BIG GAME HUNTING ON MODERNIST TERRITORY:

FEMALE ANIMALITY IN F. SCOTT FITZGERALD AND DJUNA BARNES

by

Shannon Krieger

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This thesis was prepared under the direction of the candidate's thesis advisor, Dr. Taylor Hagood, Department of English, and has been approved by all members of the supervisory committee. It was submitted to the faculty of the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters and was accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

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Among slaughterhouses and suffragists—writers of the American Modernist movement were called to the creative task of reimagining boundaries between human and nonhuman while also extending this conversation onto the site of "New Women." The threat to "civilized man" by "primal nonhuman animal" becomes tied up with the threat of an independent "wild" woman to a system which traditionally depends upon her domestication. Female animality in modernist texts thus emerges as a symbol of both masculine anxiety and feminine liberation. When women begin to challenge traditional institutions which would see her survive exclusively by contract to a male "keeper," men become increasingly desperate to establish an apex social, economic, and political position. As such, female animality in these texts is designed to reinforce *or* resist standard constructs of human/nonhuman and masculine/feminine, yet both assert the feminine-animal-character as a hybrid commodity bred for patriarchal consumption. Despite the heteronormative compulsion to sketch woman as an elusive animal to be

hunted (courtship), caged (marriage), and kept (children)—there is also an advantage in recognizing one's place in such a "jungle," as scholars have often described progressive-era America. By examining the intersection of animality and feminist theory within modernist literature, it becomes clear that the category of nonhuman animal is one historically manipulated through patriarchal systems to delegate women's bodies as a site of oppression and subordination.

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INTRODUCTION: TROPHY WOMEN OF THE MODERNIST MOVEMENT

A creature both elusive and pervasive, her slender figure might be found stamped to pulped pages between ads for Lucky Strike cigarettes and Wrigley's chewing gum. Or perhaps she stares out through heavy-lashed eyes from a poster, begging passerby to ENLIST or BUY WAR SAVING STAMPS. A much more thrilling encounter lies outside such two-dimensional forms, however. To catch her mid-shimmy, bobbed-hair dutifully unmoving is to behold the ultimate trophy of the American Dream. Whether she is kept wrapped around the neck like an expensive fur or mounted on the wall back home, to have her is evidence of a successful hunt. To keep her proves an aptitude for domestication.

As figurehead of the Roaring Twenties, the flapper has spent the past one hundred years branded as a vessel of rebellion and female liberation. Having finally abandoned the oppressive corset of Victorian tradition in favor of those famous loose-fitting dresses, the flapper epoch reads a bit like taking one’s bra off after a long day...a really, really long day. The “New Woman” of the early twentieth century also commanded sexual agency beyond her plunging neckline. The period saw the advent of ‘petting parties’ and an influx of personally owned automobiles which provided a private, movable space for such petting. Publicly, flappers smoked, drank, and partook in uproarious behavior generally—much to the collective celebration of the social movement. Yet, the rise and fall of the flapper also correlates with the institution of mass marketing and its dependence on newly emerging mediums of popular culture to broadcast products not

only as desirable, but necessary to consumers. Thus, the flapper marks a paradox imminent to the feminist agenda which strives to assign agency to women within a culture desperate to place her among product. If we consider the emboldened femininity of flapper-dom a pillar of Jazz Age culture, it must also be understood that hers was a brand that sold. Under the pretext of liberation, these women played at freedom while capitalism and patriarchy held the strings.

The flapper reign covers a markedly short period in American history, beginning from about the 1910's and dissipating in the early 1930's. Her cultural cache is most certainly wrapped up in the tumult of historical events which drastically altered the way that, not only young women, but the entire generation looked at life. Following the economic promises of industrialism at the turn of the twentieth century, much of the U.S. population began to migrate from rural settings to urban cities. The geographical shift in consumers to industrial areas influenced the concentration of popular culture that would emerge from these spaces not long after. By the time World War I began in 1914, the trickle of migrants turned into a flood as the demand for labor substantially increased and was marketed as a patriotic duty during wartime efforts. Suddenly, marginalized individuals were working jobs previously exclusive to the now-recruited white men. Along with the suffragists' continuous call for equality, the demand for labor during the war ultimately gave women a taste of life outside the socially constructed roles of domesticity. Despite such a liberating premise, the trench warfare of WWI saw many vets-—fathers, brothers, husbands—returning home completely mutilated, both physically and mentally. Between the mechanized slaughter overseas, the assembly line of the states, and the global pandemic of 1918, the 1910's and 20's mark a time of

national trauma in American history. Under the veil of disillusionment, the populace desperately sought escape through immediate forms of pleasure, which the emerging consumerist culture was all too prepared to supply. The 'celebration' recognized both in the moment and retrospectively can just as easily be interpreted as a collected act of repression played out in the form of speakeasies, fast cars, and, indeed, flappers.

Along with all of the socio-historical implications, the collective imagination of the early twentieth century was also grappling with the scientific work of Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud. Despite contemporary challenges, the collision of psychoanalysis and biology redefined what it meant to be "human" on the precipice of a vastly industrializing society. While not the first to speculate on notions of evolution, Darwin's conclusions in 1859's *On the Origin of Species* proved the most impactful to the popular consciousness. Demolishing the humanist tenet of most major religions in one fell swoop, he claims to "view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Cambrian system was deposited" (*The Norton Book of Nature Writing* 160). Darwin's overall argument that humans evolved from a nonhuman animal, particularly a nonhuman of 'pre-Cambrian' status, seriously complicates the place of mankind as the epicenter of all existence. This ideological destabilization only added urgency to *man*kind's push to dominate the natural world and, by extension, those bodies delegated similarly as 'othered' spaces.

The rise of industrial capitalism alongside evolutionary theory reinforced the category of human as a privileged site that was not only unavailable to nonhuman animals, but to all who resist or threaten the profiteers of *man*kind's "progression." Jason Moore's critique of the "Capitalocene" confirms that the status of human or nonhuman is

determined by one's capacity to labor specifically for the benefit of capital gain, rather than laboring outside the predominate economic system. In this manner, "capitalism was built on excluding most *humans* from Humanity—indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, nearly all women…from the perspective of imperial administrators, merchants, planters, and *conquistadors*, these humans were not Human at all. They were regarded as part of Nature, along with trees and soil and rivers—and treated accordingly" ("The Rise of Cheap Labor" 2). If the inability or refusal to conform to the economic regime of capitalism places one outside of humanity, a woman's choice to abdicate from traditional gender roles within the patriarchal order would see her doubly removed. Thus, her nonhuman animal-nature is translated through a discourse of contractual bondage to a male keeper. Her animality thus becomes colonialized by privileged humanity.

Meanwhile, the psychoanalytic writings of Freud maintain an active conversation with the more biological work of Darwin, often analyzing human behavior in terms of "instinct" and "drives." Although such commentary culminates most evidently in 1929's *Civilization and its Discontents*, a considerable amount of Freud's published work pushes for a recognition of what will be discussed as female animality. For example, his 1919 essay "The Uncanny" can be read as a description of how the human readership felt upon the site of nonhuman others while still in the shadow of Darwin's recent discoveries. In the simplest terms, Freud defines uncanny as "that class of frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" (*The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* 825). The evolutionary connection between man and nonhuman animal put forth in *Origin of Species* suggests that this 'old and long familiar' can be identified across the species boundary. By extension the New (species of) Woman in the early

twentieth century and her threat to destabilize traditional gender roles would similarly elicit feelings of the uncanny, particularly for those in power under the premise of patriarchy. Beyond Freud, the influx of psychological sciences became increasingly weaponized against women, exploiting the reductive prognosis of "hysteria" as a means to institutionalize and disavow behavior deemed unfavorable to masculine traditions. Science in the service of oppression thus validates the systemic caging of women alongside nonhuman animal.

