Frances Kerr

Feeling "Half Feminine": Modernism and the Politics of Emotion in *The Great Gatsby*

Gatsby is a "clown," wrote H. L. Mencken, with "the simple sentimentality of a somewhat sclerotic fat woman."[1] Fleshy, foolish, and gendered female, Mencken's fat clown draws together into one startling image the rhetorical features and barely camouflaged paranoia about being feminine that recur in early modernist discussions of art and the creative process.[2] This fear and these features appear in reviews of Fitzgerald's first two novels and are also present deep in the narrative structure of *The Great Gatsby* and in the psychology of its narrator, Nick Carraway. Fitzgerald's third novel joined an ongoing conversation.

In 1921 Fitzgerald himself referred to lazily crafted writing as "that slatternly thing, a written-down mental excretion"[3]—a near-image resembling Mencken's "sclerotic fat woman." Ezra Pound described the true poetic act as metaphorical sex in which the male poet revitalizes a lethargic feminine culture. Writing good poetry was, he said, like "driving any new idea into the great passive vulva of [literary] London."[4] Not infrequently, the modernist avant-garde chose female images of disease, fat, ignorance, laziness, or sentimentality to signify a lack of either emotional or intellectual vigor. Edna St. Vincent Millay is reported to have feminized Fitzgerald in this vein, referring to him as "an ignorant old woman" whose talent was "like a jewel" he was too "stupid" to know what to do with.[5] Reviewing *This Side of Paradise*, Edmund Wilson wrote, "Like a woman, [Fitzgerald] is not much given to abstract or impersonal thought." In fact, Wilson claimed, "when [Fitzgerald] wrote the book, [he] was drunk with Compton Mackenzie, . . . [who has] the capacity for pretty writing . . . [but] lacks both the

American Literature, Volume 68, Number 2, June 1996. CCC 0002-9831/96/$1.50.

intellectual force and the emotional imagination to . . . [manage] the material which he *secretes* in such enormous abundance [my emphasis]."[6] Is Fitzgerald's "slatternly excretion" an echo of Wilson's early complaints?

Over his lifetime, Fitzgerald made a number of statements to acquaintances that mirror the distinction often drawn by the modernist avant-garde between the intellectual and emotional vigor of true manhood and feminine debility.[7] In these statements, Fitzgerald usually appears to identify with men in a contempt for feminine weakness. In 1925 he wrote Marya Mannes that "women, and even intelligent women, haven't generally cared much for [*The Great Gatsby*]. They do not like women to be presented as *emotionally* passive—as a matter of fact I think most women are."[8] In 1935 Fitzgerald told his secretary Laura Guthrie, "Women are so weak, really—emotionally unstable—and their nerves, when strained, break."[9] According to his friend Andrew Turnbull, Fitzgerald was fond of noting that "this is a man's world. All wise women conform to the man's lead."[10] What are we to make, then, of another remark Fitzgerald made to Laura Guthrie: "I don't know what it is in me or that comes to me when I start to write. I am half feminine—at least my mind is"?[11]

It was in the 1970s that readers first began to address seriously the themes of gender and sexuality in *The Great Gatsby*; a few critics have pointed out the novel's bizarre homoerotic leitmotif.[12] While many readers now acknowledge some sort of conjunction of gender, sexuality, and homoeroticism in *The Great Gatsby*, we have yet to explore these issues in a context larger than Fitzgerald's own psychology or the textual world of *The Great Gatsby*. Reading Fitzgerald's novel as part of a modernist dialogue on the gender of emotion in art not only situates its gender and sexuality motifs historically but also contributes to our understanding of Fitzgerald's psychology while providing a new reading of the novel.

Completed early in 1925, *The Great Gatsby* was shaped partially by Fitzgerald's exposure to modernists like Joyce and Eliot and also by the reviews of his first two novels. For the most part, reviewers praised *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned* for their vivid language and realistic detail, as well as for the author's modern sensibility. A few reviewers, however, voiced concern about what they considered Fitzgerald's intellectual fakery, emotional profusion, and loosely managed form.[13] Burton Rascoe, for example, described *The Beautiful and*

Damned as "blubberingly sentimental" and "banal and commonplace." His speculative explanation for these shortcomings was Fitzgerald's "refusal to subject his spontaneous outbursts to the refining process of self-criticism and to the clarification of a plan."[14] "My one hope," Fitzgerald wrote Max Perkins in 1921, "is to be endorsed by the intellectually élite and thus be *forced* onto people as Conrad has."[15] In 1924 Fitzgerald's "intellectually élite" consisted of Edmund Wilson, H. L. Mencken, and the modernist innovators these men praised, especially Conrad, Eliot, and Joyce.[16] Aspiring to keep artistic company with these men, Fitzgerald began to modify the stylistic habits that had elicited criticism like Burton Rascoe's—as well as three parodies. In his third novel he wanted to achieve a cleaner, harder style and to concentrate on the importance of form. He envisioned the new novel as a redress of the excesses in his previous fiction—a move forward. He promised Max Perkins that his next novel would be "a consciously artistic achievement & must depend on that as the 1st books did not." He explained that he had "an enormous power in me now" and promised that the new novel would not be "trashy imaginings" or "three books" in one like *This Side of Paradise*.[17] When *The Great Gatsby* was finished, he told Charles C. Baldwin that it had been "an attempt at form."[18]

It was with Mencken and Wilson that Fitzgerald had the closest professional ties at this time. Both were influential spokesmen for a literature that broke with nineteenth-century traditions. Respecting the toughness that Mencken demanded from a modern artist, Fitzgerald would have encountered the gendered rhetoric that Mencken and others sometimes used to express that expectation. In a review of Ezra Pound's *Provença*, for example, Mencken took delight in summarizing Pound's estimation of the effeminate poetry scene: "Mr. Pound's complaint" is that "nine tenths of our living makers and singers it would seem are women, and fully two-thirds of these women are ladies. The result is a boudoir tinkle in the tumult of the lyre."[19] Besides the boudoir, Pound used the kitchen and the nursery as metaphorical sites for the feminization of literature. He complained to Harriet Monroe about an unnamed woman's translation of Catullus, calling it a "bakeshop-decoration": "This female['s translation]," he sneered, is "not much Catullus and a lot of muck added"—"pink blue baby ribbon" and "wedding-cake cupids."[20]

Drawing a similar distinction between feminine and masculine sensibilities and agendas, James Joyce reportedly announced that *The Waste*

Land was a victory over well-bred women's sentimentality: poetry, he said, would never be for the ladies again.[21]

On occasion, Fitzgerald's rhetoric employs metaphors and gender binaries like those found in avant-garde statements about art and the creative process. Ironically, Fitzgerald used the same fatness metaphor Mencken later applied to Gatsby when he wrote Max Perkins in 1921 that he was "sick of the flabby semi-intellectual softness in which I flounder with my generation." He went on to confess, "I'm having a hell of a time because I've loafed for 5 months and I want to get to work." He chose an image of vigorous masculinity—the opposite of domestic inertia—to describe the creative state he sought: "If it wasn't for Zelda I think I'd disappear out of sight for three years. Ship as a sailor or something and get hard."[22] A "hardness of edge" was the quality that Ezra Pound insisted upon for the new poetry[23] if modern writers were to overcome the "perpetual mother's meeting" in the "Eunited Eunuchated States of America."[24] Pound wrote Harriet Monroe that she should have "one faint trace of confidence in the American poet's ability to hit the trail."[25] "Ship as a sailor" draws from the same image pool.

