of multitudinous details. Luminous are what he put in the the Cantos (Kenner 186). "Portrait d'Une Femme" is Pound's attempt to "ward off" any associations between his method and the methods of the scholar and Victorian dilettante.

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KEYWORDS

Cantos, collage, luminous detail, modernism, multitudinous detail, "Portrait d'Une Femme," Ezra Pound

WORKS CITED


Fitzgerald's THE GREAT GATSBY and BABYLON REVISITED

F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, "Mostly, we authors repeat ourselves. [...] W]e tell our two or three stories—each time in a new disguise—maybe ten times, maybe a hundred, as long as people will listen" ("One Hundred" 132). Whether Fitzgerald's generalization applies to most authors, even his strongest admirers (and I am one) would concede that it applies to him.

Usually, the pattern in Fitzgerald's fiction is for material to appear first in his short stories and later in his novels. As Matthew J. Bruccoli points out, Fitzgerald's stories sometimes "introduce or test themes, settings, and situations that are fully developed in the novels" (Preface xvii).

But in the case of "Babylon Revisited," a work many critics consider to be Fitzgerald's greatest short story (Baker 269; Davison 192; Higgins 121; Jett 5; Sylvester 180), the situation is somewhat more complicated. As is widely noted, the story fits the standard pattern by foreshadowing elements more fully developed in a later novel, Tender Is the Night (Kennedy 319; Sylvester 182–83), and even originally contained a passage later used in Tender (Sylvester 182–83). But not so widely noted is the fact that "Babylon Revisited" also echoes material from an earlier novel, Fitzgerald's masterpiece The Great Gatsby. Thus, teachers and students can benefit from examining the short
story not only as a great work in its own right, but also for the light it sheds on other works in the Fitzgerald canon.

The most obvious element *Gatsby* and “Babylon” share is a protagonist who focuses single-mindedly on winning back a female who was once his. In both works, the protagonist hopes that, by winning the female, he will recapture a happier, more innocent past and will somehow wipe out the intervening years when the female was not his. In *The Great Gatsby*, Gatsby’s goal is not simply to regain his former lover, Daisy Buchanan; it is to “obliterat[e] three years” by getting Daisy to tell her husband Tom that she never loved him. And although the narrator, Nick Carraway, reacts to this plan by warning Gatsby “You can’t repeat the past,” Gatsby replies, “Why of course you can!” (116)

In “Babylon Revisited,” Charlie Wales associates regaining custody of his daughter Honoria with regaining the uncomplicated virtues of life before he succumbed to the decadence of late-1920s Paris, a decadence that destroyed his marriage and eventually led to his wife’s death. In arguing for her custody to Honoria’s guardians, he repeatedly seeks to downplay his escapades from three years earlier and instead emphasizes his hard work in the years prior to that (626). And as he observes his daughter, “He thought he knew what to do for her. [...] he wanted to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again as the eternally valuable element” (619).

Both works portray money, when not honestly earned, as corrupting that past innocence. In *Gatsby*, Daisy is corrupt largely because she and her husband Tom were both born extremely wealthy and thus could afford to be “careless people” in their dealings with others (187). In “Babylon,” the decadent behavior of Charlie and other Americans in Paris during the late 1920s stems from the fact that the stock market boom allowed them to stop working and instead live off their stock dividends (626).

In fact, in both works the idea of accumulating money the “wrong” way is part of the reason the protagonist is unable to achieve his dreams. And in both, the protagonist faces a “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” situation regarding work and money. When Gatsby first won Daisy, he could not keep her largely because he was poor (137, 156); but when, years later, he tries to win her back as a rich man, he is ultimately undone largely because his shady means of making money and his *nouveau riche* ways invite Tom’s disdain and Daisy’s disapproval (113–14, 141). In “Babylon,” when Charlie tries to regain custody of his daughter, he faces not only the guardians’ disapproval for having quit work in the late 1920s and gone broke in the 1929 crash, but also their jealousy for his having worked so hard and so effectively after the crash that he has once again become wealthy (618–19, 626, 629).

Ultimately, the two protagonists are defeated in almost identical ways: on the verge of achieving their dreams, both see those dreams destroyed when signs of recent corruption come crashing in during a climactic confronta-
tion. Gatsby initially succeeds in regaining Daisy’s love, but in a confrontation with Daisy and Tom, he finds that despite the adulterous and corrupt nature of her marriage, she cannot “obliterate the past” by saying she never loved Tom (140–41). Moments later, Tom completes the destruction of Gatsby’s dream by revealing that he has gained information about Gatsby’s shady ways of making money (141–42). In “Babylon,” Charlie has succeeded to the point where he and the guardians are discussing when Honoria will be returned to him, when Charlie’s old friends Duncan and Lorraine arrive at the guardians’ home, drunk and uninvited, and cause a scene by trying to get Charlie to go out on the town with them (630–31). Although he treats them coldly, this reminder of his past misbehaviors temporarily destroys his bid to get his daughter back.

Given their similar plots and themes, it is not surprising that the two works also share certain image patterns, nor that the shared imagery dramatizes the protagonists’ thwarted longings to set up a home with the female and protect her. When Gatsby drops off Daisy at her house after the confrontation with Tom, he waits outside in the dark to make sure she is safe. Gatsby tells Nick, “She’s locked herself into her room and if he tries any brutality she’s going to turn the light out and on again” (152). The next day he tells Nick, “[A]bout four o’clock she came to the window and stood there a minute and then turned off the light” (154). This is echoed in “Babylon” when Charlie, returning Honoria to the guardians’ house after a father-daughter day together, realizes he should not go in and so tells her, “When you’re safe inside, just show yourself in that window.” He then “waited in the dark street until she appeared, all warm and glowing, in the window above” (624).

Both stories also contain similar images reinforcing the idea that the past is dead and cannot be revived. Whereas “Babylon” deals with Charlie’s struggle to regain his daughter Honoria, his greatest longing is to have back his late wife Helen, Honoria’s mother. At one point, he dreams that Helen is near but frustratingly inaccessible: “she was in a swing in a white dress, and swinging faster and faster all the time, so that at the end he could not hear clearly all that she said” (628). When he awakes, of course, she is gone. Similarly, as the confrontation scene in Gatsby winds down, Gatsby tries to talk to Daisy, who is wearing a white dress, but finds her “drawing further and further into herself,” leaving him with only the “dead dream [...] trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling [...] toward that lost voice across the room” (142). The same scene in “Babylon,” in which Charlie is losing Helen and is unable to hear her clearly as she swings faster and faster may also echo the scene in which Gatsby revisits the city where he and Daisy had been lovers: “He stretched out his hand desperately [...] 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” (160–61).

Given the failure of both Gatsby and Charlie in their quests, one must assume that Fitzgerald recognized the folly of trying to recapture the past.
Yet on an unconscious level, he evidently was driven toward a similar quest. Six years after the publication of what is generally considered his greatest novel, he returned to many of the same ideas and images in what is generally considered his greatest short story. By indulging his need to retell his story in a new disguise, Fitzgerald beat his boat against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

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KEYWORDS
"Babylon Revisited," corruption, F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, recapturing the past, repetition, wealth

WORKS CITED

The Nietzschean Madman in Beckett’s ENDGAME

Halfway through Samuel Beckett’s *Endgame*, Hamm remembers visiting a “madman.” The remembered visit is anomalous—it is unlike Hamm to have had a friend or to have visited anyone. The unusualness calls attention to the memory. So does its strategic placement. The memory occurs on