Birthed alongside such intense social, economic, and scientific shifts in history is the literary genre of modernism—lowercased for the purposes of this project because it will signify the artistic movement over the moment. The experimental nature of modernist writing often depends upon a fusion of emerging biological and psychological thought within the fictional narrative, marking these texts as pertinent interrogations at the boundaries of human and nonhuman. The impact of psychology can be identified through styles such as stream of consciousness and unreliable narrators—both of which work to challenge traditional convictions of "reality" and "normality." Meanwhile, influences more biological in nature are better interpreted through the construction of characters within the modernist text. More often than not, animality becomes a marker of otherness. As Carrie Rohman confirms in *Stalking the Subject*:

> Modernist texts reveal various attempts to solve the species problem through the displacement of animality onto a disenfranchised 'other.' These displacements occurred within an imperialist chain-of-being inspired by evolutionary theory that designated white men the superior 'species' and descended through racialized others and women only to

> bottom-out at the level of the animal. It is proximity to the animal, of course, that gives the imperialist chain-of-being its force. (46)

In configuring otherness and animality as occupying the same marginalized body, Rohman also sheds light in the adoption of Social Darwinism into the fictional imagination of the time. Whether human or non, animality in modernist literature becomes a space of both curiosity and anxiety—the Other to one's Self, the primal to one's civilized, the subject to be dominated before it dominates.

Indeed, even Jacques Derrida—one of the most cited philosophers in the discourse of animal studies—centers part of the argument put forth in *The Animal That Therefore I Am* on an analysis of a text not far from the modernist moment (1865's *Alice in Wonderland*). In the foundational 1997 lecture turned 2008 book, Derrida muses on the philosophical subjectivity of nonhuman animals in human history and initiates the systemic deconstruction now mandatory to conversations surrounding animal studies. As the following project unravels, particular consideration will be given to Derrida's discussion on the reversal of "the gaze called animal" and the hegemonic nature of language at the site of otherness (381). Also inspired by Derrida and proposing theories on animality through the lens of modernist texts is scholar Cary Wolfe. With a foundation in the posthumanities, Wolfe's work often elbows through the initial claims of anthropocentrism to discuss human animality through a discourse of species. Roughly defined, the term refers to the institution of Western society in branding both human and nonhuman animals in terms of a species hierarchy—thus validating and desensitizing the violence, oppression, and consumption of these individuals within the constructs of "civilization" (*Animal Rites* Ch. 1). The ways in which such speciesism interacts with

codes of femininity will offer an intriguing examination of the modernist texts discussed later. Finally, Michael Lunblad's *The Birth of a Jungle: Animality in Progressive-Era U.S. Literature and Culture* maintains a valuable examination between the proposed historical moment and its impact on the roles and performances of animality in both literature and society.

Many texts in the field of animal studies are prefaced with the author's formal apology to the reader at possibly coming across "quaintly lunatic" or as a "judgmental, lecturing idiot" (*Animal Rites* by Cary Wolfe; *Making a Killing* by Bob Torres). It is interesting that *women* writing in the field appear somewhat less inclined to apologize for the work at hand and definitely avoid any claims to 'lunacy' or 'idiocy.' As 2018's *Animaladies* posits, "Pathologizing human-animal relationships [and therefore academic investigations into such relationships] blocks empathy toward animals [and those classified as nonhuman other] because the characterization...as mad, 'crazy,' and *feminized*, distracts attention from broader social disorder regarding human exploitation" (Gruen/ Probyn-Rapsey 2 my italics). Perhaps more familiar with dismissal on the grounds of 'crazy,' women writing in animal studies recognize the disadvantage in framing such a complex argument with apologies or sentiment. What's more, the intersection of feminist theory and animal studies has proven valuable in rethinking the economic, political, and social positions of both female human and nonhuman animals within patriarchal systems. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Carol Adams aligns the commodification of animal bodies with those of women—establishing both as sites which are systemically fragmented (dismembered) for patriarchal consumption (26). Donna Haraway's 2003 *Companion Species Manifesto* similarly examines the

"significant otherness" assigned to and shared between human (women) and nonhuman animal (canine) as a product "inherit[ed]...[through] the turbulent history of modern capitalism" (16/24). Overall the fusion of feminist theory and animality studies reveals an entanglement of nonhuman bodies necessary to the base of patriarchal foundations and suggests that the title of "human" is exclusive to heteronormative white men.

And so—among slaughterhouses and suffragists—writers of the modernist movement are called to the creative task of reimagining boundaries between human and nonhuman while also extending this conversation onto the site of New Women. The threat to "civilized man" by "primal nonhuman animal" becomes tied up with the threat of an independent "wild" woman to a system which traditionally depends upon her domestication. Female animality in modernist texts thus emerges as a symbol of both masculine anxiety and feminine liberation. When women begin to challenge traditional institutions which would see her survive exclusively by contract to a male "keeper," men become increasingly desperate to establish an apex social, economic, and political position. As such, female animality in modernist texts is often designed to reinforce *or* resist standard constructs of human/nonhuman and masculine/feminine, yet both assert the feminine-animal-character as a hybrid commodity bred for patriarchal consumption. The flapper brand of femininity sold and continues to sell because she is marketed as liberated merely to pacify women into docile servitude. Susan Bordo expands upon the "the body as metaphor for culture:"

> Our bodies are trained, shaped, and impressed with the stamp of the prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, femininity...female bodies become docile bodies- bodies whose forces and

> energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, 'improvement.'...Viewed historically, the discipline and normalization of the female body has to be acknowledged as an amazingly durable and flexible strategy of social control. (2240-2241)

Despite the heteronormative compulsion to sketch woman as an elusive animal to be hunted (courtship), caged (marriage), and kept (children) —there is an advantage in recognizing one's place in such a "jungle" (as scholars have often described progressive-era America). By examining the intersection of animality and feminist theory within modernist literature, it becomes clear that the category of nonhuman animal is one historically manipulated through patriarchal systems to delegate specific bodies as sites of oppression and subordination.

With all of these dynamics in mind, chapter one will trace the nuance of female animality in the early stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald, revealing a heteronormative compulsion to view women as the decorative appendage to traditional codes of masculinity. The short work collected in 1920's *Flappers and Philosophers* offers a particularly pertinent insight on the pursual and subsequent capturing of Zelda Sayre as the ultimate trophy-animal-wife. Her refusal to conform to the roles of wife and mother sparks a conflict of ownership within the traditional, patriarchal terms of marriage and is thereby reflected in Scott's barely-fictional portrayal of women in his stories. The proceeding examination will translate masculine anxiety through Scott's employment of female animality in early works, ultimately pointing to the limitations of manipulating the category of nonhuman animal as a validation for subordination.

In chapter two, female animality is analyzed in favor of escaping the social trap which determines to see both women and nonhuman others as the necessary commodity to patriarchal consumption. As a queer woman, Djuna Barnes writes the female-animal-characters of her modernist work as a space of interrogation at the boundaries of otherness and consistently challenges the indoctrination of binary opposition. Her early short work satirizes the male gaze upon the site of both human and "nonhuman" femininity , thereby permitting both an agency far more complex than Fitzgerald's masculine/human assessment. Finally, Barnes's novel *Nightwood* offers female animality as an important tool in resisting and combating the systemic exploitation of nonhuman others within the constructs of patriarchal society.

It is important to preface the following project by acknowledging its merely periphery consideration of racial discourse at the intersection of feminist and animality studies. While there are moments within the primary texts that I felt must not be overlooked as such, any extensive attempt to bring in the complexities of critical race theory deserves a separate investigation altogether. The dual oppression experienced by women of color within the heteropatriarchy is significantly incomparable to the less specific discussion of feminist thought and animality set forth in the following pages. This thesis explores the codes of otherness as they are shared between and projected on both women and nonhuman animals *generally* as a means to ignite a wide ranging conversation on social and political activism for *all* marginalized or oppressed others.