Like Fitzgerald, Pound used the term "flabby" to suggest his generation's intellectual inertia, warning that unless literature could become "austere, direct, free from emotional slither," and " 'nearer the bone' "[26] people would continue to "regard [it] as something vastly more flabby . . . and indefinite than, let us say, mathematics."[27] The modernists' fear of being too lazy, leisured, or domestic for the labor of real creation, of being too emotionally self-expressive ("flabby") in their thinking and writing, and of being popular among those that Fitzgerald himself considered the "semi-intellectual masses"—these fears were often expressed as the fear of being feminine. In the terms of modernist discourse, Mencken's description of Gatsby as a fat clownwoman establishes in one condensed image the side of this gendered dichotomy to which Fitzgerald's third novel might belong.

Fitzgerald, of course, had wanted *The Great Gatsby* to be a casting off of emotional excess and an assertion of full artistic control. His most direct connection to the modernist rhetoric emphasizing such discipline was Edmund Wilson, his friend and literary colleague since their Princeton days. All his life, Fitzgerald considered Wilson his intellectual superior; Wilson, in turn, assumed early and maintained to the end the role of tutor. Milton A. Cohen's analysis of their life-long

relationship demonstrates that although Wilson drew Fitzgerald into the modernist circle and encouraged and often favorably evaluated Fitzgerald's work, his habit was to praise "specific qualities . . . while lacerating the work's intellectual rigor or aesthetic design."[28] I would add that, given the gender binaries of modernist aesthetics, Wilson's evaluations delivered an implicit message about the precariousness of Fitzgerald's artistic masculinity.

In 1919 Wilson entreated Fitzgerald to "Clear your mind of cant! brace up your artistic conscience, which was always the weakest part of your talent! . . . Banish whatever sentimentalities may still cling about you from college!"[29] In a long analysis of *This Side of Paradise*, Wilson warned him bluntly about the sin of personal emotion and identified him as one who particularly faced its temptations: "I really think you should cultivate detachment," he urged. "It would all be better if you would tighten up your artistic conscience and pay a little more attention to form. . . . I believe you might become a very popular trashy novelist without much difficulty."[30] Wilson compares *This Side of Paradise* to *The Young Visiters* [*sic*]—"a novel," Cohen notes, "allegedly written by a preadolescent English girl."[31]

Fitzgerald's goals for his third novel, then, took shape in the context of a discourse in which ideas about the appropriate kind and degree of emotion in art were inflected with concerns about manly detachment, discipline, and craftsmanship. Avant-garde imagery ranging from the lightly mocking to the caustic and offensive was sometimes used to cast sentimentality, self-indulgent personal expression, and intellectual posturing as feminine. Because some of Fitzgerald's reviewers had identified these characteristics in his first two novels, he may have felt, as he immersed himself in the work that was to refine away those excesses, that his artistic masculinity was in question. Mencken's caricature of Gatsby as a fat clown-woman gives concrete form, after the fact, to what Fitzgerald might have been conditioned to suspect about himself by 1924. Gatsby is not only a clown—amusement for the masses—says Mencken; *he is a man who seems like a woman.*

Asserting masculinity but confessing femininity is a thread that runs through several of Fitzgerald's private declarations, as noted earlier. That fragmentary pattern, however, becomes the narrative frame for *The Great Gatsby*, a novel preoccupied with the gender of emotion and emotional revelation in "a man's world." Nick Carraway publicly accepts but privately suffers under the elaborate gender politics that

set the terms for men's social exchanges in this novel. He feels "half feminine."

Nick is the well-educated son of a now "prominent" and "well-to-do" midwestern family that made its money in wholesale hardware while fostering the myth of their descent from the Dukes of Buccleuch.[32] He is, consequently, a mildly alienated observer of pretension in other people. Bored by the emotional routine of his family's life (all his aunts and uncles "talked . . . over" his decision to learn the bond business "as if they were choosing a prep-school for me" [7]), Nick leaves for the East, his prudently benevolent father having agreed to support him for one year. He departs with a sense of moral principle and personal discipline instilled by his upbringing, and a tolerantly skeptical distance from his family's social pretension and clannish devotion. Nick is thoroughly upper middle class—economically, socially, intellectually, psychologically—but, like other members of his family, he thinks of himself as somewhat and somehow beyond the confines of his social rank. His class ambivalence is gender ambivalence too.

Nick Carraway opens his narrative with a tribute to his disciplined and disciplining father, who, in the role of patriarch and proprietor of the family's destiny, has cautioned his son over the years to avoid impulsiveness. "We've always been unusually communicative," explains Nick, "in a reserved way" (5). "Reserv[ing] all judgment," being reserved, drawing upon reserves of understood but never stated emotion—these are the characteristics of manhood Nick has learned from the father with whom he shares, he implies, a rare bond. Like his father, Nick projects an upper-middle-class masculinity, taking pride in his patient objectivity, moral discipline, and emotional reserve. At the same time, he shelters what he considers dangerous desires in a secret interior, walled off from social interactions but nonetheless conditioned by them. Nick's public persona and private feelings are split into the same binary I have identified in modernist rhetoric: masculinity is absolute control over emotional flab ("a hardness of edge"); femininity is emotional indulgence or its opposite—enervation. Nick's fear of being perceived as feminine and the secret knowledge that he *is* feminine create the troubling fissures in his personality that we have traditionally described as either moral lapses or narrative unreliability.[33] Nick's aberrations as a narrator can be understood as a function of the relations among men this novel describes. Nick acts like a man, but—sometimes—feels like a woman.

What is at issue for Nick is both sexuality and gender identity. In this "man's world," Nick carefully guards but secretly indulges his "feminine" tendencies, not only in his "reserved" relationship with his father but also in his encounters with unreservedly boorish, aggressive men like Tom Buchanan. Nick practices the same double maneuver when managing his dangerous emotional and erotic attractions to men—to Mr. McKee and Gatsby. In its gender and sexual politics, therefore, *The Great Gatsby* is as radical as it is conservative, because the conforming and dissenting dimensions of Nick Carraway's masculinity never converge into a unified consciousness. Ostensibly, Nick is the mildly deviating but dutiful replica of his reserved, respectable, rational, middle-class father; at the same time, however, he fancifully imagines escaping to a different kind of masculinity altogether, one that can accommodate his "feminine" emotional excesses and his occasional, casual attraction to men. Nick's psychology and the danger that defines men's social relationships in *The Great Gatsby* may reflect the intensity and ambivalence of Fitzgerald's response to the gender politics implicit in avant-garde modernist aesthetics. Ideologically, *The Great Gatsby* undermines as much as it endorses the notion that certain kinds or amounts of personal emotion in a work of art, or in a man, are feminine.

■ ■ ■

"I am full of interior rules," Nick admits to himself, "that act as brakes on my desires" (63–64). These rules are his father's instructions for a moral life, which Nick has internalized. Nick has trouble embracing these instructions completely, however. He confesses that, at night, after studying financial topics in the library for "a conscientious hour," he likes "to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter their lives, and *no one would ever know or disapprove*" (61, my emphasis). The "no one" is his father, the "brakes." With uncharacteristic candor, Nick goes on to acknowledge "a haunting loneliness sometimes" and "a sinking in my heart" at the sight of "[f]orms leaned together in the taxis" and the sense of their "gayety . . . and intimate excitement" (62)—a life far removed from the one that his middle-class friends and relatives envision for him back home with the girl they would like him to marry (24). Nick's professed devotion to his father's morality and emotional discipline hides both a melancholy loneliness and a

secret desire to violate his father's expectations by pursuing wild and romantic women. Nick's public reserve hides his private desires.

