

An Analysis of Amory Blaine's Affective Masculinity in Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*

Narges Bayat ¹

Ph.D. Candidate, English Department, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

Ali Taghizadeh (Corresponding Author) ²

Assistant Professor, English Department, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran.

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.34785/J014.2023.002>

Article Type: Original Article

Page Numbers: 15-29

Received: 21 January 2022

Accepted: 10 October 2022

Abstract

In the early decades of the twentieth century, masculinity created a tangled network of man-woman connections centered on power and control. Additionally, how a man formed relationships was very significant in enhancing his public persona. Scott Fitzgerald's fiction articulates this complicated and contentious historiography of masculinity and its linkages to the era's literary tradition. This paper proceeds toward masculinity studies to demonstrate the representation of affective masculinity in Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920). The authors argue that Deleuze's concept of "affect" and its relation to modern discourses of masculinity would enhance our perception of Fitzgerald's construction of masculinity in his debut novel. The paper analyzes the affective transformation of Amory Blaine as a new man based on his interactions with the female characters of the story. The results of the research show that in Fitzgerald's definition of masculinity, man is affected and enhanced by the gentle feminine features, and Amory Blaine too acquires a new identity for himself.

Keywords

Affect; Amory Blaine; Deleuze; Fitzgerald; Gender; Masculinity.

1. Introduction

In the early twentieth century, the developing cultural attitude of American capitalist modernity showed several features including a growing restlessness. This strongly gendered period was also associated with a wave of effeminacy and concern about masculinity, it was experiencing the diminishing values of Victorian American independence and self-reliance, and a resolve to prove one's masculinity made the male individuals pursue seemingly improbable goals for themselves in the emerging modern era. Under the dual forces of industrialization and feminism, the American man felt apprehensive and emasculated (Kerr 406). Thus, a new kind of masculinity emerged during this period that Greg Forter describes as "hard, aggressive, physically powerful, and potent" ("Introduction" 26). Moreover, Forter highlights the work of gender

¹ Nargesbayat@outlook.com

² altaghee@razi.ac.ir

researchers that describes the 1920s as crucial in the formation of modern gender standards. He agrees with scholars such as Michael Kimmel and Anthony Rotundo, who contend that during the 1920s, there was a crisis in masculinity (“Modernist Studies” 296). This ambiguous reimagining of masculinity was characterized by a tangled network of man-woman connections centered on control and power, in contrast to the Victorian patriarchal division of society into private and public realms. Additionally, how a man formed connections with others was significant in the enhancement of his masculine image (Miller 210-11). Therefore, throughout *This Side of Paradise*, gender norms are repeatedly questioned because the traits of the male and the female identity often get merged, which means that masculinity is mirrored as basically different from what it was in Victorian times.

Deleuze and Guattari define “man” in terms of a creative experience and experimentation with subjectivities (321). They propose that men dismantle their identities by constantly exploring subjectivities beyond the rigid boundaries imposed on them (what they would call a deterritorialization). Their assertion that “there is no becoming-man” indicates the difficulties of applying Deleuze and Guattari’s experimental theory to masculinity studies (322). We agree with Ronald Bogue that Deleuze does not provide a coherent theory of literature, and that much of Deleuze’s literary writing is a “thinking-alongside-literary-texts”; in other words, they are discussions of philosophical topics that are sparked by and deepened by interactions with literary texts (2). Therefore, Deleuze does not provide a theory of masculinity; but his concept of affect helps reshape modern discourses of masculinity.

This article seeks to use Deleuzian affect to advance toward masculinity studies to analyze how Fitzgerald articulates this complicated and contentious historiography of masculinity and its linkages to the era’s literary tradition. The authors argue that Deleuze’s concept of affect enhances the perception of constructed masculinity in *This Side of Paradise*. What is implicated in this research is the capacity to think of masculinities as a creative force that departs from morality and transcendental judgments and moves toward Deleuzian ethics that values human capacity for affecting and being affected. Thus, this research analyzes the evolution of Amory Blaine, Fitzgerald’s main character, from an egotist to a personage based on the combination of affective interactions that Amory experiences with several female characters in the novel.