I: THE BRANDING OF FITZGERALD'S FLAPPER

As women in the 1910's and 20's began to adopt the flapper lifestyle as a welcome break from strict Victorian tradition, the fiction of Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald worked to brand and sell her image for mass consumption. From the Isabelles and Rosalinds of his first 1920 novel, *This Side of Paradise*, to the Daisys and Jordans of 1925's *Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald employs the emboldened flapper figure as a literary device throughout the span of his work. It is *his* name which is synonymous with the movement and not Barbra Stanwyck or Clara Bow. Only recently has Zelda Fitzgerald been recognized as a woman who was far more complex and talented than the fictionalized versions Scott designed after her. Writing in favor of a predominantly white male audience, Fitzgerald's work advertised the new breed of woman as a desirable accessory to masculine traditions. Such fictional flappers thus marketed real women as superficial commodities with quaint fantasies of independence and agency—a brand Zelda combated throughout her twenty-two year marriage to Scott.

Awaiting potential deployment into the trenches of World War I, Scott met Zelda Sayre while stationed in Montgomery, Alabama in 1918. The daughter of a wealthy family with a penchant for a good time, Sayre was an established local celebrity long before Fitzgerald arrived. She would often attend dances put on for soldiers and perform the civic duty of partnering up with several men in one night—offering a feminine embrace for them to remember overseas. Indeed, it was at one such dance that Zelda met Scott for the first time. Immediately enamored with her Southern brand of flapper, Scott

spent the proceeding months trying to convince Zelda to marry him. Along with a zest for reckless behavior, Zelda was also a smart woman familiar with the economy of such contractual relationships. Marriage to a struggling writer-soldier was only slightly romantic and entirely unpragmatic. It was not until 1919, once the manuscript of *This Side of Paradise* was accepted by Schribners, that Zelda said yes to Scott's proposal against the traditional wishes of her Evangelical family. Thus began the infamous Fitzgerald relationship, which both husband and wife would fictionalize in their writing for decades to come.

From 1920-34, Scott went on to publish four major novels which were directly accompanied by four collections of short stories. The nearly two hundred stories have often been overshadowed by the academic attention given to the larger works. However, recent scholars have recognized that "the stories have entered the era of post-structuralist analysis and gender studies, revealing further evidence of their timeless value in documenting the degree to which they address, sometimes with surprisingly post-modernist vision, enduring aspects of the human condition" (Bryant 3). What the short work often lacks in narrative depth, it gains as an archival symptom of the times—both in terms of readership imagination and the market demands of popular culture. To support the indulgent lifestyle of the Fitzgeralds, these short works were often written quickly and designed to appeal to the widest audience possible, so Scott wrote what sold: flapper stories.

With Zelda as mascot, Scott's depictions of flapper figures in early short stories influenced the way the emerging "feminized culture" conducted or "groomed" themselves (Sanderson 15/ 5). Scott may not have single-handedly defined the emerging

Modern Woman, but he sensationalized those particular characteristics which would sell to his widest audience of heteronormative white men. Thus the female characters of the early stories become psychosexual conflations of innocence/deviance, docile/aggressive, human/nonhuman. In particular the collection which accompanied *This Side of Paradise*—aptly titled *Flappers and Philosophers* and dedicated to Zelda—is the most concerned with depictions of flappers, animality, and, in several cases, nuances of "madness." In these early works, women are often written as alluring in their animality—objects of curiosity and attraction. Yet, as the allure wears off and the masculine gaze drifts, she becomes a space of inconvenience, a vessel drifting ceaselessly towards mental compromise. While the flapper figure historically signified a woman's reclamation of her sexual identity from constructs of patriarchy, a close reading of the stories in *Flappers and Philosophers* makes it clear that she is merely *permitted* to be sexual by a male-orchestrated, consumerist society. As soon as this identity escapes the clutches of male ownership, it is subjugated to fictional and nonfictional cages.

Given the breadth of short fiction written by Scott in his lifetime, the proceeding examination will focus on pieces written between February and May of 1920, all of which were published in *The Saturday Evening Post* and anthologized in *Flappers and Philosophers.* Not only are these stories significant in terms of the critical theories set forth in this particular project, but they were also written and published on the precipice of Scott's marriage to Zelda (April 1920), the publication of *This Side of Paradise* (March 1920), and the aggressive rise in Fitzgerald's commercial popularity. Essentially, Scott's entire literary career and personal life is determined by the year 1920. Throughout the stories in *Flappers and Philosophers*, the human/nonhuman line is often blurred in

the portrayal of female characters, pointing to Fitzgerald's conflicting ideologies and relationships regarding codes of femininity and masculinity. In examining the varied nuances of human animality in Fitzgerald's collection, an attraction to and anxiety at the boundaries of otherness is illuminated. While his later stories continue to grapple with binaries of masculine/feminine, human/nonhuman, self/other—they are markedly more interested in Scott's critique of the emerging disillusionment located at the heart of the American Dream.

"Head and Shoulders" & "The Offshore Pirate"

Scott's first commercial success came from the publication of "Head and Shoulders" on February 21, 1920. He sold the story for four hundred dollars to *The Saturday Evening Post* and it was received well enough to be adapted into a silent movie that same year as *The Chorus Girl's Romance.* While "Head and Shoulders" was Scott's first financial success as a writer, it was not selected as the opening story of *Flappers and Philosophers.* It seems the publishers decided that "The Offshore Pirate" (which would also make its way to the silver screen) would be a better start to the collection. As prominent Fitzgerald scholar Kirk Curnutt mentions in the 2020 Oxford centennial introduction to *Flappers and Philosophers*, "exactly who selected the stories and how their running order was compiled remains a mystery" (xii). What is perhaps less mysterious is that both stories were designed with the intention to sell to the mass market for as much money as they could get. As Scott gracefully confessed to Ernest Hemingway, he considered such stories "whoring but that he had to do it as he made his money from the magazines to have money ahead to write decent books" (*A Moveable Feast* 153). It is interesting that Scott felt the compulsion to align his writing with the

commodification/economy of bodies suggested through the system of 'whoring,' particularly in correspondence with his masculine antithesis. The comparison anticipates the ways in which human and nonhuman animality collide at the site of female characters—coding them as objects of exchange and ownership. Given the wide success of both "Pirate" and "Shoulders," such a symbolic economy is not only indicative of Scott Fitzgerald's views on women/femininity, but also that of the readership who eagerly consumed such work.

Both "Head and Shoulders" and "The Offshore Pirate" are satirical love stories that focus on the early stages of courtship and marriage, or the hunt and subsequent domestication of the female characters by the male. The former narrative follows the developing relationship between a hyper-academic prodigy Horace Tarbox and the sensationalized flapper-actress, Marcia Meadows. Horace's infatuation with Marcia's performance—both on stage and off—quickly causes him to abandon philosophy in favor of pursuing her hand in marriage. Similarly, "The Offshore Pirate" follows an unraveling love story between Ardita Farnam and Curtis Carlye/Toby Moreland, but presents their courtship more so as an adventurous hunt for a mystical creature. While the female protagonists in these stories grapple with the pressures of an impending marriage, both recognize it as a threat to their independence as well as an inescapable consequence of being a woman. Despite Ardita's constant criticism on the prospects of her betrothal, "Offshore" romanticizes the early stages of courtship and concludes with a very staged proposal—all occurring over the course of only a few days. Meanwhile, "Shoulders" starts as a fun, flirty tale of two budding lovers only to reveal a more complicated critique on the economic and social sacrifices inherent in long-term, domestic arrangements.