Complicating Nick's romantic fantasies about carefree women are the facts of his narrative. In spite of his awkward romances with women and a fascination with Daisy's ethereal sexuality, Nick's strongest emotional bonds are with men. Myrtle Wilson's party in Tom Buchanan's apartment (chapter 2) is a carnival of gender stereotypes against which Nick's own gender confusion and the ambiguity of his erotic desires first appear in bold relief as he contemplates the plight of the sentimental photographer Mr. McKee. This is a chapter about sex, gender, and art in which Fitzgerald presents Menckenesque gender stereotypes at every turn, only to undermine them with a bizarre homoerotic rebuttal. Myrtle Wilson, Tom Buchanan, and the comic-pathetic photographer are not only stereotypes set in motion in a fictional scene but ideological nodes in a modernist subtext on art.

In Tom's apartment, Myrtle has assembled a circle of sentimental but overbearing women who become the audience for the photographer Mr. McKee, a "pale feminine man" (34) who wanders futilely among them, attempting to discuss his work. His conversational overtures are drowned out by the cacophony of women's banal chatter, gossip, and "artificial laughter" (40). Even the oversized "tapestried furniture" is covered with "ladies swinging in the Gardens of Versailles." Copies of *Town Tattle*, "small scandal magazines of Broadway," and popular bestsellers like *Simon Called Peter* litter the table (33). Vacuous women, who seem to be everywhere, attempt "adorable" (35), "rakish," and "proprietary" (34) poses. To Nick, the room is a nightmare of female pretension. Mrs. McKee, he observes, is "shrill, languid, handsome and horrible" (34). Myrtle assumes an "impressive hauteur" as her "high, mincing shout" (35) mingles with "the incessant clicking" of her sister Catherine's "pottery bracelets" (34). Myrtle becomes "more violently affected moment by moment," and as she "expand[s] the room [grows] smaller around her" (35). Every detail in this scene is made to suggest that women's collective sentimentality, portrayed as the outcome of narcissism and the utter lack of taste and discrimination, is an anti-intellectual Force, huge and engulfing. Indeed, McKee's "over-enlarged" photograph of Myrtle's mother (33) "hover[s] like an ectoplasm on the wall" (34). At first Nick mistakes its fleshy image for a "hen sitting on a blurred rock," but then in mock enlightenment he observes not a literal hen but the figurative equivalent:

"a bonnet and the countenance of a stout old lady beam[ing] down into the room" (33)—a cheery version of Mencken's "fat woman." The only item missing from her portrait is Pound's "pink blue baby ribbon."

One of the fears expressed by Pound, Hemingway, Eliot, Mencken, Wilson, and others was that popular culture, dominated by women, was fast becoming the major form of artistic expression in the modern world, appropriating the audience and diminishing the market for serious art. Fitzgerald himself attributed the disappointing sales figures for *Gatsby*, a work that critics praised, to the fact that the book contained "no important woman character, and women control the fiction market at present."[34] Nick Carraway's descriptions in chapter 2 bear what Andreas Huyssen calls the mark of the modernist aesthetic in their "positioning of woman as avid consumer of pulp," incapable of appreciating higher forms of art.[35] "The constant fear of the modernist artist," asserts Huyssen, is that he will be "devoured by mass culture," which he genders feminine and considers "inauthentic."[36] The party scene in Tom's apartment is Fitzgerald's expression of the fear that Huyssen and other more recent historians have attributed to many major male modernist writers.[37]

Because the Prufrockian Mr. McKee lacks emotional strength and vitality, he is overwhelmed by his female audience. Nick labels Mr. McKee "feminine" because the photographer is silenced by a lower-class version of the genteel "ladies societies" Pound says oversee literature in America,[38] and because he is one of Pound's "lovely lot who want to express their own personalities"[39]—a "castrated hobby horse."[40] In T. S. Eliot's terms, McKee is too emotionally undisciplined as an artist to recognize what Eliot calls "significant emotion": "But very few know when there is an expression of *significant* emotion, emotion which has its life in the poem and not in the history of the poet. The emotion of art is impersonal."[41]

Fitzgerald's photographer suffers from what Nick calls that "*flabby* impressionability which is dignified under the name of the 'creative temperament'" (6, my emphasis). Mr. McKee is the cartoon version of the "trashy" artist Wilson warned Fitzgerald he was in danger of becoming. Absurd and pathetic, McKee is not really an artist—and not fully a man. To be feminine in *The Great Gatsby* is to be either emotionally weak, like Pound's caricatures of the debilitated artist in the "Eunited Eunuchated States of America," or lavishly sentimental and tasteless, like Myrtle and the women at her party. Aesthetically,

to be feminine is to express personality and personal emotion rather than to sacrifice the self to the "significant" emotion of serious art. Until Tom Buchanan breaks Myrtle's nose, Fitzgerald appears to be using McKee to give fictional shape to modernist ideas of excellence. But immediately after Tom's violence, the tone of the chapter shifts abruptly as McKee and Nick leave the apartment together.

Until their departure, Nick has ridiculed McKee's emotionalism with a kind of Poundian mockery, appearing to view this "castrated hobby horse" as a comic spectacle. All of Nick's initial descriptions of McKee are delivered with sardonic amusement; however, when Nick is alone with McKee, his voice becomes heavy with melancholy, sympathy, and desire. In fact, after Nick and McKee leave the party, an erotically charged scene takes place in which Nick's identification with and attraction to the "feminine" artist complicate his earlier humor. As the two men descend in the elevator, their conversation suggests homosexual arousal, blocked by the elevator boy who becomes the policeman of forbidden desires between men:

> "Come to lunch some day," [McKee] suggested, as we groaned down in the elevator. . . .
>
> "Keep your hands off the lever," snapped the elevator boy.
>
> "I beg your pardon," said Mr. McKee with dignity. "I didn't know I was touching it.
>
> "All right," I agreed, "I'll be glad to."
>
> . . . I was standing beside his bed and he was sitting up between the sheets, clad in his underwear, with a great portfolio in his hands. (42)

In the sexual valence of the elevator scene, McKee is attempting to arouse Nick, but he withdraws his advances when the elevator boy interferes. Nick's acceptance of a lunch date becomes also the acceptance of McKee's advances, delivered in the code of social propriety. The fact that they are "groaning down" in the elevator suggests deflation as either the frustrating nature of this sort of sexual situation for Nick or some kind of orgasmic climax. An ellipsis immediately follows this exchange, and the scene changes suddenly, and strangely, to McKee's bedroom, where McKee is sitting up in bed in his underwear showing Nick his portfolio of photographs, one of which is called "Loneliness."