2. Theoretical Framework

Deleuze’s philosophy introduces notions that bring a novel perspective to how we understand masculinity and conduct masculinity studies as a field, as well as new ways of thinking about established issues in masculinity studies. This section focuses on the connections between Deleuze and Guattari’s work on affect and modern discourses of masculinity and what Bennett refers to as “the power of things” (361). For Deleuze, the revolutionary purpose of literature is to create individuals who do not actually exist. Since he believes that writers do not really write on behalf of a group of individuals. Thus, Deleuze

disapproves of the limitations that come with crafting a literary statement. He essentially proposes a literary aesthetics or, to put it another way, an aesthetics about writing (Buchanan and Marks 4). As a result, affect can be considered as a literary aesthetics and to support this claim Buchanan and Marks argue that for Deleuze, the critical analysis of literature begins with his “reading of Spinoza” and his conception of literature as a technique of postponing judgment and producing affects (Buchanan and Marks 3).

Affect has two distinct connotations in academic work. Affect may be pre-cognitive, meaning it can arise before consciousness, and it can also be cognitive and refer to emotional responses. Affect, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is precognitive. It is an influence on a body’s or assemblage’s ability to operate. Deleuze and Guattari’s interpretation of affect is based on Spinoza’s statement: “Affects . . . have therefore certain causes through which they are to be understood, and certain properties which are just as worthy of being known as the properties of any other thing in the contemplation of which we delight” (Deleuze and Guattari 98). Human activities and appetites are enhanced or diminished as a result of affects. As bodies are altered, they become more or less capable in specific ways and grow greater or lesser in others.

Affects are byproducts of connectivity. They are formed by bodies and situations pressing up against one another and acting on one another. Spinoza, and later Deleuze and Guattari, felt that bodies are formed in part by their interactions with others (Lloyd and Gatens 77). What a body may become and how a body is accepted already involves the nature of the human body. Put differently, our awareness of the body’s constitution influences how we connect to and deal with the body, as well as the possibilities that are available to the body.

Affect as a shift in capacity to act is discussed by Deleuze and Guattari via the concept of *affectus* or the increase or reduction in subjective capacity caused by an affect. In *Spinoza, Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze defines *affectus* as “an increase or reduction of the ability of action, for the body and the intellect alike” (49). He then builds on this notion by claiming that *affectus* is not the same as emotion. Anna Hickey-Moody explains this point when she states that “While emotion is the psychological striation of affect, the manner in which subjectivity captures our perceptions of change, *affectus* is the virtuality and materiality of the increase or decrease in a body’s ability to act” (*Deleuze and Masculinity* 47). More precisely, affection denotes a condition of the affected body and presupposes the presence of the affecting body. In contrast, *affectus* marks a transition from one state to another, taking into consideration the affecting bodies’ correlative fluctuation (Deleuze, *Spinoza* 49). As a result, *affectus* is the materiality of change: it is “the passing from one condition to another” that happens in connection to “affecting bodies” (Deleuze, *Spinoza* 50). A certain kind of movement generates the emotions or thoughts that Deleuze alludes to. The modulation of *affectus*: the virtual and material alteration that causes affection or the feeling of affect in consciousness is increasing or lowering one’s capacity to act.

Deleuze and Guattari, like Spinoza, investigate methods of thinking about the body as a malleable, context-responsive assemblage. Each body's embodied mind, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is a performance of difference, the mind is the body's idea, and human consciousness is a result of corporeality. The embodied accumulation of our activities is our subjectivity. Every person has "the originality of a day, a season, a year, a life (whatever of its length)" (Deleuze and Guattari 262). The similarity between Spinoza's philosophy and Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the body is shown by their claim that everybody is "a longitude and latitude, a collection of speeds and slowness between created particles, a set of nonsubjectified feelings" (Deleuze and Guattari 262). We are reminded here, as in Deleuze's previous citation from Spinoza's *Ethics*, that the body is an extension of substance, a variant of the two universal properties of cognition and extension. Human bodies are constantly remaking themselves as a result of their actions: relationships, passions, and the environments in which they live. Emotions are a barometer of *affectus* and one of the ways that bodies communicate with one another. Emotions are jumbled concepts, a registration of *affectus*, and thinking coordinates: our capacity to affect and be affected is shaped by our experiences. For example, Spinoza claims that "the idea of each manner in which the human body is affected by an external body involves the nature of the human body and the external body" (Spinoza 63). This phrase exemplifies Spinoza's idea that bodies are primarily formed via social interactions (Lloyd and Gatens 77). The possibilities we give the body, ourselves, and others are shaped by our affects.