The difference between these narratives on romantic love turned contractual obligation become evident not only through expressions of female animality as symbolic of her value as a wife but is also framed by the markedly different settings. Alongside the very real migration from rural to urban spaces at the time, so too did modernists fictionally place characters within or outside spaces of progression and emerging social norms. As Aiping Zhang expands on Fitzgerald's particular interplay of urban and rural spaces, "[his] use of these settings as a rich source of imagery objectifies social trends and individual desires. Each setting is no longer just a locale...but a sophisticated device, an integral part of the story designed to convey a unique vision of life in a profound way" (*Enchanted Places*). As such, the predominantly urban setting of "Shoulders" presents characters far more invested in the pressures of performing roles within the "normative" constructs of an ever-present and watchful society. Literally on stage, Marcia's feminine otherness is translated through Horace's conflicted lens of masculinity as nonhuman, and thus imperialistically deemed "in need" of domestication. Meanwhile, the South Florida coast of "Offshore" sees Ardita under the illusion of being temporarily removed from pressures entailed in her socialite status. Immersed in a "blue dream," Ardita is able to act outside of the expectations of gender which leads to her alignment with nonhuman animal—she is sketched as an intriguing sea creature worthy of the mantle (4).

Diving into the arguably more thrilling tale between the two stories, "Offshore Pirate" depends upon an element of fantasy which includes a more explicit blurring of human and nonhuman animal through descriptions of Ardita Farnam. We first meet Ms. Farnam while she lounges on her uncle's yacht anchored off the coast of Palm Beach. The initial description sketches the young flapper as animal: "slender and supple, with a

spoiled mouth and quick gray eyes full of a radiant curiosity" (4). Ardita is at once threatening with 'quick gray eyes' and desirable ('supple') in her primary nonhuman animal description. As the scene unravels, Ardita gets into a heated debate with her uncle regarding a prearranged suitor onshore. She decries "I won't go ashore! Won't! Do you hear? Won't," clearly rejecting the human obligation to social standards expected of landlocked young women (8). Ardita's unbending demeanor does not cease concerning her uncle, however, as she repeatedly screams "shut up" at others throughout the story. The refusal to willingly submit, even rhetorically, to any of one of the entire cast of male characters in "Offshore Pirate" positions Ardita Farnam as a woman pushing against doctrines of traditional thought.

As the story continues Ardita becomes more explicitly animalistic in description, thereby reinforcing the flapper figure as merely an attractive specimen to be collected for display by the male pursuer. After the confrontation with her uncle, Ardita is left alone on the yacht only to be stumbled upon by "a large rowboat...containing seven men, six of them rowing and one standing up in the stern" (9). Here we meet head 'pirate,' Curtis Carlyle, along with Babe from Bermuda and five African Americans from Tennessee, all of whom are part of a singing group recently turned robbers, and then even more recently turned pirates (or at least that is the story told to Ardita). After hijacking the *Narcissus*, kidnapper and kidnappee share several intimate moments, one of which Carlyle remarks, "I suppose you're a shark" in response to the vision of Ardita bikini-clad on a beach (26). She responds, "Yes, I am pretty good. And I look cute too. A sculptor up at Rye last summer told me my calves were worth five hundred dollars" (26). Here we see the application of animality (shark) to the character of Ardita to expose a level of

intimidation and captivation in the feminine figure, not to mention notions of owning such a symbol—her body parts come at a price. The female animality continues: "she spread her arms and stood there swanlike, radiating pride in her young perfection" and as Ardita herself exclaims, "We're going through the black air with our arms wide….and our feet straight out behind like a dolphin's tail" (30). The species of animal used regarding the figure of Ardita are symbolic of beauty on one hand (swan) and playful curiosity (dolphin) on the other. What's more, her female animality takes on a mythical undertone in its semblance to a mermaid. Such a comparison not only reinforces Ardita's hybridity, but also suggests that the quest to own her is based on an unrealistic fantasy of femininity.

Unlike Ardita's aquatic reprieve, the reader first encounters Marcia Meadows in "Head and Shoulders" as she actively and willingly enters into "designated" male territory. Yet, Marcia clearly recognizes the value of her own feminine appeal within the social constructs of urban living. Upon a dare she playfully enters into Horace's dormitory, her presence described as "a sound as of a rustling, diaphanous form" (59). While 'rustling' indicates a more animalistic quality, the 'diaphanous form' assigns this quality to that of ethereal apparition. Regardless, Marcia Meadows is at once illustrated as at least somewhat nonhuman. Her boldness at entering into his domain of intellectual meanderings is so unnatural to Horace that his first thought is described as:

> she existed there only as a *phantom* of his imagination. Women didn't come into men's rooms and sink into men's [chairs]. Women brought laundry and took your seat in the street-car and married you later on when you were old enough to know fetters. (59 my italics)

It is interesting that Horace equates marriage to a jail sentence while also pointing to the docile servitude that women are delegated to both socially (men are obligated to *stand over* women on the street-car) and economically (men's laundry is a woman's job). As "Head and Shoulders" plays out, it becomes clear that Horace's understanding of gender performance is merely learned from the philosophizing of men before him and not from any real, social experiences. As he is quick to confess to Marcia, "To aid in the massacre [his childhood and upbringing] I had ear trouble—seven operations between the age of nine and twelve. Of course this kept me apart from other boys and made me ripe for forcing" (61). Horace's struggle to keep up with the competition inherent to masculine traditions is amplified by the densely populated setting of the story—one that places a high value on social standing and mobility. So when Marcia admits to being a successful stage actress with celebrity status, Horace reassesses her phantom estimation in favor of his own social salvation—she becomes a totem of femininity to be contracted into marriage.

The character point of view between these two stories also plays an important role in how the female protagonists are perceived as other either through animality (Ardita) or domesticated nonhuman (Marcia). As Derrida suggests in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, the main boundary between human/nonhuman is language and similarly the voice given (or not) to these female-animal characters determines the agency they are permitted in the narrative. Not only outspoken but also assigned an internal dialogue, Ardita maintains her wild demeanor throughout "Offshore Pirate." Such an "untamed" personality plays into her eventual "trapping" and becoming the trophy-animal-wife at the end of Toby Moreland's adventurous marine hunt. Meanwhile, Marcia speaks, but is

often quoting others or reciting lines from plays, essentially depending on the words of others to communicate. What's more, the only time the reader gets a hint at her internal dialogue is when Marica recognizes the economy of ownership in the male gaze as Horace stares up at her while on stage. This sudden realization is described as "An *instinctive* defiance rose within her...Unconquerable revulsion seized her" (68 my italics). In the brief moment that the reader is permitted within the thoughts of Marcia, she is described as a panicked animal, one realizing they've been cornered. Having invited Horace to her show in the first place, Marcia feels "vaguely sorry—as though an unwonted responsibility was being forced on her" (68). Reminiscent of Horace's earlier description of 'fetters,' Marcia realizes that her social and economic independence will become jeopardized as her youth fades (a favorite theme of Fitzgerald's) thus pointing to marriage as an ideal source of social and economic security for a woman.

Not long after Marcia's onstage revelation (or perhaps panic attack) at the prospect of marriage, she agrees to Horace's insistent proposal. Having been disappointed at the "value of academic knowledge" in the job market, Horace confesses to "hate" that Marcia not only continues to work after marriage but is making more money than him (71). The romanticization felt in the blind pursuit of Marcia quickly fades as Horace realizes that matrimony does not seem to secure the "masculine" status he had hoped for. The financial tensions are then exacerbated by Marcia's pregnancy a few months into the marriage, which ultimately forces Horace to take over the role of performing for money. A skilled acrobat, he takes his act to the Hippodrome, an arena famous for disappearing elephants and other animal performances. The role of spectator and spectacle reversed, Horace is now the one positioned on the platform of nonhuman others. Regardless of

such a comparison, he is able to play out the role of "male provider" while Marcia is on bedrest. Any reprieve in the reestablishment of traditional/human gender roles is short lived, however, when Marcia reveals she has written a book during her pregnancy. Titled *Sandra Pepys, Syncopated*, the book is described not unlike the more experimental modernist work of Fitzgerald's time:

> [featuring] constant mistakes in spelling and grammar [and] weird punctuation...From its first published instalment it attracted attention far and wide. A trite enough subject--a girl from a small New Jersey town coming to New York to on the stage--treated simply, with a peculiar vividness of phrasing and a haunting undertone of sadness in the very inadequacy of its vocabulary, it made an irresistible appeal. (78)

Marcia's status as nonhuman other can no longer hold in the imagined hegemony of Horace. She has accomplished the very thing he wished to do as an academic and, in doing so, proved that socially constructed binaries of identity (wife/husband, man/woman, human/nonhuman) are not only malleable, but oftentimes arbitrary. Yet, Fitzgerald is sure to downplay any celebration of female intellect or agency by ending the story as a warning against marriage to such women. Horace's academic hero—Anton Laurier—pays a visit to the Tarbox home after he "read the book of Madame, and [had] been charmed" (79). Humiliated by his wife's intellectual honor, Horace disavows any role as supportive husband to warn philosopher and reader alike: "About raps [knocks]. Don't answer them! Let them alone—have a padded door" (79).