Among the photographs that the two men look over together—all of which are inspired by McKee's personal sentiments rather than

Eliot's "impersonal" emotion—is "Beauty and the Beast," whose unoriginal title borrows the fairy tale theme of a misunderstood man's social exile. The title also suggests Keats's romantic idealism—with its gulf between reality and ideal beauty—but McKee's sentimentality deflates Keats's high seriousness and renders it silly. The photograph "Brook'n Bridge" sounds like "broken bridge," again suggesting loneliness. One of Nick's own fears, of course, will become apparent later in the narrative: the fear of isolation he confronts on his thirtieth birthday, with its "promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know" (143). McKee is everything that Nick's father and Fitzgerald's "intellectually élite" would consider an ineffectual man. Nick, however, is drawn to McKee, although the nature of the attraction is ambiguous. Is he sexually aroused, is he distantly sympathetic, or does he identify deeply with McKee's ineffectual sentimentality? Why does he follow him home to his bedroom?

Nick does not fully account for the time he spends at McKee's bedside contemplating male loneliness in photographs saturated with what, in high modernist aesthetics, is "insignificant" emotion. It is "some time toward midnight" (41) when Nick and McKee leave Myrtle's party; after the interlude in McKee's apartment has ended, Nick is "lying half asleep in the cold lower level of the Pennsylvania Station, . . . waiting for the four o'clock train" (42). There is a time span of about three hours for which Nick gives no details. Is the reader to assume that a homosexual encounter transpired? A homosexual proposition was made in the elevator and refused in the bedroom? An emotional bond was confirmed? A mere intellectual curiosity was satisfied?

"Homoerotic fantasy, when it occurs in a heterosexual man," says Richard A. Isay, "is a defense against heterosexuality, which is perceived as threatening because of the anxiety associated with conventional masculine strivings." Men who establish their manhood among men by excelling at sports, making money, and enjoying the attentions of women are sometimes perceived by other men as "competitive and [threateningly] assertive."[42] When Nick describes his first encounter with Tom Buchanan early in the narrative, it is the former football player's imposing masculinity that commands his attention. "It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough" to "[bring] down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest," Nick muses (10). He also remembers that Tom was "one of the most powerful ends

that ever played football at New Haven" (10). Nick describes Tom's physical power with fascination: "he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat" (11). By the time Nick leaves Myrtle's party, Tom Buchanan's conventional masculinity has been established as residing in his financial power, his extramarital affairs, his accomplishments in sports, and his physical violence toward Myrtle. It is immediately after Tom uses "the enormous power of that body" (11) to break Myrtle's nose that McKee and Nick depart together, as if fleeing Tom and his masculinity, and perhaps the heterosexual drama itself.

What is important here is not whether Nick feels homosexual desire for Mr. McKee but Nick's responses to both McKee and Tom, responses which create the ambiguity of the whole McKee episode. Rather than an absolute ideological statement about "feminine" emotion in art or a clear revelation of Nick's sexuality or gender identity, the chapter registers Fitzgerald's ambivalence toward the high modernist taboo on sentimentality and personal expression and perhaps also anxiety about the nature of his own artistic talent. The chapter's strange gender transgressions suggest Fitzgerald's discomfort with strict divisions between masculine and feminine behavior and personality. Homosexual panic, aesthetic and personal—not explicit homosexual desire—is the fragmented subtext of chapter 2.

According to Eve Sedgwick, homosexual panic takes many forms. The term encompasses not only a homosexual man's fear of disclosure but also a heterosexual man's anxiety about the "femininity" of his personal attributes and/or an incipient awareness of his emotional or erotic attractions to other men. Homosexual panic is a hyperawareness of the dangerous relations among men when strict gender binaries have the potential to define as masculine or feminine a man's actions and interactions with other men. Among the possible definitions of the term "closet" is the idea of performance: the closet is a man's collective words and actions that confirm his social alliance with heterosexual men while effectively hiding from public view—and sometimes from his own full consciousness—his potential femininity or his potential romantic or erotic attraction to other men.[43] The terms "closet" and "homosexual panic" illuminate, organize, and help us to make sense of Nick's inconsistent and at times bizarre behavior in an otherwise ordered narrative.

Fitzgerald worried that other men might consider him a "fairy." Angus P. Collins notes that in Fitzgerald's early drafts of *Tender is the Night*, there is an "air of acutely horrified fascination" with the varieties of homosexuality he dramatizes in the bar scene that far exceeds the "dramatic requirements of the situation." In fact, argues Collins, "the scene contains an element of latent identification which seriously belies its own intentions."[44] Fitzgerald was not homosexual, but he feared he might be perceived as homosexual by other men.[45] Looking back on the night he first met Fitzgerald, Hemingway described their encounter in terms that verify Fitzgerald's perception that heterosexual men in his circle sometimes scrutinized each other for signs of hidden homosexuality. In his mocking description of Fitzgerald, Hemingway claimed that he felt an uneasiness about Fitzgerald's masculinity and possibly his sexual orientation: Fitzgerald's "delicate long-lipped Irish mouth . . . , on a girl, would have been the mouth of a beauty. . . . The mouth worried you until you knew him and then it worried you more."[46] In a 1929 letter to Hemingway, Fitzgerald feminized his description of himself as a writer of sentimental popular fiction: "the *Post* now pays the old whore $4,000 a screw."[47]

Both Hemingway and Fitzgerald were fascinated by and publicly critical of male homosexuals. Both men used the term "fairy" with disgust to signify not only a man's lack of emotional vitality but an artist's lack of discipline and character. Isay observes that this sort of "homophobia is prevalent in groups in which men are selected to participate because of their 'masculine' qualities and where individuals must deny, repress, or suppress their feminine attributes in order to maintain the public and/or private image of the group and in order to continue to belong."[48] As I have suggested, masculinity in modernist rhetoric was associated with discipline, craftsmanship, and vigor; "fairies," "castrated hobby horses," and "ladies" were labels used to identify inferior writers. The McKee episode, with its ambiguous blend of conventional homophobia, homoerotic attraction, and homosocial identification and affection dramatizes Nick's (and perhaps Fitzgerald's) ambivalence about the direct expression of personal feelings in art as well as among men.

The McKee exchange, moreover, is a generative point in the developing plot: it foreshadows Nick's relationship to Gatsby. McKee is the first of two imaginative, defeated, and "feminine" men who attract Nick. Nick's romantic odyssey takes him from an unemotional obli-

gation to the Midwest girlfriend, to the feminine Mr. McKee, to the masculine sportswoman Jordan Baker, and finally to Gatsby, who, in the novel's most emotionally brutal scene, is publicly feminized by Tom Buchanan. Because of *Gatsby*'s compressed, lyrical descriptions, it is easy to overlook the few details that reveal Nick's psychology as he shifts his attention from the Midwest girlfriend to Jordan Baker and then to Gatsby. Both shifts depend on the same psychological maneuver as Nick justifies his pursuit of what he considers illicit desires.

Nick's attraction to Jordan begins while he is still writing dutiful weekly letters to the young woman at home whom all his relatives expect him to marry. In the midst of fulfilling this obligation, Nick succumbs to more exciting desires and a loss of emotional control: "*all* I could think of was how when that certain girl [Jordan] played tennis, a faint mustache of perspiration appeared on her upper lip" (64, emphasis mine). What Nick does publicly (writes responsible letters to his girlfriend) does not match what he feels privately (an obsessive attraction to Jordan's mustache of sweat). In this synecdochical reference to his consuming passion for a transitory masculine feature of Jordan—not an attraction to the *person*, we note—he is speaking metaphorically, he is obsessive, and he has masculinized her. All three of these habits of mind reappear when his obsession with Jordan shifts abruptly to preoccupation with Gatsby.

