette and prestige of multiple courses. Soup is presented to diners as a way to entice the palate as well as line the stomach in order to help the diner prevent overeating.

Sandwiches emerge as Anthony’s favorite craving: they are always on hand, courtesy of Bounds (*B & D* 215); preferred for alleviating hangovers (52); and nervously

“munched” when he and Gloria are fighting (216). When his condition deteriorates so much so that he abandons high-balls for whiskies, he opts to send for sandwiches so that he and his drinking companions might eat in Sammy’s bar (431). This food not only represents comfort, but it is known by heavy drinkers that bread and heartier foods coat the stomach and in some cases, prevent hangovers. But in addition to being associated with heartiness, the description of sandwiches provides synesthetic value: sandwiches combine multiple flavors, textures, colors, and temperatures (215, 431). They also represent sophistication according to Maury: “A man’s social rank is determined by the amount of bread he eats in a sandwich” (271).

In his study of Fitzgerald’s use of the bar setting, Aiping Zhang recognizes how Anthony depends on refreshment to “transcend the unpleasant things in his life” (*Enchanted Places* 67). Furthermore, Zhang notes that this scene in Sammy’s Bar represents “the first and perhaps only time throughout the entire novel that Anthony appears so articulate and so determined in doing something for himself” (67), i.e. obtaining drinks in front of his acquaintances.

#### *Conclusions about Anthony Patch*

The gastronomy motif establishes Anthony’s dependence on corporeal and edible indulgence. Such dependence suggests a pitiful desire for satiation, and the notion that his joy is subject to spoilage because it is comestible. Anthony emerges as an insecure child, one who seeks acceptance and companionship in episodes centered around the dining ritual. Anthony alights when the dining ritual is proposed, and is equally deflated

when the ritual is postponed, interrupted, ruined, or rejected. Whenever he is uncomfortable, he retreats to gastronomy.

From both psychological and gastronomical perspectives, it seems that Anthony would pair best with either a Geraldine or Dot. Both women represent the simpleton type which Anthony and Maury seek for their appreciation of the finer pleasures of lounging, conversing, and imbibing. They seem to know and accept their roles as subordinate indulgers. Geraldine dislikes the frequency of Anthony's drinking, however, and Dot is too young and irrational to comprehend Anthony's style. From the description of her previous relationships, Dot seems to value devotion from her men, something that Anthony is too jaded to provide. Geraldine and Dot emerge as more fitting companions for Anthony because they too seem to operate according to the socio-corporeal.

In one of Anthony's final attempts to secure conventional employment, we can observe his ultimate return to a dependence on gastronomy. Attempting to muster the confidence for work in sales, he retreats into a bar for nerve-settling whiskies, and rationalizes that it would be "futile" to attempt solicitation on an empty stomach (385). Anthony needs food for comfort and courage, and what is most remarkable about Anthony's bout with sales are the locations at which he decides to solicit: a bar, a grocery store, and a deli (385-6). When Anthony can no longer support himself, maintain any level of sobriety, and is dealt the final, tooth-knocking blow from his former rival, Joseph Bloeckman, we observe that "his discomfort [becomes] centralized in his stomach" (438). He suffers orally and gastronomically as a result of his hopeless dependence on the corporeal.



### **CHAPTER THREE—Dining as “Conspicuous Consumption” for Gloria Patch**

In this chapter I will more briefly examine the upbringing, identity formation, and attitudes toward gastronomy of Gloria Patch in order to establish what I believe is her more practical attitude toward gastronomy. I allude to Ray Canterbury’s interpretation of *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, by Thorstein Veblen, to demonstrate Gloria’s “struggle for class” (“That Damned Thorstein Veblen” 111). In lieu of the more subjective comestible transaction sought by Anthony, I posit that Gloria dedicates herself to the objective vocation of “conspicuous consumption” (113-14), which disregards the pleasurable and corporeal aspects of dining, and seeks the social privilege associated with wealth instead.

### *Childhood Experiences*

The concept of moral orphanhood could certainly apply to Gloria as well. Despite her having been spoiled and breast-fed longer than normal, she is attended to by vacant parents who seem unable to modify her obstinate behavior. We observe the distress of Mrs. Gilbert at the multitudes of boyfriends that Gloria had as a teenager, how she broke their hearts with her capriciousness and lack of commitment. And in Gloria's twenties, they disapprove of her altogether: "Gloria goes, goes, goes...She dances all afternoon and all night, until I think she's going to wear herself to a shadow. Her father is very worried about her" (*B & D* 39). And interestingly enough, Mr. Gilbert expresses his disapproval in a particular instance in terms of gastronomy: "she never ate her meals" (40). Gloria also manifests an oral fixation in adulthood, which occurs in the form of her sucking on gum drops and biting her hands when she faces a situation that displeases her.