The conclusion of "Offshore Pirate" reveals that the entire Atlantic fantasy between Ardita and Carlyle was an invention to convince her to court the man she

adamantly refused to go to shore for at the beginning of the story: Toby Moreland. Reminiscent of the previous 'dolphin' comparison, Ardita's intelligence and rebellious nature is now patronized—she's been tangled in Moreland's deceptive net the whole time. Given her stubborn demeanor, the more surprising part of the story's concluding scene is that Ardita actually agrees to continue a romantic relationship with Carlyle, now Toby. Claiming to be impressed with such an imaginative ruse, Ardita tells him "I want you to lie to me just as sweetly as you know how *for the rest of my life*" (32 my italics). Once again Fitzgerald ends with a biting critique on romantic love and marriage, positing that such relationships are often built upon a foundation of deceit. Yet, the agency given to Ardita as a character might have gotten away from the author in this regard. Her litany of philosophical ponderings throughout the story reveals a keen awareness of the position of young, single women within society. After dodging the family's first attempt to "marry [her] off," Ardita found "life was scarcely worth living" and opted to "live as [she] liked always and to die in [her] own way" (22). Such a confession adds a level of depth to this particular flapper character, underscoring that Ardita came out of a depressive state fully recognizing herself as a desirable commodity. She goes on: "the men kept gathering—old men and young men, my mental and physical inferiors, most of them, but all intensely desiring to have me—*to own* this rather magnificent proud tradition I'd built up 'round me" (23). Just as the repetitive comparison between human and nonhuman animal suggests, Ardita sees herself as the feminine "mascot" to patriarchal society (17). The end of the story told through this lens sees Ardita choosing a partner who can invent an illusion to cover the depressing truth of women's position as objects of exchange.

It seems important to once again pause here and point to the ways in which animality is applied to the female other in not only “Offshore Pirate” and “Head and Shoulders,” but in the stories to be discussed later, and juxtapose harshly with the ways in which Fitzgerald handles racial others in the texts. As Carrie Rohman writes in *Stalking the Subject: Modernism and the Animal*, the animal figure in modernist imaginations also brought on an increase in:

> Social Darwinisms, the revamping of social hierarchies that valued a given culture or gender according to its perceived distance from the animal in the chain of evolutionary progress. These hierarchies line up with an imperialist chain of being that animalizes the colonized other in an attempt to purify the European subject of its Darwinian heritage. But our critical discussions of race and imperialism rarely understand how these otherings are given force through the discourse of species. (22)

Flappers and Philosophers was published the same year that the Nineteenth Amendment was passed alongside the fusion of African and European cultures celebrated in the Jazz Age. However, as a white male writing in and for a society favoring whiteness and masculinity, Fitzgerald’s application of animality to racial and feminine others reiterates a psychological and social anxiety toward both. As Jared Griffin discusses in an essay about “Offshore Pirate,” Fitzgerald is “an author who is beginning to write about the ironies of race and manhood, yet nevertheless sympathizes with a conservative racial ideology steeped in the rhetoric of American masculinity and class” and suggests “we need to look more closely at how race and gender inform each other in the imagery employed by a pre-Gatsby Fitzgerald” (Griffin 325). Overall, the context of animality at

work within Fitzgerald's fiction reflects not only his own anxiety in terms of otherness, but also the overall socio-historical implications of the modernist moment.

"The Ice-Palace"

Wedged between the two previously discussed works in *Flappers and Philosophers*, "The Ice Palace" was originally published in *The Saturday Evening Post* on May 22, 1920. It is one of a handful of Fitzgerald stories based around the fictional Southern town of Tarleton, Georgia. Scott created Tarleton merely to avoid directly offending the in-laws, however, and these stories are inspired by his time in Montgomery and the complicated courting of its reigning debutante: Zelda Sayre. While "Ice Palace" deals with themes of "traditional" Southern manners and "romanticized" Confederate memories, it also relies quite heavily on human animality. As with "Head and Shoulders" and "Offshore," this story traces the sort of contractual obligation of a marriage proposal between Southerner, Sally Carrol Happer, and Northerner, Harry Bellamy. Unlike the previous stories, though, Fitzgerald offers up "Ice Palace" as a carnival of varying human-animals and the implications of their "natural" or "unnatural" environment. Yet, the various forms of animality described are not dependent on gender as it is in the previous stories. While Sally Carrol is still the object of acquisition as the animal is hunted, her brief yet explicit translation of human characters into categories of implicit animality offers "Ice Palace" as a text both anthropological and ethological in nature.

About halfway through "Ice Palace," we find Sally Carrol removed from her native Southern region and placed into that of the Northern town of her new fiancé. The initial excitement of Harry's proposal is wearing off to be replaced with despondence and general unease at the thought of her future status as a "Northern wife." At a party in

which she is essentially being socialized with her husband-to-be's close circle of friends, Sally Carrol is approached by the professor Roger Patton. Noticing her dismay ("I saw you look out the window a minute ago—and shiver") he strikes up a conversation which comes to the point of discussing Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen (58), a prominent modernist writer and, interestingly, one for whom a plethora of animal studies research exists—particularly concerning *The Wild Duck.* Moving on, however, Sally Carrol eventually admits that she "always think[s] of people as feline or canine, *irrespective of sex*" (58 my italics). Here she eradicates the gendering of animality in her philosophy, adding a complexity to both her character and Fitzgerald's play on the human/nonhuman boundary. Sally Carrol goes on to explain to Patton, "I'm feline. So are you. So are most Southern men an' most of these girls here" to which he inquires what we are all wondering: "What does 'canine' imply? A certain conscious masculinity as opposed to subtle?" (58). Here, Fitzgerald seems to anticipate the ways in which his own brand of masculinity would famously be compared to that of Ernest Hemingway, another prominent modernist writer who he was to meet in 1925. Moreover, the conversation of canine or feline reinforces the anxiety of definitive gender lines (something Scott may have struggled with) and disrupts the traditional discourse of anthropomorphism.

If we return to the beginning of "Ice Palace" Fitzgerald writes Sally Carrol as indeed possessing 'feline' qualities and that these qualities are less indicative of her gender and more so concerned with a quality of character, be it human or nonhuman. The consideration of various "species of human" on Fitzgerald's part spotlights an infusion of Freudian theories (concerned with "natural dispositions" according to social and psychological codes) and Darwinian thought (aligning human species with animal

species). As Ronald Berman clarifies, “In order to make [his characters] *psychology* credible, Fitzgerald used mechanisms of dream and daydream, and suggested layers of complexity beneath the *human* surface...Fitzgerald, like any other writer, needed ideas to verify behavior—and to make his work recognizable” (50 my italics). In the case of “Ice Palace,” he employs the mechanism of animality—and more specifically a discourse of species in an effort to represent human temperament or *person*ality. Berman also points out that Edmund Wilson, a prominent critic of the time and close friend of the Fitzgeralds, felt that the fusion of Freudian and Darwinian science made an undeniable impression on the emergent fiction of the time. Berman goes as far to suggest that Wilson “particularly had Scott and Zelda in mind” while writing *The Wound and the Bow* in 1941, a book which explores the creative psychology and drives behind several modernists writers (52). Despite the decidedly short list of nonhuman animal characters in Fitzgerald’s work, “The Ice Palace” is a pertinent example of how he implores animality as a means toward a more complex reading of an otherwise superficial short story.