It is Jordan's "hard, jaunty body" (63) that initially attracts Nick, along with her "masculine" personal qualities—her self-assurance and careful control over her emotions. No other woman in the novel has such control. Daisy openly reveals her bitterness and anger to Nick, making him scornful and uncomfortable, while Myrtle exudes sentimental foolishness. Although Jordan's masculine appearance and emotional reserve initially appeal to Nick, he is never interested in intimacy. Their exchanges are wooden throughout, marked by Nick's reserve and hesitation and what he suggests is Jordan's arrogant indifference. The lifeless quality of their relationship is most pronounced in the scene of their kiss, which he describes in a stiff, rational voice (85), not the voice of his "haunting loneliness" (62). When Nick finally terminates the relationship, his remarks lead the reader to believe that it is Jordan's indifference, shallowness, and dishonesty that prompt his move. The psychological subtext of *Gatsby*, however, suggests a motivation altogether different. Nick Carraway identifies with and feels most romantically drawn not to "masculine" women but to "feminine" men.

Nick's break with Jordan comes near the end of the novel, as Tom, Daisy, Jordan, and Nick gather at the Buchanans' house after the shock of Myrtle's sudden death. Jordan puts her hand on his arm and says, "Won't you come in, Nick?" to which he replies, "No, thanks" (149). Nick goes on to explain to the reader, not to Jordan, "I was feeling a little sick and I wanted to be alone. . . . I'd had enough of all of them for one day." He adds, "She must have seen something of this in my expression for she turned abruptly away and ran up the porch steps into the house" (150). Most readers have assumed that Nick's estimate of Jordan is accurate, that she is indeed cold, arrogant, and careless. Detached from Nick's interpretation, Jordan's overture tentatively expresses a need for emotional contact and offers Nick the chance to confirm his own need. Her sudden flight is significantly different from her earlier pose of self-contained indifference; it is a spontaneous emotional reaction that reveals her sudden vulnerability. The day's shocking events have apparently broken through her protective pose. Nick, however, is not interested in her emotional change—or in a woman's vulnerability. What Nick reveals at this point is his attraction to vulnerable men.

Immediately after Jordan enters the house, Nick confesses, "I must have felt pretty weird by that time because *I could think of nothing* except the luminosity of [Gatsby's] pink suit under the moon" (150, my emphasis). Immediately after Myrtle's death, the rest of the characters turn to each other: Tom and Daisy reunite, and Jordan reaches out to Nick. Nick, however, is drawn to Gatsby's pink *suit*, just as he was drawn to Jordan's "*mustache of sweat.*"

Several things become apparent here, all configured succinctly in the image of the suit of the now socially exiled Gatsby. Nick follows the same fetishistic pattern in disentangling himself from Jordan as he did when ridding himself of the midwest sweetheart. Here, Nick claims to reject Jordan because her upper-class "carelessness" offends his moral principles, although the more immediate and convincing reason seems to be a fascination with Gatsby's pink clothes. If what Nick was drawn to in Jordan was masculinity in a woman, what he is drawn to in Gatsby is femininity in a man. This attraction to Gatsby follows Nick's second flight from Tom Buchanan's brutality, and it is the second alliance he has formed with a sensitive, alienated, and defeated man. Nick's obsessive interest in Gatsby's suit comes just after Tom's second major display of aggression, when he forces Daisy to leave Gatsby by humiliating them both in a room at the Plaza Hotel. In

that spectacular scene, Tom turns Gatsby into the social equivalent of a woman.

Tom's material wealth and physical virility together form the apex of a class-gender hierarchy. In the old American aristocracy of the East, fictionalized by Edith Wharton, the defining component of upper-class manhood was gentility—taste, manners, culture—as much as inherited wealth. As Charles Weir Jr. aptly notes, "There are no old families in Fitzgerald."[49] Tom Buchanan represents the new American upper class, whose members value money and material possessions, not the development of character and taste. The kind of interior riches cultivated by the old aristocracy had acquired effete, effeminate connotations in the new century. Tom's "fractiousness" and "cruel body" (11), along with his money, women, and "gonnegtion[s]," are what constitute his powerful masculinity. He is all physical and material force; he appears to have no emotional interior, and he demonstrates, repeatedly, that he has no manners, taste, or intelligence.

Men's competition in the new upper class is governed by a crucial social binary: the secret and the public. A powerful man maintains his social position by denying his own emotional interior while penetrating the emotional secrets of other men. To lose control of one's woman or one's inner emotions in the presence of others is to risk losing one's masculinity.[50] In his confrontation with Tom Buchanan, Gatsby loses control of both.

Tom's inquisition of Daisy and Gatsby at the Plaza in front of Nick and Jordan is verbal violence aimed at humiliation. Its method is to strip away the public identities of those who threaten him and reveal their secret vulnerability. Tom approaches Gatsby and Daisy in the same manner—as objects for his use, valuable for what they can be manipulated to suggest about Tom himself. When he questions Daisy about "Kapiolani," he makes public the essence if not the details of a private sexual experience shared during their marriage. Since Daisy's identity has always depended on her sexual appeal to men, which Tom's numerous affairs have called into question, he moves here to assure her of her position as an enchantress of men while confirming his exclusive access to her. When Tom boasts to Gatsby, "Why,—there're things between Daisy and me that you'll never know, things that neither of us can forget (140)," he confirms his exclusive knowledge of both his own and Daisy's secrets.

Tom also has secret information about Gatsby. Through his network

of powerful men Tom has learned that Gatsby is a bootlegger and a gambler, that his fortune was made illegally in the underworld (141). Gatsby, Tom reveals, has never been "above the hot struggles of the poor" (157), like Tom and his set, but is driven by desire. To be a feminine man in *The Great Gatsby* is to nurse, intensely, an emotional interior, as does Mr. McKee. When Tom pronounces Gatsby "Mr. Nobody From Nowhere," he ridicules Gatsby's longing, his secret emotional life (137). When Tom renames him, Gatsby's male title of address is—Nothing. His manhood is negated.

Gatsby's splendid dreams, like Daisy's tentative attempt to create a new and independent self, are no match for the reality of Tom's aggression. To be a feminine man in *The Great Gatsby* is to have an emotional interior always threatened with exposure and ridicule in the competition among men that brings material success and social position. It is to dream instead of to have; it is to rely on the imagination instead of the material world. If McKee is by nature a "pale feminine" artist, Gatsby is the man of imagination feminized against his will. To be feminized is, in Prufrock's words, to find oneself "fix[ed] . . . in a formulated phrase" by those who have social power. In the terms of modernist aesthetics, it is to be pronounced "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere"—a "trashy novelist" whose romantic hero is a "sclerotic fat woman."

Tom's feminization of Gatsby is the climactic point in the narrative that registers Nick's (and Fitzgerald's) perception of the social and aesthetic values that regulate men's emotional expression in "a man's world." The power of Tom's sadistic righteousness over Gatsby's impotent sincerity is what gives this scene its terrifying, sickening quality. Tom's display of power confirms for Nick that a man is most powerless among other men when he admits to an inner emotional life. Nick's immediate response to Gatsby's defeat is pity for Gatsby and fear for himself, emotions that cannot be expressed without weakening his own pose of manly invulnerability. Repressed, these emotions crystallize into obsessive, eroticized concern ("I could think of nothing except the luminosity of his pink suit under the moon"). From this point on, Nick is devoted exclusively to Gatsby; no other character receives his sustained attention, respect, or affection. Once George Wilson murders Gatsby, Nick's language swells to lyrical heights as he transforms the devastated con man with romantic dreams into a mythic American hero, a mythopoesis that powerfully expresses Nick's, and perhaps Fitzgerald's, gender anxiety.