Using Deleuze's concept of affect, Terrance McDonald proposes a new conceptualization of masculinities that aims to get beyond conventional ideas of masculinity. Rather than restructuring masculinities, McDonald makes a compelling argument for embracing the "uncertainty of being" (McDonald 58). He claims that Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of immanence (as well as subsequent work by Braidotti, Grosz, and Colebrook) and Spinoza's *Ethics* (as well as Lloyd and Gatens' work) can help us understand masculinities "as ex post facto culturally, socially, and historically constructed as a priori male" (61). Quoting from Deleuze and Guattari, McDonald states that "There is no 'becoming-man,' since we make men not through an immanent experience of becoming, but through a transcendent ideal that is generated through a retrospective judgment of what defines a man" (63). McDonald is looking for a new way of thinking about masculinities that moves away from transcendent assessments of good or poor gender performances and toward a Deleuzian/Spinozist ethics that prioritizes physical capacity for affecting and being affected. Masculinities, according to this new understanding, is creative, non-human energy that has no attachment to the male body other than its ability to affect or be affected by this energy.

According to McDonald, transcendent male ideals continue to postpone and deny representation because they produce the illusion of a hegemonic ideal that can never be realized, which inevitably leads to major crises. He makes a persuasive argument for embracing the unpredictable nature of being rather than trying to mold someone into a predetermined form. When considering Deleuze's Spinozian dichotomy between morality and ethics, McDonald argues that we cannot depend on systems that enforce a distinction, such as those that define masculinity and femininity, since such moralistic rules overlook the diversity of each distinct event. Such contextual knowledge is anchored inside an ethical framework, enabling us to perceive masculinity as a collection of abilities or affects: as a sequence of physiological capacities, as what a body can do, rather than as an intrinsic or fundamental thing (McDonald 67-69).

Affect is also important in understanding the shift from morality to ethics, as well as the shift from abstract criteria for assessing bodies to a practical, and corporeal method of evaluating what bodies accomplish. Deleuze defines a body as an assemblage of forces "forces of life and forces of thought" which can be human or nonhuman (*Pure Immanence* 59). Positive affects are generative and may boost a body's potential to endure. Negative affects, on the other hand, hinder or impede a body's capacity to survive. We may categorize some types of affects as masculine or feminine. The generation of certain sorts of capabilities is likewise a masculine affective act. Affection is triggered by contacts with other human and nonhuman bodies, as well as by the concepts (discourses or belief systems) that underpin these relationships. Therefore, a distinction about how good or bad a body is; does not inform us what the body can achieve. A body does not provide truth; it has an impact on other bodies by enhancing or diminishing their potential to act. It is always changing as it engages in different interactions with other bodies in various circumstances. As a result, context is critical for analyzing affect (Hickey-Moody, *Deleuzian Encounters* 63-65). McDonald believes that the ethology of masculinities traces the integration and disintegration of masculinities with other bodies to explore what masculinities can achieve (69). The changing character of masculinity is embedded in "the negative logic of a patriarchal gender system" (Wojtaszek 115). It criticizes the unknown aspects of masculine power.

Therefore, based on Deleuzian philosophy, masculinities rejects transcendent values and embraces immanent ethics where man no longer follows any codes or ideals and can think of new affective interactions with the world. McDonald expounds on Deleuze's concept of affect as a movement toward the ethology of masculinity that values creativity and rejects masculine ideals. He explains that this ethology is based on the capacity of a body to affect and be affected by other bodies. Following this theoretical framework, in the next section, we will demonstrate that Amory Blaine's adolescent

masculinity negates traditional masculine ideals. We will further explain that his transformation from an egotist to a personage (as Monsignor Darcy explained to Amory), is based on a set of affective interactions with his mother, Beatrice, and with his four key romantic interests: Isabelle, Clara, Rosalind, and Eleanor.

3. Discussion

3.1. From Gender Studies to the Affective Turn

Pearl James explains that *This Side of Paradise* “serves as an archetypal statement of an anxiety about male coming-of-age that appears in early-twentieth-century American society,” he also points out that this masculinity differs from that of prior literary portrayals (James 2). Additionally, James studies a queer theory version of the novel, which, although disparaging, probes the author’s longing for idealized manhood. Similarly, Greg Forter investigates Fitzgerald’s beliefs about masculinity in a larger context than merely his first work, pointing to a shifting image of masculinity. Forter, like many Fitzgerald researchers, draws connections between Fitzgerald’s works and his life. For *This Side of Paradise*, He turns to the author’s ambition to marry Zelda Sayre as well as an aim of disproving his own alleged femininity (“Modernist Studies” 298-99). While both James and Forter discuss Fitzgerald’s femininity, they ignore the novel’s main images of femininity—Amory’s mother and his love interests. These criticisms cannot account for Fitzgerald’s description of the growing post-adolescent life period; because they ignore the gender divide, which is best understood through the impacts that Amory and the female characters have on each other.