The descriptions of Sally Carrol throughout “Ice Palace" go beyond the self-ascribed, metaphorical title of feline—Fitzgerald quite literally sketches her behavior as that of a cat. As the story opens, she is resting on a window sill as “the Happer house took the full sun.” Meanwhile one of her Tarleton beaus beckons to her from the yard to which “Sally Carrol gazed down sleepily. She started to yawn, but finding this quite impossible unless she raised her chin from the window-sill, changed her mind and continued silently to regard the car” (33). Eventually unable to ignore the honks of Clark Darrow’s Ford, she “sighed voluminously and raised herself with profound inertia from

the floor where she had been occupied" (34). If Sally Carrol's less-than-metaphorical felinity is still in doubt, the scene concludes with her knocking over a glass of water and leaving the room without any attempt to clean it up. Such descriptions continue to be applied to her character throughout the story, positioning Sally Carrol as the 'feline' so often at the receiving end of 'canine' pursuit.

Meanwhile, the canine characters in "Ice Palace" are described in a decidedly less animalistic manner than Sally Carrol's own behavior and taxonomy would suggest. The figures are not depicted within the discourse of the species—they are not energetic, salivating, playful, or even mean-tempered. Professor Robert Patton confesses that he sees the canine-Northerners not unlike an Isben character, having a "certain brooding rigidity. They're righteous, narrow, and cheerless, without infinite possibilities for great sorrow or joy" (45). Such a rigidity juxtaposes to the Sally Carrol/Southern disposition which identifies a certain duality or hybridity of nature. As she confesses to a Southern friend before departing, "There's two sides to me, you see. There's the sleepy old side you love; an' there's a sort of energy—the feelin' that makes me do wild things" (47). It is the 'wild' side which Sally Carrol heeds when accepting Harry's proposal, only to be wildly disappointed in the progression/domestication toward marriage. What's more, her human/nonhuman, civilized/wild duality reveals a more empathetic perspective by her character in the face of otherness throughout "Ice Palace."

Not only does this duality point to the notions of civility and wildness at work in the human consciousness; it also emphasizes the contrast in setting between the slow pace of the South to the dehumanizing nature of the progressive North. The heat is described as "never hostile, only comforting, like a great warm nourishing bosom for the

infant earth" while the cold North is recounted having "no sky- only a dark, ominous tent that draped the top of the streets...chilling away the comfort...It was a dismal town after all" (47/65). The story ultimately sketches the South as a space of innocent ('infant') femininity ('bosom') and decidedly less threatening as such ('never hostile'). Meanwhile, the North is described as a depressing and un-nurturing area—one perhaps more invested in the dehumanization inherent to a modernizing, industrialized city. In his essay on the "Ice Palace," Derek Lee explains, "Through Sally Carrol, we understand the South as a wonderland where pre-Enlightenment attributes like simplicity and nature still have a place in the modern world" (131). In other words, the South, and therefore Sally Carrol as its native, draws a thinner line between human and animal as opposed to the more desolate coldness of the 'canine' North.

Sally Carrol's repeated concern for and understanding of those deemed nonhuman clashes with the views of Harry, who depends on and manipulates such binaries of otherness as a means to define himself against. Unsurprisingly in terms of literary animality studies, this preoccupation with "self versus other" sees Harry's character participating in scenes nuanced in racism, classism, and sexism beginning perhaps most obviously with his choice to marry a Southern feline-girl who embodies the "innocent femininity" of her natural environment over a Northern canine-girl of his local region. Harry admits to Sally Carrol that he views Southerners, men particularly, as "sort of degenerates...They've lived so long down there with all the colored people that they've gotten lazy and shiftless" (48). Given the dehumanizing nature inherent in such racist claims (fictional and non) along with Sally Carrol's earlier appraisal that most Southern men (and herself) fall under the category of feline (versus all others, who are canine)

together serves to seriously complicate this single line from "Ice Palace." Firstly, the particular use of 'degenerate' here implies not only a sort of aberration in the status of one's perceived personhood, but also a movement "back" from the space of humanity. Harry's contention regarding race and regionality thus becomes tangled in Sally Carrol's species theory, which would then push her into *his* version of being "not fully human." And so the feline/canine narrative in "Ice Palace" is implicated into a much more serious conversation regarding the intersection of gender, race, and animality.

As the story approaches its climax, Harry attempts to soothe premarital tensions by escorting Sally Carrol into a space constructed entirely from the climate she has been unable to adapt to: an ice palace. A man made structure built of "blocks for which had been selected for their purity and clearness," the castle represents manipulation of the natural world in favor of 'pure' (white) masculinity disguised as "progression" (52). Confined inside such an emblem, Sally Carrol slowly descends into a state of panic. Aligning the cacophony of ceremonies by local men's clubs to that of "the North offering sacrifice on some mighty altar to the gray pagan God of Snow," her position as 'sacrifice' upon the altar of marriage becomes imminent (52). Clearly exhilarated at such a celebration of man's prowess, Harry goes on to patronize Sally Carrol's fear by running away and leaving her in the dark tunnels of the ice palace. Like a cat suddenly realizing its caged circumstances, she "started to run straight forward, and then turned like lightning and sped back the way she had come" (53). Unable to escape the palace and the patriarchal construction it symbolizes, Sally Carrol begins to see her place "embedded" in the frozen pillars of tradition "like corpses she had read of" (54). She realizes that an engagement to Harry will require a sterilization of self, leaving Sally Carrol nothing more

than a cold stanchion in the shape of a wife. As such, the non-threatening theories on animality, and by extension all those falling under the category of nonhuman other, have turned into a code for subordination in the hands of 'progressive men.' After spending two hours in the palace of revelation, Sally Carrol is found seemingly far more angry than delirious from the experience. She demands with "unstrained passion" to be returned home.

"Bernice Bobs Her Hair"

Considered to be the most popular story from *Flappers and Philosophers*, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" veers only slightly from the standard theme of marriage to focus instead on female competition during the early stages of courtship. Many scholars assert that Fitzgerald was inspired by a pages-long letter he wrote to his sister dispersing various advice on how to become socially adept and attractive to others. It also seems pertinent, however, that the two *original* names drafted for the female rivals in "Bernice" (Barbara and Marjorie) are the same names of Ginerva King's sisters. Ginerva was Scott's first love and devastating heartbreak, the celebrity socialite having famously opted to "marry up" instead of remaining involved with the struggling writer (Bruccoli *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur*). King is repeatedly framed as "the one that got away" in Fitzgerald's fictive imagination—a particularly potent idiom in terms of female animality. Given such context, "Bernice" can be read as a story fantasizing and celebrating female competition for male attention. The story finds a docile Bernice visiting her decidedly aggressive cousin Marjorie. Fitzgerald designs these characters as opposing versions (Ginerva/Zelda) of the Modern Woman who must ultimately vie to secure an apex position within the same social circle. Meanwhile, the aloof hopeless

romantic, Warren McIntyre/Scott Fitzgerald, plays spectator at the arena of female competition.

The application of animality in “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” first emerges not in the two women but subtly and nuanced in the descriptions of characters existing as the backdrop of the tale. While the previous stories feature setting as an influencing factor for the emergence of human animality, in “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” the peopling of the environment is itself described as animalistic. The older women gathered at the clubhouse dance, for example, are described in the opening scene as “a great babble of middle-aged ladies with sharp eyes and icy hearts behind lorgnettes and large bosoms” (131). Identifying the assembly of women as a babble not only resonates with gaggle, but also suggests that the group are apt to be heard before they are seen. Paired with their sharp eyes, the female chest is desexualized and more comparable to the plumage of a bird’s puffed torso. While these older women are described in terms of animality, such desexualization is likely a reflection of Fitzgerald's opinion that a woman’s value decreases with age.