Nick's public masculinity is based throughout on conformity to his father's ideas about upper-middle-class manhood. His elevating Gatsby to mythic stature symbolizes the ambivalence he feels toward his father's expectations of emotional reserve among good men. Gatsby, that is, satisfies some of Mr. Carraway's criteria for the successful man—hard work, devotion to one's goal, good manners. Nick, his father, and Gatsby have these traits in common. But Nick is also drawn to Gatsby by hungers that cannot be revealed to his father. "There was something gorgeous" about Gatsby, confesses Nick (6). The "something gorgeous" is everything in Nick himself that he cannot speak about: his tendency toward romantic excess, his undisciplined, impractical, and secret interior life with its "haunting loneliness" and fantasies of "romantic women" and "pale feminine" men. Nick's creation of a heroic Gatsby openly confirms his father's ideals while allowing Nick to keep intense imaginative company with defeated, emotional male dreamers like himself. Nick's mythopoesis perfectly captures the split in his gender identity: his Gatsby fortifies Nick's public masculinity while allowing him to engage privately in "feminine" emotions. Gatsby as myth articulates what Nick cannot openly admit—that he identifies with and is emotionally, and sometimes romantically, attracted to "feminine" men.

The romantic element in Nick's interest in the feminine McKee and the feminized Gatsby is conditioned by the rules of men's competition and emotional distance. As Isay explains, heterosexual men who feel uncertain of their ability to compete and perform among other men may fantasize about a sexual or romantic attraction to them, since their social interaction as competitors or partners seems questionable. Such fantasies are a defense against the "dangers inherent in . . . aggressive, 'masculine' strivings."[51] Nick's fantasizing does not take the form of extended narratives, but the reader becomes aware of his imaginative activity through his impulses and impressions, as in his exchange with McKee in the elevator or his sudden attraction to Gatsby's pink suit. Nick's turning Gatsby into myth at the end is an extension of this kind of fantasy.

Nick's mythopoesis is also retribution, a way for Fitzgerald to criticize what Tom Buchanan represents. As the competitive, brutal man of financial and physical sport, Tom Buchanan will always rough-shoulder the man of imagination, the artist. McKee, Gatsby, and Nick are all artist figures—men who invest the world with symbolic meaning by arranging people and objects into narratives or visual patterns

of order and significance. All three maintain a secret interior space for the imagination and for the socially inappropriate, dangerous, or outrageous desires to which it gives rise. Nick's symbolic Gatsby is the artist's revenge against the man of the world: by turning Gatsby into a symbol of American idealism, morally above and intellectually beyond Tom Buchanan, Fitzgerald can validate those qualities in Gatsby and Nick that Tom, dismissing them as feminine, overpowers.

In some respects, Fitzgerald's novel is a challenge to the modernist rhetoric that separated manly emotional vitality from womanly sentiment: by the end of *The Great Gatsby*, Tom Buchanan collapses into sentimentality. Mindless emotional excess, it would seem, is not the exclusive province of women and "feminine" men. Nick encounters Tom for the last time by chance on Fifth Avenue. To Nick's questions about his role in helping the deranged Wilson locate his victim, Tom says defensively, "And if you think I didn't have my share of suffering—look here, when I went to give up that flat and saw that damn box of dog biscuits sitting there on the sideboard I sat down and cried like a baby" (187). Tom's outburst, prompted by dog biscuits, is a reprise of the "feminine" sentimentality that Myrtle exuded when she demanded that Tom buy her the dog because it was "cute" (32) and because "they're nice to have—a dog." Tom paid money for a dog peddled on the street as a pure-bred Airedale that was actually, Nick clarifies, of "an indeterminate breed" (31). Oblivious to facts, Myrtle had "fondled" the gift "with rapture" (32). Later her affection for the animal dissolves. The "little dog . . . sitting on the table looking with blind eyes through the smoke and from time to time groaning faintly" (41), Fitzgerald suggests, is not cute. Tom's tears over the dog biscuits are not a sign of new emotional depth in his character; they are the sentimental substitute for character. He embraces Myrtle's foolish, selfish sentimentality as a way of avoiding facts.

The Great Gatsby's gender ideology, then, is a disjointed dialectic that never resolves its oppositions. Fitzgerald both observes and dismantles strict divisions between masculinity and femininity, between womanly sentiment and manly vitality. What I believe this divided perspective indicates is Fitzgerald's debt to and discomfort with the distinctions members of his "intellectually élite" drew between self-expression and artistic detachment, a distinction that encompassed the difference between what Eliot called the "significant emotion" of art and mere personal feeling.

When *The Great Gatsby* appeared, T. S. Eliot wrote Fitzgerald, telling

him, as Fitzgerald ecstatically reported to Max Perkins, that "it was *the 1st step forward American fiction had taken since Henry James.*"[52] What Eliot probably had in mind was Fitzgerald's selective use of image, setting, and dialogue—rather than discursive narration—to achieve thematic unity. Other modernist critics and writers, including Stein and Hemingway, were equally impressed; but not all the reviews were favorable. Mencken, whose review praised "the charm and beauty of the writing,"[53] was the first major critic to raise (with the image of the fat woman) a question that would become an ongoing issue in *Gatsby* criticism: whether or not Fitzgerald lost emotional control in his characterization of Gatsby and Nick—whether he substituted personal feeling for "significant emotion." Attempting to answer the question, we encounter, I believe, Fitzgerald's ambivalence about strict distinctions between merely personal "feminine" feeling and aesthetic emotion.

Over the years, readers have debated the question of Fitzgerald's emotional control in a variety of critical frameworks. The many readers who admire the novel's technique find, in general, that Nick's character is impersonally and convincingly drawn and that Gatsby is wholly believable as the pure, irreducible embodiment of a particularly American "heightened sensitivity to the promises of life" (6). Other readers, Menken's descendants, believe that Fitzgerald's artistic control wavers and that his own emotions are not sufficiently filtered out of his characters. These readers raise the same question Eliot raised about *Hamlet* in the essay in which he outlined his theory of impersonality.[54] If these dissenting readers were to use Eliot's terminology, they might argue that Fitzgerald failed to complete the artist's sacrifice of personal emotion to the purer, less cluttered emotions of art. According to Eliot's critical logic, Gatsby is a failed objective correlative. Gary J. Scrimgeour provides the most caustic summation of Gatsby: He is "a boor, a roughneck, a fraud, a criminal. His taste is vulgar, his behavior ostentatious, his love adolescent, his business dealings ruthless and dishonest. He is interested in people . . . only when he wants to use them. . . . Like other paranoiacs, he lives in a childish tissue of lies."[55] Scrimgeour's provocative description implies that Gatsby is not an appropriate objective correlative for the incorruptible American belief in possibility.