In a more recent study of the novel, Sarah Churchwell portrays Amory Blaine as Fitzgerald’s “ironized alter ego, [who] dislikes the dishonesty of his parents’ generation; oscillating between cynicism and optimism, seeking a goal worthy of his undefined dreams” (Churchwell 15). Fitzgerald’s semi-autobiographical novel takes readers on a trip through Amory’s boyhood, beginning with his upbringing in the Midwest and the influence of his mother, Beatrice. The first chapter of Amory’s life serves as a prelude to the young Amory, who appears throughout the narrative. Amory’s young adulthood begins at Princeton, where he continues his schooling while also pursuing job aspirations and thoughts of marriage with a variety of romantic interests—Isabelle, Clara, and later Rosalind and Eleanor. The novel concludes before Amory can effectively transition out of this life period and into genuine maturity; in the last chapters of the novel, an unemployed and loveless Amory has an epiphany about his generation as a whole on the grounds of Princeton. These prominent aspects of profession and romance are sometimes overlooked in critical responses to the novel, particularly in light of appraisals of where the work fits in Fitzgerald’s canon and the importance of its first success. As a result, these critical responses do not fully engage the novel’s text and what it can indicate about a new stage of identity formation.

On the other hand Patricia Clough follows Deleuze and defines the “affective turn,” as “a new configuration of bodies, technology, and substance that sparks a change in thinking in critical theory” (Clough 2), which enables gender studies experts to go beyond the linguistic approaches to gender. Hence, we try to distinguish between gendered experiences of maturation in order to examine the circumstances and characteristics of these developments as they apply to *This Side of Paradise*. The sociological research on gender development shows that not all characteristics are clearly masculine or feminine. For example, Olivier Galland’s study focuses on “the extremely comparable pathways of entry into adulthood for young girls and boys” especially when education is involved (Galland 170). Therefore, we assume that in *This Side of Paradise*, Amory’s new masculinity is a combination of experiences that are not masculine or feminine but are the result of an affective turn in Amory’s identity due to his interactions with different women.

Barry Gross refers to these romantic interests in the novel as “Fitzgerald’s golden girls” and the “main representations of beauty, sex, and aristocracy” (“Dominating Intention” 55). However, when we consider these “golden girls” in *This Side of Paradise*, we realize how their fundamental aspects reflect Amory’s developmental personality traits. In other words, Amory’s romantic pursuits in the novel are machinic assemblages that affect his personage. The traits that Fitzgerald stresses the most in the construction of these “golden beauties” are respect for one’s generation, a quest for identity, a need for financial stability or professional achievement, and a preoccupation with beauty. How Amory is affected by these traits reveals that since affect lacks fixity, it may reconfigure masculinities that claim or seek to be stable and unchanging (Reeser 8). Put differently, the flexibility and indeterminacy of affects question and negate the idealized representations of masculinity.

In *This Side of Paradise*, the concept of an evolving personage is linked to the affective interactions between characters. Monsignor Darcy, a Catholic priest and Amory’s mentor, defines a personage as someone who is “never thought of apart from what he’s done. He’s a bar on which a thousand things have been hung” (92). A personage is employed in this novel to express the components of one’s identity and based on Deleuze’s concept of affect a personage is a machinic assemblage of affections. As Fitzgerald’s narrative progresses, the performative aspects of personage become more apparent. Furthermore, inspired by Deleuze’s concept of affect, Margaret Wetherell’s “affective practice” helps us acknowledge that Amory’s development of a personage relies on a combination of affective factors, which, in this case, are the impacts that different female characters make on Amory. Wetherell characterizes affect as an element in a series of actions and reactions. Put simply, in the formation of one’s developmental personage, affects are interconnected (89). Thus, the development of Amory’s personage relies on a series of affective interconnections between Amory and several female characters.

3.2. Affective Transformation of Amory

Although Fitzgerald does not show the apparent distinctions between Amory's generation and the previous one until toward the end of the story, there are early signs of such a difference when Beatrice is introduced. The novel's opening chapter, "Amory, Son of Beatrice," is dedicated to Amory's mother, who is the most vividly described member of the Victorian generation. As a consequence of Beatrice's formal education, her childhood is depicted with a cloud of "Renaissance glory" (8). This and other characteristics bestowed on Beatrice in the first section are often ascribed to Amory throughout the remainder of *This Side of Paradise*—or at the very least contrasted with their generational disparities.