The story goes on to explain that “every young man with a large income leads the life of a hunted partridge” which works to reverse the gendering of hunter/hunted as analyzed in previous stories (132). The wealthy men are something to be caught, stuffed, and put on a wall, not unlike the shark-like Ardita or feline Sally Carrol. Yet, “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” positions the female characters as the ones pursuing while the male characters remain on the periphery and are repeatedly referred to as “stags” (100/112). The animal-peopling of the setting continues as the scene of ballroom dancing concludes: “The couples exchange artificial, effortless smiles, facetiously repeat ‘*la*-de-*dad da* dum-

dum,' and then the clatter of young feminine voices soars over the burst of clapping" (132). The imagery here conveys both the song of birds to one another (*la*-de-*dad*) and the unitary flight of a flock at a sudden interruption (feminine voices soar). By "animalizing" these early scenes, Fitzgerald anticipates a more subtle and comprehensible convergence of female/nonhuman animal in the characters of Bernice and Marjorie. The setting also pushes the reader to see their unraveling aggressive competition as a sort of natural ritual occurring across species boundaries.

As Fitzgerald surely insinuated in the aforementioned letter sent to his sister, the prospect of securing a partner in any environment requires a very precise dance and formulated physical appearance in order to attract one. This is no different for the characters of Bernice and Marjorie, who while on escapades with a plethora of possible suitors on the same dancefloor (territory), were destined to become competitors. As the narrator (Scott?) supplies, "Youth in this jazz-nourished generation is temperamentally restless" (135). The plot of "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" begins to read as a nature documentary, and we come to recognize the innate differences between Bernice and Marjorie. As it is put, "Marjorie never giggled, was never frightened, seldom embarrassed, and in fact had very few qualities which Bernice considered appropriately and blessedly feminine" while Bernice is preoccupied "on novels which the female was beloved because of certain mysterious womanly qualities, always mentioned but never displayed" (137). Thus Marjorie comes to represent the new feminine, flapper mentality of the Jazz Age while Bernice is stuck in the exceedingly less popular, more traditional values gender—that is until the two begin to embody the same brand.

Marjorie eventually agrees to help Bernice become more attractive to the men in their social group only to realize she has created a competitor in doing so, pushing both women into various representations of animality. Echoing Darwin himself, Marjorie anticipates a push toward animalistic behavior early on by explaining to her mother how "these days it's every girl for herself" (104). And so after losing the attention of Warren McIntyre (the man she previously went to great lengths to ignore) to the new version of Bernice (whom she helped create) Marjorie is provoked into action. She "did her work very coldly and succinctly in three sentences" and informs Bernice that this man "doesn't care a snap of his fingers about" her (153). Albeit not yet physical, this is nonetheless an attack on Bernice that leaves her "half-angry, half-afraid" which are two indicators that seem to transcend between human and animal if a threat is observed (153). The aggression continues when Bernice is, as the title suggests, pressured to cut her hair into the fashionable "bob" style of the time. As Warren and Marjorie "stared at her, challenged her, defied her," Bernice reluctantly agrees (155).

As she awaits the fated haircut, Bernice considers whether "they would tie a white cloth round her neck lest any of her blood—nonsense—hair—should get on her clothes" (156). In mixing up the severity of spilled blood with the more superficial asset of a hair style, the likeliness to an animalesque confrontation is clearly at hand. As Michael Lundblad writes, "The animal within you, just like the animal in the wild, is naturally hardwired for survival in the jungle, even if the human part of you is defined by the capacity for restraining those animal instincts" (499). Bernice is slowly being pushed to shed her "humanity" as the affront from Marjorie persists. The story continues, and Marjorie is reported as "serpentlike" in the aftermath of the "outrageous trap" that she

concocted for Bernice (158). However, Bernice quickly retaliates that evening. As she prepares for her final escape from the humility and humanity of this town to return to Eau Claire she moves "quietly, but with deadly efficiency" in her preparations (160). We are suddenly seeing the animality of the character of Bernice and it seems even more menacing than the passive aggression of Marjorie. Almost fully-animal Bernice goes on, "stealthily to the bureau, picked up an article that lay there, and turning out all the lights stood quietly until her eyes became accustomed to the darkness. Softly she pushed open the door to Marjorie's room. She heard the quiet, even breathing of an untroubled conscious asleep" (161). Here, Bernice is adapting to the dark in order to cut off Marjorie's braids while she sleeps. As she eventually whips the dismembered locks at the front door of Warren's nearby home, she "laughed again, no longer *restraining* herself" (162 my italics). It would seem Bernice has abandoned the restrictions of socialized humanity as she sees it and is now free to be true to her newly realized animal self.

And yet, any gratification felt in reading "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" as the ultimate revenge tale is complicated upon reflection to an earlier claim regarding Bernice's heritage. While complaining to her mother about her social ineptitude, Marjorie suggests "I think it's that crazy Indian blood in Bernice...Maybe she's a reversion to type. Indian women all just sat around and never said anything" (105). Brief as it is, to include such a point on Fitzgerald's part presumes that the display of animality in the final scene is somehow an implication of Bernice's Native American ancestry. In fact, after the deed of "amputating" Marjorie's braids is complete and Bernice has thrown them onto Warren's porch, she giggles "Scalp the selfish thing!" (122). Scholars have problematically suggested that such a conclusion "assert[s] that a victory of a female Native American

individual over white patriarchal society is actually possible" (Notea 30).. As with the previous stories, however, "Bernice" maintains the theme of animality merely to reinforce a social hierarchy in favor of white masculinity. As Ya'ara Notea agrees:

> Even if one chooses to believe that Bernice's final actions imply an embrace of her ancestral Native American roots (which, we must remember, could merely be a piece of gossip overheard by Marjorie), she herself employs this identity in the most stereotypical, socially constructed manner, taking on the role of a savage, scalping warrior. [The] argument that Bernice's socialization eventually entails a break from social norms and from society does not account for the unfortunate reality that it is impossible to exist outside society. When girls and women do refuse society's normalizing coercion, they are never victorious but instead are shunned from society, driven to madness or to death. (30)

So, despite writing both characters as possessing animality and engaging in forms of feminine competition, it becomes clear that Fitzgerald ultimately designs Marjorie as the "civilized" female animal while Bernice remains the "uncivilized." Her decision to prematurely return to Eau Claire is not some sort of victory but an admission of her inadaptability to progressive "feminine qualities" (108). As such, the final scene sees Bernice dressed in a "new traveling suit" to compliment the 'amputation' of her own feminine hair, thus completing the transformation into a "Greenwich Villager who had left her spectacles at home" (122/121/119). If the status of her otherness was not complete, Fitzgerald is sure to compare her to "bohemian feminists" because there is nothing quite as unattractive or undesirable to men as a feminist (Curnett 180).

II: BARNES UNLEASHES THE FEMALE ANIMAL

It is somewhat unfair to claim that the work of Djuna Barnes is completely overshadowed by the commercial success of Fitzgerald—her writing is recognized as an important contribution to the modernist genre. The appeal of her art can be directly accredited to a deep recognition of the strange darkness in which it was conceived. As one of the leading figures of the early bohemian circuit in New York City, Barnes's work leans heavily on the more experimental and abstract styles of the modernist movement. The 1937 novel *Nightwood* is widely recognized as the greatest success of her career, yet Barnes's creativity reached beyond any one genre and, in fact, any one medium. Her breadth of work includes plays, poetry, sketches, drawings, interviews, newspaper articles, and a large number of short stories. Despite such a range, however, most of the work shares themes of the grotesque and is steeped in deep pessimism which is just barely hidden beneath Barnes's infamous dark humor. If Fitzgerald's legacy lies with the Jay Gatsbys of American culture, Barnes is inclined to unearth the gritty truth to their pseudo-success.