In a similar line of analysis, other readers have wondered why Nick chooses Gatsby as the essence of the American imagination over other characters who also seem intensely driven and equally betrayed

by the social environment that encourages such faith in Possibility. Myrtle Wilson shares Gatsby's sentimental yearnings and desperate hope. Until it runs her down, not even the speeding car she believes contains her destiny can deter her. After her death, Fitzgerald, in a sudden change of perspective, refers to her "tremendous vitality" (145). Before their deaths, both Myrtle and Gatsby are equally tasteless and ostentatious, distinguished by their narrow vision as much as by their vitality. How is Gatsby significantly different from Myrtle Wilson? Some readers have suggested that Daisy is also a victim of the "foul dust [that] floated in the wake of [her] dreams" (6).[56] Why does Nick single out a rich gangster and con man as the especially "gorgeous" representative of American Desire? According to Eliot's theory of impersonality, Nick is like Eliot's Hamlet: he is "dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible because it is in *excess* of the facts as they appear."[57] Nick himself may believe that Gatsby "turned out all right at the end" (6), and Fitzgerald may believe it, but Mencken's descendants find that, given the textual facts, they cannot share in the emotional logic that leads to this conclusion. In Eliot's terms, Fitzgerald's personal feeling is too nebulously bound up in both Gatsby and Nick; it has not been fully transmuted into the "significant emotion" of impersonal form.[58]

As I have suggested, Nick's strange interest in Mr. McKee and his unqualified fascination with Gatsby are emotionally excessive responses in part because embedded within them is Fitzgerald's unarticulated sympathy with men who appear feminine to other men. Although Fitzgerald achieved an impersonal style in *The Great Gatsby*, he did not distance himself from his characters to the degree that Eliot and others advocated. My concern here is not to make an aesthetic judgment but to suggest that Fitzgerald's sensibility and talent may have been more congruent with androgynous models and metaphors for writing in which the concept of emotion was not so laden with implicit cautions against femininity. Perhaps this is what Fitzgerald had in mind in calling himself "half feminine."

Recent studies of the modernist period have revealed that not only the Bloomsbury group, but women writers on the Left Bank in Paris, Katherine Mansfield, and others were creating new techniques in fiction based on an idea of impersonality that diverged from the Joyce/Eliot/Pound conception of it.[59] Sydney Janet Kaplan's study of Katherine Mansfield's modernism, for example, describes Mansfield's

work as committed to the concept of impersonality but also to a kind of Bergsonian intuition: "the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible."[60] Such intuition and impersonality are not, Kaplan stresses, mutually exclusive. Mansfield herself said, "All that [a writer] sees must be saturated" in "an initial emotion." This emotion "alone can give . . . [the work] a close and intimate unity."[61] Fitzgerald placed the same emphasis on the writer's intense emotion as a unifying principle.[62] So, of course, did Eliot, Joyce, and Pound. However, Fitzgerald and Mansfield incorporated their personal sympathies more freely and transparently into their art than did the other three modernists. Although Fitzgerald applied the method of impersonality advocated by his "intellectually élite," he apparently modified the method in his characterization of Gatsby, Nick, and Mr. McKee to maintain a greater personal intimacy with these characters, a practice similar to what Kaplan sees in Mansfield's work. Fitzgerald's sympathy with these three male characters—along with a concern about his own artistic and personal femininity—may have colored the novel's characterization and shaped the elements of the plot discussed earlier.

To my knowledge, no critic has conducted a thorough comparison of Fitzgerald's technique in *The Great Gatsby* and the fictional technique of a woman modernist. Placing Fitzgerald in such a context (Mansfield and Jean Rhys come to mind immediately) might provide a new structure for viewing questions about impersonality raised by *The Great Gatsby*. I am not suggesting direct influence but similar fictional methods that modified slightly but significantly the theories of impersonality described and practiced by Eliot, Joyce, and Pound.[63]

A year before Fitzgerald told Laura Guthrie he was "half feminine," he wrote a letter to H. L. Mencken stating strongly that his acceptance of the modernist separation of life and art into different emotional spheres was only partial. His statement sounds like an oblique rebuttal to the "sclerotic fat woman." He told Mencken that he would accept being "as anonymous as Rimbaud" if he could only "impress my image (even though an image the size of a nickel) upon the soul of a people." This sacrifice of fame and money for art, he stipulated, "is no sentimental yapping about being disinterested. It is simply that having once found the intensity of art, nothing else that can happen in life can ever again seem as important as the creative process."[64] In 1934, then, Fitz-

gerald still embraced the modernist elevation of art above life, but he deplored the sentimentality that called it disinterested. Is it not sentimental, he apparently wondered, to be so didactic about avoiding personal sentiment? In 1924, however, Fitzgerald's ambivalence about "feminine" subjectivity and sentiment remained embedded in the narrative conflict and character development of *The Great Gatsby*. Nick Carraway, who embodies a public masculinity of emotional reserve and a transgressive secret femininity of emotional freedom, may be emblematic of the subtle ways that Fitzgerald modified the aesthetic laws regulating men's emotional expression among "the intellectual élite."

Upon completing *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald wrote Max Perkins, "I think that at last I've done something really my own."[65] In light of my discussion, that announcement rings true, but it is complicated and ironic. *The Great Gatsby* is the product of Fitzgerald's self-assertion at the point in his life when he sensed his creative potential most clearly; at the same time, his purposeful "attempt at form" bears the imprint of a personal struggle with the gender-inflected standards of modernism.

Durham Technical Community College,
Durham, North Carolina

Notes

1 H. L. Mencken, review of *The Great Gatsby*, *Baltimore Evening Sun* (1925); reprinted in *Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work*, ed. Alfred Kazin (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1951), 88.

2 Gender as an evaluative category in modernist literature and the lives of early modernist writers has been well documented in recent years. See, for example, Marianne DeKoven, *Rich and Strange: Gender, History, Modernism* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991); Suzanne Clark, *Sentimental Modernism: Women Writers and the Revolution of the Word* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1991); Bonnie Kime Scott, *The Gender of Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990).

3 F. Scott Fitzgerald to Max Perkins, 25 August 1921, in *The Letters of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed. Andrew Turnbull (New York: Scribner's, 1963), 148; hereafter abbreviated as *LFSF*.

4 Ezra Pound, "Translator's Postscript" to Remy de Gourmont, *The Natural Philosophy of Love* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922), 207.

5 In a review of *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned*, Edmund Wilson passed along this description of Fitzgerald without naming the person who had made it. In a footnote in a reprint of the review,

Wilson acknowledged that Millay was the source. See Edmund Wilson, "F. Scott Fitzgerald," in *The Shores of Light: A Literary Chronicle of the Twenties and Thirties* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Young, 1952), 27; hereafter abbreviated as *SL*.

6 Edmund Wilson, "The Literary Spotlight—VI: F. Scott Fitzgerald," *The Bookman*, March 1922, 20–25; reprinted in Wilson, *SL*, 27–35.

7 I use the term *modernist avant-garde* here to refer generally to those writers, reviewers, and intellectuals in the early twentieth century who shared the conviction that modern literature had to break completely with nineteenth-century literary forms, which they believed embroidered and exploited emotion. Fitzgerald admired especially the work of Conrad, Joyce, and Eliot, but through Edmund Wilson and H. L. Mencken he encountered the ideas of others, like Millay and Pound, who sometimes characterized avant-garde experimentation with form as a hardy masculine enterprise, opposing it to the feminine emotional indulgence typical, they believed, of nineteenth-century sensibilities.

8 Fitzgerald to Marya Mannes, 21 October 1925, quoted in Matthew Bruccoli, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Life in Letters* (New York: Scribner's, 1994), 129; hereafter abbreviated as *LL*.

9 F. Scott Fitzgerald, quoted in Andrew Turnbull, *Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Scribner's, 1962), 261; hereafter abbreviated as *SF*.