Despite Gloria's weak parental relationships and manifestations of orality, it does not seem as though the reader should worry about Gloria. This is not to say that her behavior is balanced or mature by any means; however, Gloria demonstrates a stronger personality type than Anthony does, an ability to make it on her own regardless of negative experiences in her formative years.

### *Affinity for Control*

Like Anthony attitude toward food and drink, Gloria's attitude can be read as part of her vocation of procuring a husband; West argues that "[h]er business is to be alluring to suitors" (51), which the reader can observe in her selection of dainty meals. We can also observe Gloria's sense of purpose in her preference for sobriety in social settings:

she complains to Anthony about the drunken bacon-burning, the rudeness of Anthony's guest Joe Hull (*B & D* 240), and the fact that he is "so simple when [he is] drunk" (268). This last remark indicates two things: her preference for sobriety and her aversion to Anthony's basic sensory perceptions, his inescapable corporeal dependence. When she does drink, she usually takes no more than "her accustomed limit of four precisely timed cocktails" (224). For Gloria, inebriation represents weakness and lack of control. The bacon-burning comment might suggest that not only was there a mess in her kitchen that night, but that, for such a vain woman as herself, she is turned off by such a fat-laden snack. Gloria seems to interpret a compulsion for food and drink as weakness and dependence upon outside forces, which is a dependence to which she herself is unwilling to submit.

This parallels her refusal to commit to a man in the years before she meets Anthony. As previously stated, West believes it is Gloria's objective to make a good match; when we pair this concept with her vanity, we might conclude that she enjoys things for a short time, and quickly, because she has an objective: to extract what she can before things—such as her own youth and beauty—decay. This idea can be observed in her tour of Robert E. Lee's house, when she expounds to Anthony her philosophy that people should let things take their course and then decay in due time. Such sentiments make Gloria appear practical. In a related scene, Gloria identifies with lower-class patrons at the Marathon cabaret. She realizes that she herself manifests some essence of lower class. Anthony protests, longing for her to be one of his little "idiots" (*B & D* 72), but she insists:

You don't know me...I've got a streak of what you'd call cheapness. I don't know where I get it but it's—oh, things like this and bright colors and gaudy vulgarity. I seem to belong here. These people could appreciate me and take me for granted, and these men would fall in love with me and admire me, whereas the clever men I meet would just analyze me and tell me I'm this because of this or that because of that (73).

This description seems to render Gloria's deterioration at novel's end less tragic than Anthony's because she possesses a callousness that will temper the blow of not inheriting Cross Patch's millions in time.

### *Interpersonal Relationships*

#### Suitors

Gloria's interpersonal relationships mainly consist of flirtations and friendships with men. Beginning with her string of teenage boyfriends, Gloria is known to break hearts and take names later on in her journal. Like many of the instances in Anthony's social behavior, Gloria manifests some of her interaction in gastronomical terms. For instance, she participates in the dining ritual to avoid boredom (*B & D* 228) and confirm that she is still able to attract men (411). She also displays oral behavior such as nail biting and sucking on gum drops—a nervous habit with plenty of suggestive power. Men seem to interpret her candy-sucking as flirtation, or at the very least, endearing idiosyncrasy—an imperfection that they might exploit in order to draw closer to her romantically.

This suggestion of flirtation is not lost on Maury Noble. He meets her two years after she has already come out in Kansas City society, but nevertheless, finds her beautiful and amusing (82). Maury expresses a nostalgia for his ability to be “stirred up”; in “The Connoisseur of Kisses,” we observe Gloria succumbing to the same type of coldness after having grown bored of “the tender tribute of many eyes” (81). Like Geraldine or Dot with Anthony, Gloria seems better suited for Maury because both possess an “eternally old” soul, which might be understood as a social assimilation or purpose which Anthony seems incapable of attaining.

During her courtship with Anthony, Gloria reveals in a journal entry her desires for their relationship, namely, that she wants to marry “Anthony—a temporarily passionate lover with wisdom enough to realize when it has flown and that it must fly” (147). This passage might suggest that Gloria considers Anthony to be reasonably mature, or “eternally old” (51) as we find with Maury. However, Gloria expresses her intentions in the journal even more clearly, and foreshadows the doomed fate of her relationship with Anthony, in prandial terms: “What a fate—to grow rotund and unseemly, to lose my self-love, to think in terms of milk, oatmeal...” (147). Here we observe Gloria’s aversion to the very types of basic comfort foods that she will so desperately crave with Anthony by novel’s end.