Through Isabelle, Amory's first love, Fitzgerald reintroduces the obsessive perspective of the self as a crucial developmental trait. Early on in her introduction, Isabelle is likened to an actress who is aware of her "conscious attraction" and hence of the impact that she has on Amory as his sophisticated friend (79). Throughout two different chapters, Isabelle is depicted as an egotist—this egotist is at first highly interested in Amory and later she makes him disappointed. Yet, these chapters are separated by a planned page-break in the middle of an argument between the couple, and then there is an entire chapter that continues the debate, titled "The Egotist Considers" (108-9). Like Amory, these two Isabelle(s), one who likes Amory and the other version who dislikes him, are concerned with developing as a personage. Thus Isabelle, with her "conscious attraction," is likened to an actress. And Fitzgerald indicates that Amory and Isabelle are like characters in a play or the "antagonist" and "protagonist" who affect each other (106). By adopting a third-person narrative style that focuses significantly on Amory, Fitzgerald shows how Amory shapes Isabelle's identity especially when he says "she was everything he had anticipated" and depicts her from an idealized standpoint (106). Hence in the romantic relationship between Amory and Isabelle, at first, Amory affects Isabelle's egotistic identity.

Nevertheless, following the chapter break, Fitzgerald's alternative version of Isabelle gives Amory a "faint, mirthless echo of a grin" that strikes him as a more terrible performance than anything he had seen her do before (110). Amory answers Isabelle's position by informing her that she is "so damned feminine" implying that his conscious construction of selfhood differs from hers (111). As a result, having an affect on Isabelle's identity, Amory's identity is simultaneously affected as well. The narrative implies that there is something unique about how this female character expresses her identity, which makes it difficult for Amory to stand in connection with her once he finds it. Through Amory's first love, Fitzgerald shows that Isabelle's growing identity and egotism affect Amory's identity respectively.

Clara, Amory's second romantic interest, has her one-word titled section in the novel, similar to "Isabelle," with the opening line stating that "She was immemorial" (164). Clara has already left this developmental phase and moved to her early adulthood, as evidenced by the normal social perimeters of maturity; she has been married and has children. However, Amory's admiration for her roots in the fact that she is an adult and this idea appeals to Amory's "sense of situation" (165). This "sense of situation," as used here, relates to Clara's widowhood and financial conditions, which the still-young Amory finds unsatisfactory due to their lack of drama. Notwithstanding Beatrice, Clara is Amory's first indication of what feminine adulthood looks like because all of Amory's previous love interests are about the same age as Amory. Clara, like other female characters in the story, represents Amory's aspirations for femininity. Still, Fitzgerald emphasizes Clara's virtue by stating that "She was the first fine lady" that Amory had ever known (168). Amory's interaction with Clara, and his perception of her kindness, set the tone for the next great lady he meets, Rosalind, who becomes an idealized version of femininity for him.

A careful examination of Rosalind guarantees the most precise expression of the feminine form of adulthood in Fitzgerald's novel that affects Amory's personage. The complexity and length of the sections in which Rosalind appears, as well as the fact that with her arrival onto the scene the text shifts to drama, all contribute to this critical attention. In this section of Fitzgerald's text, the development of Rosalind's personage is depicted through female experience. And the most significant element is the role of beauty in her character and for her generation of golden girls. For example, Gross remarks that Rosalind will always "select what is best for her beauty," which he calls her "raison d'être" (56).

The emphasis on beauty is another reflection of Amory's affective experience. His beauty or attractiveness is frequently emphasized in the story, including in the early "DESCRIPTIVE" section, where we read that Amory "lacked somehow that intense animal magnetism that so often accompanies beauty in men or women," while on the other hand "people never forget his face" (74). Yet, Fitzgerald builds Rosalind's character with a focus on her attractiveness. He spends the first half of "The Debutante" elaborating on how her beauty affects her identity, even claiming that "all criticism of Rosalind ends in her beauty" (202). Rosalind's awareness of her attractiveness and her subsequent use of that awareness is often reflected in the criticism she receives. Also, Fitzgerald does not recognize beauty as a particularly feminine specific since Rosalind adds, "I am not really feminine, you know—in my mind" (205). In the context of the Amory-Rosalind relationship, beauty is redefined as a masculine trait that eventually shapes and affects their identity. The emphasis on beauty as a masculine differentia is an acknowledgment of McDonald's defense of Deleuzian ethics that advocates creative and unpredictable masculinity.