10 Fitzgerald, quoted in *SF*, 262.

11 Fitzgerald, quoted in *SF*, 259.

12 See Keith Fraser, "Another Reading of *The Great Gatsby*," *English Studies in Canada* 5 (autumn 1979): 330–43; Edward Wasiolek, "The Sexual Drama of Nick and Gatsby," *The International Fiction Review* 19 (1992): 14–22.

13 For an annotated bibliography of reviews of both novels, see Jackson R. Bryer, *The Critical Reception of F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Bibliographical Study* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1967), 4–13 and 24–40.

14 Burton Rascoe, "Novels from the Younger Men," *The Bookman*, May 1922, 305.

15 Fitzgerald to Max Perkins, before 12 December 1921, *LFSF*, 151.

16 For a detailed study of Fitzgerald's modernist affiliations at this time, see James E. Miller Jr., *F. Scott Fitzgerald: His Art and His Technique* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1964), 155–99; see also Robert Sklar, *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Last Laocoön* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), 148–76.

17 Fitzgerald to Max Perkins, 10 April 1924, in *LL*, 67.

18 F. Scott Fitzgerald, interview with Charles C. Baldwin, originally published as "F. Scott Fitzgerald," in *The Men Who Make Our Novels* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1924); reprinted in *F. Scott Fitzgerald in His Own Time: A Miscellany*, ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli and Jackson R. Bryer (Kent State Univ. Press, 1971), 268.

19 H. L. Mencken, "Review," *Smart Set*, April 1911, 166–67; reprinted in *Ezra Pound: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Eric Homberger (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 73.
20 Ezra Pound to Harriet Monroe, February 1916, in *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound*, ed. D. D. Paige (New York: New Directions, 1971), 69–70; hereafter abbreviated *SLEP*.
21 Richard Ellman, "The First *Waste Land*," in *Eliot in His Time*, ed. A. Walton Litz (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1973), 51.
22 Fitzgerald to Max Perkins, 25 August 1921, in *LFSF*, 148.
23 In a letter to H. L. Mencken, Pound criticized Edgar Lee Masters for writing "a little too much, and without sufficient hardness of edge" (*SLEP*, 51).
24 Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson, 1921, in *Pound/"The Little Review": The Letters of Ezra Pound to Margaret Anderson: "The Little Review" Correspondence*, ed. Scott, Thomas L., and Melvin J. Friedman, with Jackson Bryer (New York: New Directions, 1988), 267.
25 Ezra Pound to Harriet Monroe, 28 March 1914, in *SLEP*, 35.
26 Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect," in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968), 12; hereafter abbreviated as *LEEP*.
27 Ezra Pound, "How to Read," in *LEEP*, 18.
28 Milton A. Cohen, "Fitzgerald's Third Regret: Intellectual Pretense and the Ghost of Edmund Wilson," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 33 (spring 1991): 68.
29 Edmund Wilson to Fitzgerald, 9 August 1919, in *Edmund Wilson: Letters on Literature and Politics, 1912–1972*, ed. Elena Wilson (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1977), 44.
30 Edmund Wilson to Fitzgerald, 21 November 1919, in the Papers of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Princeton University Library. The entire letter is printed in Milton R. Stern, *The Golden Moment: The Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1970), 37–39.
31 Cohen, 68.
32 F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925; New York: Scribner's, 1991), 7; all subsequent references are to this edition and are cited parenthetically by page number.
33 See Kent Cartwright, "Nick Carraway as an Unreliable Narrator," *Papers on Language and Literature* 20 (spring 1984): 218–32; and Gary J. Scrimgeour, "Against *The Great Gatsby*," in *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of "The Great Gatsby,"* ed., Ernest H. Lockridge (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 70–81.
34 Fitzgerald to Max Perkins, 24 April 1925, in *LFSF*, 180.
35 Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," in *Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, ed. Tania Modleski (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), 190.
36 Huyssen, 196. Huyssen was the first to present a developed discussion of this strain in modernist ideology. Recent scholarship has clarified the

ways in which many modernist writers actually incorporated elements of popular culture into their works. See, for example, David Chintz, "T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide," *PMLA* 110 (1995): 236–47.

37 For example, see Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1988).

38 "'[T]he American' cannot be expected to take [literature] seriously . . . [when] it is left to the care of ladies' societies" (Ezra Pound, "Patria Mia," in *Ezra Pound: Selected Prose*, ed. William Cookson [New York: New Directions, 1973], 109).

39 Ezra Pound to Harriet Monroe, March 1913, in *SLEP*, 15.

40 Ezra Pound, "Webster Ford," *The Egoist*, 1 January 1915, 11.

41 T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1975), 44; hereafter abbreviated as *SPTSE*.

42 Richard A. Isay, *Being Homosexual: Gay Men and Their Development* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1989), 99.

43 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1990).

44 Angus P. Collins, "F. Scott Fitzgerald: Homosexuality and the Genesis of *Tender Is the Night*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 13 (1986): 169.

45 Morley Callahan recalls Fitzgerald asking him, "Remember the night I was in bad shape? I took your arm. . . . You thought I was a fairy, didn't you?" (Callahan, *That Summer in Paris: Memories of Tangled Friendships with Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Some Others* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1963), 207.

46 Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 149.

47 Fitzgerald to Ernest Hemingway, 23 August 1929, in *LFSF*, 307.

48 Isay, 78–79.

49 Charles Weir Jr., "'An Invite with Gilded Edges': A Study of F. Scott Fitzgerald," in Kazin, 141.

50 For the generative paradigm of these social dynamics in British literature, see Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1985).

51 Isay, 99.

52 Fitzgerald to Max Perkins, 20 February 1926, in *LL*, 137.

53 H. L. Menken, in Kazin, 89.

54 T. S. Eliot, *Hamlet*, in *SPTSE*, 45–49.

55 Scrimgeour, 73.

56 Leland S. Person Jr., "'Herstory' and Daisy Buchanan," *American Literature* 50 (1978–79): 250–57.

57 T. S. Eliot, *SPTSE*, 48.

58 Hugh Kenner develops this argument in *A Homemade World: The American Modernists* (New York: Knopf, 1975), 33–49. Kenner suggests that

"The author, who set out to be Nick Carraway, generally forgets to be anybody but Scott Fitzgerald" (36).

59 See Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank: Paris, 1900–1940* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1987).

60 Henri Bergson, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. T. E. Hulme (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1912), 7; quoted in Sydney Janet Kaplan, *Katherine Mansfield and the Origins of Modernist Fiction* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1991), 182.

61 Katherine Mansfield, *Novels and Novelists* (New York: Knopf, 1930), 236; quoted in Kaplan, 183.

62 "I must start out with an emotion—one that's close to me and that I can understand" (F. Scott Fitzgerald, "One Hundred False Starts," in *Afternoon of an Author: A Selection of Uncollected Stories and Essays by F. Scott Fitzgerald*, ed Arthur Mizener [New York: Scribner's, 1957], 132).

63 We now understand some of the ways that Eliot and Pound actually violated their own theories of impersonality in their major works, but in the twenties this understanding was decades away. See James E. Miller Jr., *T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1977); and Robert Casillo, *The Genealogy of Demons: Anti-Semitism, Fascism, and the Myths of Ezra Pound* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1988).

64 Fitzgerald to H. L. Mencken, 23 April 1934, in *LL*, 256.

65 Fitzgerald to Max Perkins, 27 October 1924, in *LFSF*, 168.