### Females

Gloria manifests a distinct mistrust of female companionship. Perhaps this is because she desires to be the belle of the ball wherever she goes, or because she uses teas for gossip and the negotiation of her social superiority. Besides her occasional outings

with Muriel and Rachael Jerryl, Anthony notes that Gloria is “unresponsive to female intimacy” (*B & D* 228). One particular instance, in which she accepts an invitation from Rachael Jerryl (now Barnes), whom she believes was once ensconced in extramarital relations with her own Anthony, illustrates that her jealousy is surpassed only by the “shallow” (Searles 14) desire to keep her enemies closer than her friends (*B & D* 364). Another particular scene in Chapter Three—“The Broken Lute,” depicts Gloria’s jealousy over Rachael in gastronomical terms. Gloria calls Anthony aside to protest his paying for their drink and entertainment while in the midst of entertaining his guests Maury, Dick, the Barneses, and Fred Paramore.

GLORIA: ...why do you insist on paying for everything? Both those men have more money than you!

ANTHONY: Why, Gloria! They’re my guests!

GLORIA: That’s no reason why you should pay for a bottle of champagne Rachael Barnes smashed. Dick tried to fix that second taxi bill, and you wouldn’t let him (269).

Here we can observe the tension of socio-gastronomic styles between Gloria and Anthony; Gloria wants the guests to have the decency to leave before breakfast (280), whereas, Anthony cannot spoil his guests enough. This tension aggravates Gloria so much that while Anthony serves in the army, Gloria decides to spite her husband by abandoning her cocktail restriction in the company of another man.

“I wish you weren’t married,” said Collins, his face a ludicrous travesty of ‘in all seriousness.’

“Why?” She held out her glass to be filled with a high-ball.

“Don’t drink any more,” he urged her, frowning.

“Why not?”

“You’d be nicer—if you didn’t.”

Gloria caught suddenly the intended suggestion of the remark, the atmosphere he was attempting to create. She wanted to laugh—yet she realized that there was nothing to laugh at. She had been enjoying the evening, and she had no desire to go home—at the same time it hurt her pride to be flirted with on just that level.

“Pour me another drink,” she insisted.

“Please—”

“Oh, don’t be ridiculous!” she cried in exasperation.

“Very well.” He yielded with ill grace.

In this scene, Gloria negotiates, or rather, dictates her social status in gastronomical terms. She will not endure being told to stop drinking, not by Captain Collins, nor by her own standard of sobriety if it means her superiority and control over her situation is at stake.

### *Rhetoric of Food and Drink Choices*

Wilhelmi’s discussion of New Gastronomy provides the more fitting description of Gloria’s comestible transaction. As opposed to Anthony, who operates under the subjective comestible transaction of Eater Response Theory, Gloria, chooses foods for their “objective meaning” (Wilhelmi 81). For the New Gastronome, the purpose of dining is to “[discover] the objective meaning of food” (81), and then seek out the

particular menu items that authenticate the eater to be “a person of culture and class” (81). Gloria’s consistent dining on tomato sandwiches, stuffed tomatoes, lemonade, and gum drops establish her desire to choose foods for their objective meaning, and therefore, negotiate her social status: “Not only did she require food from a selection of a dozen dishes, but in addition this food must be prepared in just a certain way” (161). Whereas lemonade and gum drops do not connote “culture and class,” they do suggest a manifestation of orality, as Stavola suggests of Anthony, and establish Gloria’s youthful mystique and charm, as noted by Maury Noble in “A Lady’s Legs”: [s]he was—tremendously alive. She was eating gum-drops” (48).

In addition, we might consider the properties of foods found on Gloria’s plate prior to and during her honeymoon—her tomato sandwiches and lemonade are light, acidic, vegetarian. These foods possess acidic properties; they do not fill; they are not rich or savory. The lightness of Gloria’s food represents how she likes to keep her figure and her dinner-time conversations. These properties also seem to symbolize the “crisp” or “tart” manner in which Gloria behaves toward people whom she perceives are inferior. In fact, George J. Searles interprets Gloria’s “overly critical palate as a synecdoche of her whole personality” (18). Ironically, however, by novel’s end, Gloria perceives her inferiors in terms of sweetness, just as Anthony does. In the chapter “No Matter!,” an interesting transformation occurs regarding her food choices; Gloria opts for heartier fare after the deterioration of her intimacy with Anthony. After his stint in the army, she is described eating eggs (429), and Anthony brings her potato salad and cold chicken from the delicatessen (442). At this point, she seems to welcome comfort foods and maintains a new objective: procuring them with what little money she and Anthony have left. In



one instance, she counts her coins before deciding whether to go for coffee and rolls, or stay in for devilled ham and bread (413). Gloria also begins preparing her own meals. Whereas, this is a technical aspect of dining—the Patches can no longer afford a cook—it underscores her sinking into the lower class and coming to depend on the richer and more basic foods to which she previously held an aversion.