Notwithstanding, near the conclusion of the novel, that is, after the split of Rosalind and Amory, Fitzgerald portrays the former's adulthood more simply: "Amory had sought her freshness, the new glow of her intellect and body. . . So far as he was concerned, young Rosalind was dead" (296). Rosalind's mastery of her emerging "personage" and self-awareness have already piqued Amory's interest—an essential trait of Fitzgerald's representation of young adulthood. Ergo, Amory comes to this conclusion about Rosalind's figurative death of youth after seeing the announcement of Rosalind's engagement. For Fitzgerald, Rosalind's marriage separates her from Amory's developmental stage. His affections for her remain distinct until the conclusion of the story, even after his encounters with his last ladylove, Eleanor.

When contrasting the arrogance and intellectual accomplishment of Eleanor against Amory's achievement, Fitzgerald erects yet another mirror in which we can evaluate Amory's progress. Eleanor, like Amory, enjoys reading and writing poetry, as we see in the section "A Poem That Eleanor Sent Amory Several Years Later" (280). Also, she aspires to literature and intellectualism in the same manner that Amory does, and he admires her for it. Amory observes that she "build[s] herself intellectual and mental pyramids" as "they created poetry at the dinner table" (274-5). This admiration of Eleanor's intellectual desire is a point at which comparing experiences of adolescent masculinity and femininity might suddenly intersect when the characters, despite their physical differences, are similar in their interest in literature.

Before proceeding toward the formation of Amory's personage, it is essential to note that affect may be a becoming, a shift into a new manner of expressing gender rather than a conservative style of stability. In relating Deleuzian affect to masculinity studies, Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth define affective power as "a body's potential to affect and be affected" (2), implying that a male body's gender subjectivity can be altered and reshaped by external factors that are unknown or unpredictable in advance. According to theorist Michael Hardt, "the formation of affects, subjectivities, and forms of existence provide a tremendous possibility for autonomous circuits of valorization, and freedom" (100). This would be an eventual emancipation from patriarchal order, among other things. The power to not know what a male body can be or become gives the capacity to liberate male bodies from the patriarchal stasis that needs them to remain the same.

Following the above exposition, the title of the final chapter of the novel, "The Egotist Becomes a Personage," represents Amory's affective transformation into a personage. Based on Hardt's explication, this affective formation allows for the eventual emancipation of Amory from his Victorian masculine egotism. Amory eventually realizes that Beatrice is the paradigm for his feminine aspirations. He concludes that Rosalind was "not like Beatrice" and that Eleanor was "just wilder and brainier" than her (303).

As a result, “Women—of whom he had anticipated so much; whose beauty he had hoped to turn into forms of art; whose unfathomable inclinations, marvelously illogical and inarticulate, he had thought to perpetuate in terms of experience. . . Isabelle, Clara, Rosalind, Eleanor, were all banished by their beauty” (308). Therefore, Fitzgerald builds Amory’s ever-evolving affective personage through significant narrative developments of these feminine figures.

3.3. Fitzgerald and Masculinity

When we employ the female protagonists of *This Side of Paradise* to establish such qualities, the masculine experience of affect is not diminished but is somewhat expanded. Instead of creating a system for a closer examination of Amory, a character who is mainly reliant on that network of feminine influence as he attempts to progress into the next life phase, Fitzgerald constructs a system for greater examination of Beatrice and Amory’s other romantic interests. Given the novel’s centrality of female representation, we may be tempted to fit Fitzgerald’s work into a twenty-first-century feminist viewpoint, albeit this carries the risk of poor interpretation. Andrew Riccardo, who refers to Fitzgerald as a “prophet” (35), discusses *This Side of Paradise* and the issue of feminist interpretation and defines the work as “an anticipative, proto-second-wave” class of feminism (31). However, whether Fitzgerald was worried about his place in the feminist timeline is unimportant, and associating his name with feminism serves little to further the debate of either. Riccardo, on the other hand, uses all of the female characters to make his arguments. Most critics are more concerned about what this work implies regarding the masculine experience; therefore, this type of interpretation is in the minority.