### *Conclusions about Gloria Patch*

Gloria's comestible transaction and style of indulgence do not meld with Anthony's. One of the biggest tragedies of the novel is that the intimacy of their marriage deteriorates as a result of adherence and lack of appreciation for individual styles of appreciating luxury. Whereas this pursuit would appear romantic and leisurely, the privileges and pressures tear the couple apart.

Gloria does not crave or indulge in food the way that Anthony does; therefore, I argue that she uses food and drink as a means to an end—namely, as currency for the practical transaction of her desired social status. Not only does Gloria wish to be perceived as beautiful and superior, but also as wealthy; her picky eating habits suggest the privilege of gastronomical frivolity. Fitzgerald clearly understood the concept of conspicuous consumption because in addition to Gloria Patch, a majority of his protagonists display just such behavior: Jay Gatsby and Dick Diver clearly come to mind. In the short fiction, we have Anson Hunter and the Washington family, most notably.

Fitzgerald uses the gastronomy motif to symbolize Gloria's desire for control. This desire for gastronomic control underscores her desire for male attention and

privileged treatment. In the beginning of the novel, Gloria eschews hearty fare and extended dinners in favor of light foods and tea-time gossip. But by novel's end, her tastes are absorbed into Anthony's, and she craves comfort foods. Searles argues that as the novel progresses, Gloria's selections connote "shallowness and frivolity" (14), however, I believe that they symbolize her waning vitality and newfound appetite for the security of Anthony's foods. She who never made coffee now makes three meals a day, and frets over procuring the eggs, milk, bread, and bacon; Gloria becomes a carbon copy of the insecure Anthony, who craves an egg-nog and a walk to stave off the hardships of life.

## CHAPTER FOUR—Conclusion

### *Merits of the Food and Drink Motif*

Regardless of character attitudes toward food and drink in the novel, what I hope to have made clear is that Fitzgerald expertly used the motif of gastronomy to symbolize his characters' desires for indulgence, communion, and privilege. These prandial allusions compliment Fitzgerald's particular brand of aesthetic description, contribute to the literary merit of the novel, and arguably, satisfy a subliminal appetite on the part of his readers. Fitzgerald seemed to understand that the mention of food and drink in literature is more powerful than other representations of luxury because it engages multiple senses. Food is also a universal physical need; whereas some perceive dining as an opportunity for pleasure, everyone perceives procuring sustenance as a necessity for life. We *need* food and drink in addition to our wanting to taste them. This is an advantage over inedible representations of luxury because things like cars, clothes, furniture, and dwellings can only be experienced with three, possibly four, of the senses. But food and drink employ all five. Although she was referring to recipes, Atwood's musing on literary gastronomy could easily translate to the pleasure of literary gastronomy found in *The Beautiful and Damned*: "[I]t's fun to read about it, and to speculate...there's a certain sybaritic voyeurism involved, an indulgence by proxy" (51).

I believe that this motif also influences reader response in terms of character sympathy. In Anthony and Gloria, we are presented with flawed characters with human compulsions and idiosyncrasies. The characters are on a quest for the continuation of

pleasant episodes in life, and they actually appear to have the means to achieve it. These human desires and compulsions contribute to a more sympathetic consideration of the Patches—they may be immature, selfish, decadent, and miserable, but they are also utterly identifiable.

### *Concessions*

When evaluating literary characters, some scholars may find it superfluous to consider whether or not characters eat and drink. Many attend to “higher-order concerns” such as plot and theme, which can be read more universally. What difference does it make whether a character bites into a sandwich or a steak? If the cake is consumed at a wedding as opposed to a birthday party? In fact, the dining motif might easily be subordinated to the concerns that West highlights as some of the major themes in the novel: “the importance of vocation, the danger of idleness, the allurements of alcohol, and the enervating effect of money” (“Question of Vocation” 56); however, I believe that the motif of gastronomy contributes to an additional and equally important theme: the psychological dependence on social ritual, specifically, Anthony’s compulsion for dining as a means of finding solace and identity and Gloria’s utilitarian praxis as a means for seeking upward social mobility. To suggest that the intimacy of the Patch marriage deteriorates due to antipodal comestible transactions would be gross oversimplification and exaggeration of the significance of prandial references. But it seems to me that these ruminations certainly add depth to the themes delineated by West, and that they cause readers to develop a deeper concern for the characters and, as a result, a deeper appreciation for the novel.

Attention to gastronomy in the literature of F. Scott Fitzgerald provides a richer reading experience. Through it readers might better appreciate spoiled and frivolous characters that seem destined to make messes of their lives. Attention to the dining attitudes, rituals, and food choices connects readers with these characters because it draws upon the basic corporeal needs and behavioral compulsions that readers share with Anthony and Gloria.

*Tension as a Result of Different Gastronomical Approaches*

As I have attempted to demonstrate, Anthony and Gloria Patch adopt different attitudes toward dining: Anthony seeks out “pleasant episodes” in order to stave off inevitable deterioration, and Gloria dines from a more practical stance of social ritual. This gastronomical binary opposition aggravates their marriage to the point of deterioration, and in one pivotal scene, Anthony pits his will against Gloria’s and ignites the fuse that explodes their intimacy. Up until that point, Anthony was content dealing with Gloria’s finicky appetite and poor social etiquette, but once he finally carves out a vocation for himself, the pursuit of pleasant gastronomical episodes, he rejects passivity and defends his ritual because it alone can effectively comfort him.

With Eric Merriam, Anthony had been sitting over a decanter of Scotch all the hot summer afternoon, while Gloria and Constance Merriam swam and sunned themselves at the Beach Club...Later they had all four played with inconsequential sandwiches; then Gloria had risen, tapping Anthony’s knee with her parasol to get his attention...He felt with injured naïveté that Gloria should not have interrupted such innocent and harmless enjoyment. This whiskey had

both soothed and clarified the restless things in his mind... Was he always to retreat from *pleasant episodes* at a touch of her parasol or a flicker of her eye?... This was the occasion of all occasions, since for a whim she had deprived him of a pleasure. His determination solidified, approached momentarily a dull and sullen hate (*B & D* 196-8, emphasis mine).

Anthony effectively imposes his will over Gloria by laying hands on her; however, the forcefulness with which he does so renders his victory hollow, similar to his pitiful murmurs of triumph in the conclusion.

But readers should not assume that Anthony lashes out whenever Gloria deprives him of pleasures; on the contrary, he endures much before finally asserting himself. Moreover, the suggestion of his being able to share gastronomical pleasures with his wife cheers him as much as his Saturday night with Maury. In the “The Soul of Gloria” section of “The Radiant Hour,” Anthony gladly gets out of bed to prepare a snack for Gloria:

“Anthony, did I hear anybody say they were thirsty?”

Anthony laughed abruptly and with a sheepish and amused grin got out of bed.

“With just a *little* piece of ice in the water,” she added. “Do you suppose I could have that?”

Gloria used the adjective “little” whenever she asked a favor—it made the favor sound less arduous. But Anthony laughed again—whether she wanted a cake of ice or a marble in it, he must go down-stairs to the kitchen... Her voice

followed him through the hall: “And just a *little* cracker with just a *little* marmalade on it...”

“Oh, gosh!” sighed Anthony in rapturous slang, “she’s wonderful, that girl! She *has* it!” (183).

Admittedly, I take a sympathetic view toward Anthony Patch. While Anthony appears socially, psychologically, and vocationally stunted, he has at least aspired to a more selfless identity than Gloria; he wants to reach out to others, which seems to suggest the possibility that he can achieve meaningful relationships. Whereas in Gloria’s case, it seems that the capriciousness, social agenda, and selfishness with which she conducts herself render her immutable.

Similar to New York Times food writer Mimi Sheraton’s wish that two of her favorite literary characters “could jump the pages and get together” for a meal, I wish that Anthony Patch could have been coddled in his formative years and served lavish meals of Boeuf en Daube by the matronly Mrs. Ramsay of Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*. Here is a literary character capable of appreciating Anthony’s penchant for gastronomy, one who willingly indulges and respects the aestheticism, communion, and social ritual of dining. Perhaps if Anthony had been fortunate to have such a mother, we would be reading an entirely different ending to *The Beautiful and Damned*. Unfortunately however, as with Gilroy’s estimation of Swann and Proust’s narrator, gastronomy fails to effect a “communion of souls” (108) for Anthony and Gloria. This can be most clearly observed in the afore-mentioned pivotal scene. Anthony so desperately implores Gloria to stay and partake with him at the Merriams’; but in her refusal, as in Proust, what occurs “is instead a meeting of mutually impenetrable solitudes” (Gilroy 108).

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