In particular, Pearl James focuses on a transcendental and idealistic conception of masculinity and explains that “the novel portrays masculinity as an unattainable ideal”. He further explains that “Fitzgerald’s resort to history . . . adumbrates a wider American coming-of-age drama produced in the background of World War I” (4). However, in this novel, the war is overtly linked to the issue of generation rather than masculinity; since Amory is considerably more preoccupied with the idea of war after the novel’s “Interlude”. Instead, James addresses the anxiety of youth in the background of the war as a reason for gender problems. But Greg Forter provides a more in-depth analysis of this issue than James’s. Forter is interested in Fitzgerald’s role in the American Modernist movement, as well as in “the new men’s history,” which is the history of the masculine experience of identity. He critiques Fitzgerald’s work at several stages, including that between the creation and the publication of his novel. Forter believes that “two significant milestones of [Fitzgerald’s] early adulthood: his choice of career and his marriage” mark this stage (“Modernist Studies” 308). Thus, one can propose that Forter’s interpretation of Fitzgerald’s coming of age is likened to Amory’s early adulthood.

Furthermore, Forter alludes to this phase in Fitzgerald's life as a period "of postponed identity and thwarted possession," and later in his argument, he refers to the suspension of Fitzgerald's adulthood ("Modernist Studies" 313). He maintains that this trend is "the difficulty of Fitzgerald's vocation," and he reminds us that the vocation of this writer is inherently feminine. Forter also claims that it is the writer's responsibility to "incorporate feminine" into their work to "achieve masculinity without adhering to its traditional features" (313). This assertion might be the key to comprehending *This Side of Paradise's* portrayal of femininity. It implies that knowing adolescent masculinity of this period also requires studying its feminine experience. Rosalind's earlier phrase, in which she tries to communicate that she is not "feminine . . . in [her] mind," exemplifies Fitzgerald's point of view (205). Fitzgerald implies that Rosalind's sophisticated style of reasoning, inappropriate to a young woman as it is, is an endeavor to prove her thinking as masculine.

Substantially, Fitzgerald utilizes female characters to reflect Amory's perspective in a way that highlights some of the contradictions or omissions in the novel's gender debate. The story introduces a new type of young man, who has a better grasp of feminine identity. Fitzgerald has Amory listen, watch, and reflect on his female counterparts. As Amory analyzes what a love interest requires of him, rather than what his male experience dictates, the novel's masculine and feminine experiences begin to merge.

Thus, Amory is a brilliant exemplification of the new sort of masculinity that the male individual is experiencing in the new era. This new individual is the fellow who will not experience the "aggressive and virile masculinity" of the Victorian age (West 51). So, one can argue that in Fitzgerald's creative imagination, masculinity, particularly in the new era, appears to have moved away from the conventional demands of the frontiersman toward a more delicate type of man capable of remaining masculine yet without the potency of aggression or virility. Throughout *This Side of Paradise*, Amory attempts to be traditionally masculine (to accord with the Victorian standards of masculinity) but fails. This shows that as social and political conditions change, new forms of masculinity may emerge, albeit slowly and cautiously, in a struggle with "residual" and dominating types that impose restrictions on what men should be (Buchbinder 177). Fitzgerald's work reveals a growing concern that character is no longer sustainable. Hence, identity is constructed and unstable.

4. Conclusion

It may not always be feasible to distinguish whether masculinity is influenced and opened up to new possibilities or whether it is closed off or re-rendered normative. Since Deleuzian "affect" is radically ambiguous, there is uncertainty about how the myth of affective masculinity is understood, which causes interpretive confusion. In other circumstances, the image of masculinity may center on uncertainty around "affect". If

viewers construct a story about the masculine image based on the details that strike them, the intersubjective affect draws attention to the affective connections as manufactured and open-ended. Multiple narratives about masculinity develop due to this hermeneutic open-endedness. They emphasize that discursive representations are inevitably interpretative and do not represent any essence of masculinity. But open-endedness is simply one aspect of the connection between masculinity and affect. As a result, researchers are always on guard for the various ways that Deleuzian “affect” operates concerning masculinity, rather than assuming that it only takes one form.

The present paper has attempted to analyze the relation between Deleuze’s concept of “affect” and modern discourses of masculinity. The writers argue that if masculinity transcends the rigid and repressive category and enters a sequence of continual becoming, we can agree with McDonald that the ethology of masculinities is an affective and creative force. This is very similar to the perspective Scott Fitzgerald takes in his depiction of Amory Blaine and his transformation from an egotist to a personage. Fitzgerald’s debut novel is an engagement of his contemporary culture’s conflict between free will and a deterministic view of the individual. There he demonstrates that the social codes constrain free will and autonomous identity. Therefore, the novel can be regarded as Fitzgerald’s contribution to the American realist movement. Amory Blaine is the illustration of a gap in conventional adolescent masculinity, and how he affects and is affected by different women creates his personage. Fitzgerald’s exaltation and affirmation of these more gentle features, along with the broken male sensibility traceable in his novel, result in a subversion of traditional gender perceptions and ideals. Accordingly, he ends *This Side of Paradise* in the same way he ends his other novels: leaving his protagonist alone and bewildered. Amory’s emotional state at the end of the novel, when he “sat down by the Jersey roadside and looked at the frost-bitten country” (260), anticipates a similar sense of profound isolation and bewilderment that Fitzgerald’s subsequent protagonists encounter. His sense of radical befuddlement indicates an evolving personage in the process of his continual becoming.

References

- Bennett, Jane. "The Force of Things: Steps toward an Ecology of Matter." *Political Theory*, Vol. 32, No. 3, Sage Publications, 2004, pp. 347–72, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4148158>.
- Bogue, Ronald. *Deleuze on Literature*. Taylor & Francis, 2013.
- Buchanan, Ian, and John Marks, editors. *Deleuze and Literature*. Edinburgh University Press, 2000. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxcrm8r>.
- Buchbinder, David. *Studying Men and Masculinities*. New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Churchwell, Sarah. "The Oracle of Our Unease." *The New York Review of Books*, 8 October. 2020.
- Clough, Patricia. *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*. Duke University Press, 2007.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*. London: Zone Books, 2005.
- . *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 1988.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*. 1980. Translated by Brian Massumi, New York: Continuum, 2012.
- Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *This Side of Paradise*. 1920. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Forster, Greg. "F. Scott Fitzgerald, Modernist Studies, and the Fin-de-Siècle Crisis in Masculinity." *American Literature*, Vol. 78, 2006, pp. 293-323, doi:10.1215/00029831-2006-004.
- . "Introduction." *Gender, Race, and Mourning in American Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Galland, Olivier. "Adolescence, Post-Adolescence, Youth: Revised Interpretations." *Revue Française De Sociologie*, Vol. 44, 2003, pp. 163–188.
- Gregg, Melissa, and Gregory J. Seigworth. "An Inventory of Shimmers." *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, New York: Duke University Press, 2010, pp. 1-26.
- Gross, Barry. "'This Side of Paradise': The Dominating Intention." *Studies in the Novel*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1969, pp. 51–59.
- Hardt, Michael. "Affective Labor." *Boundary 2*, Vol. 26, No. 2, 1999, pp. 89–100, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/303793>.
- Hickey-Moody, Anna. *Deleuze and Masculinity*. Springer International Publishing, 2019.
- . *Deleuzian Encounters: Studies in Contemporary Social Issues*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

- James, Pearl. "History and Masculinity in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 2005, pp. 1-33. doi:10.1353/mfs.2005.0035.
- Kerr, Frances. "Feeling 'Half Feminine': Modernism and the Politics of Emotion." *The Great Gatsby. American Literature*, Vol. 68, No. 2, 1996, pp. 405-31. doi:10.2307/2928304.
- Kimmel, Michael S. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Lloyd, Genevieve, and Gatens, Moira. *Collective Imaginings: Spinoza, Past and Present*. Taylor & Francis, 2002.
- McDonald, Terrance. H. "Conceptualizing an Ethology of Masculinities: Do We Know What Masculinities Can Do?" *Men and Masculinities*, Vol. 21, No. 1, 2018. pp. 56-71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X16652662>.
- Miller, Nathan. *New World Coming: The 1920s and the Making of Modern America*. Scribner, 2010.
- Reeser, Todd W. *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction*. Wiley, 2011.
- Riccardo, Andrew. "Anticipative Feminism in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* and *Flappers and Philosophers*." *Oswald Review*, Vol. 14, Fall 2012, pp. 26-57.
- Rotundo, E. Anthony. *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. Basic Books, 1993.
- Spinoza, Benedictus de. *Ethics*. 1677. Wordsworth Editions, 2001.
- West, James L. W. "The Question of Vocation in *This Side of Paradise* and *The Beautiful and Damned*." *The Cambridge Companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald*, edited by Ruth Prigozy, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 48-56. doi:10.1017/CCOL0521624479.003.
- Wetherell, Margaret. *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*. Sage Publications, 2012.
- Wojtaszek, Marek. *Masculinities and Desire: A Deleuzian Encounter*, Taylor & Francis, 2019.