Born only four years before Fitzgerald in 1892, Djuna Barnes grew up in a rural town fifty miles north of New York City. She was informally educated by her family, which included a suffragist grandmother and polyamorous father. While many of the details of her early life remain unclear, many scholars speculate that Barnes experienced some level of sexual abuse and possibly even incest (Phillip Herring, *Djuna: The Life and Work of Djuna Barnes*). Barnes herself never confirmed or denied these theories

throughout her ninety-year life, yet her creative work does navigate elements of sexual exploitation and abusive relationships. Around 1912, Barnes moved to New York City and began to publish her work in a wide variety of newspapers and magazines. Whether writing fiction or non, Barnes evokes an avant-garde theme which, in many ways, mirrors her lifestyle at the time. Taking the motto of 'free love' inscribed upon her by her father's polygamous ideologies, Barnes partook in relations with both men and women and such open sexuality permeates her work. As we will see, this approach—to both life and art—configures female animality quite differently than that of Fitzgerald's. Imagining narratives outside of the heteronormative compulsion of American society, Barnes presents animality as a means to escape the assembly line production of traditional femininity.

Much of the critical work on Djuna Barnes tends to focus on *Nightwood.* Indeed, the novel has become a staple of "lesbian" fiction although arguably a contemporary audience might recognize the more bi/queer implications of the story. Perhaps it is this fluidity of the narrative that attracts animality scholars. As Carrie Rohman emphasizes, "Unlike much modernist writing, Barnes's novel refuses the displacement of animality onto marginalized others in *the service of imperialist and masculinist projections*" (57 my italics). Along with gender and sexual (heteronormative) binaries, the text seriously complicates the line between human and nonhuman animal and pushes for a recognition of female animality in terms of liberation. Even though *Nightwood* was published roughly twenty years after the previously discussed texts, it has become a talking point in animality studies and therefore provides important insight to the argument at hand. However, the attention given to the novel will act as a bit of an afterthought to the initial

analysis, which will focus on some of Barnes's early short work. Such a consideration will compare more succinctly to the previously discussed Fitzgerald stories so far as the sociohistorical moment goes, most of them being written and published only a few years before his catapult to fame. In this manner, the imagination of the audience is reflected in Barnes's popularity as a multifaceted writer of her time especially as a queer woman.

"The Girl and the Gorilla"

Much like Fitzgerald, Barnes arrived in New York eager to get her work published in order to financially support her lifestyle. What is different about her experience and so many other women writers, however, was that she was more immediately burdened with the responsibility of supporting a family. Having moved to the city with three younger siblings, Barnes recognized the economic potential of her artistic talent in a society becoming as saturated in popular culture as that of early twentieth-century New York. While much of Fitzgerald's early short work occupies the niche of flapper fiction and *The Saturday Evening Post*, Barnes published in a wide range of newspapers and journals. Many female writers of the time were delegated to a particular column covering topics geared toward a female readership. Not surprisingly, Barnes's work resists such categorization. She published in magazines such as *All-Story Weekly*, "one of the many publishing ventures of Frank Munsey, who invented 'pulp' magazines, which could be mass-produced on cheap pulp paper and therefore sold at a very low price" (Maller 6/7). Barnes also offered her services to the style of "stunt journalism" in which women writers would often put themselves in rather precarious situations and report these experiences in writing. As Rebecca Loncraine explains,

> Stunt journalism reveals the extent to which women journalists who wanted to work outside the women's pages found that they had to use their bodies, performance, and their own experiences as a means of getting a story…[Barnes's] body is put on display as protagonist, subject and illustration. (158)

In the piece "How it Feels to Be Forcibly Fed," Barnes allows herself to be physically bound and fed by tube as incarcerated suffragists were, reporting that she "had shared the greatest experience of the bravest of my sex" (*V&R).* In "My Adventures Being Rescued," she is famously pictured dangling from the side of a building upon her umpteenth extraction by emergency workers during a series of staged rescues.

In yet another success at stunt journalism, Barnes found herself interviewing a gorilla named Dinah at the Bronx Zoo in October 1914. While the article may escape the genre of fiction—Barnes did indeed share an experience with a nonhuman primate—the style of her reporting reads as a short, biting satire on traditional notions of civility and femininity. It seems important to pause here and consider that the Bronx Zoo was also a site of a much less satirical and much more racist example of dehumanization in the case of Ota Benga. Benga who was an African man brought to America by a white '"explorer" to be showcased in the 1904 World Fair. The details of how Benga came to be paired up with the explorer in the first place remains unclear, however several sources suggest he was purchased through the slave trade. In 1906 Benga was "left" at the Bronx Zoo where he ultimately ended up living in the ape enclosure and left on display as a pillar of otherness via physical proximity to the "animal" for the viewing public to observe. Such a moment reinforces how the human/nonhuman boundary has historically been exploited

to not only uphold racist, but also sexist, classist, and so many other -ist narratives that plague "civilized" society. While Barnes's piece is not void of some racist human/nonhuman metaphor, she ultimately gives agency to Dinah as a sentient being and as an extension, pushes for a reimagination at the boundaries of otherness, generally.

Aptly titled "The Girl and the Gorilla," Barnes's stunt article assigns overtly human-feminine qualities onto the interviewee at hand: Dinah, a new gorilla at the Primate House. While the short article features Barnes's infamous humor, it also transcends the boundaries between human and nonhuman in its cultural critique of traditional gender roles. The satire is immediately evident within the opening lines of the essay:

> A NEW SPECIES has come to town! We thought we had a line on all the different kinds of femininity in the world, their fads, fancies, and fashions, their virtues and their indiscretions—when suddenly enters Dinah, the bushgirl. She is neither feminine nor very fragile, to look at. She has fashion's wide shoulder-cape of hair but this is as far as the semblance goes, as she stands before us leaning upon bowed forearms, taut as suspense, looking out of faraway eyes upon a life called civilized. Such is the gorilla woman, the only living captive of her race. (*V&R* 58)

Barnes's insistence on Dinah as 'gorilla woman' overwhelms notions of anthropomorphism and, instead, suggests a sort of hybridity of human and nonhuman qualities. She is able to align the traits of traditional femininity ('fads, fancies, and fashions') with that of another species, reversing the anthropologic themes of the "scientific human" observing the "wild specimen." Similarly, in describing Dinah as

‘looking out of faraway eyes upon a life *called* civilized,’ Barnes is raising the proverbial eyebrow at what constitutes civilized over non-civilized: particularly at the sight of a captive Dinah. Echoing contemporary scholars in animality studies, Barnes suggests that what we call ‘civilized’ is merely a façade for domination and imperialist validation of both human and nonhuman animals. She recognizes that the spectatorship of women’s bodies, particularly of the newly refashioned flapper figures, is not unlike the crowd at a zoo looking upon the nonhuman animal as a space of both curiosity and anxiety. The security of a woman-animal caged and sedated is amusing while the idea of her breaking free is a threat to civilized and patriarchal society.

Barnes maintains a connection between the feminine human and nonhuman animal throughout “The Girl and the Gorilla” by implying a level of cross-species discourse. She approaches Dinah as woman-to-woman as opposed to female human to non-gendered animality. If it were not for the contemporary knowledge we have of the ways which primates, specifically, are proven entirely capable of communicating, it might be said that Barnes is merely exercising her comedic proclivities. Yet, there are hints throughout the article that Barnes is empathic to the gorilla’s captivity without the need for spoken language. Firstly, she makes it a point that the professor in charge of Dinah points that “she had her own way of talking-” in some ways anticipating the discoveries regarding primate communication and also allowing the reader to comfortably imagine what such a communication might entail (58). Barnes makes light of such a concept, anticipating the skepticism of the readership, by asking Dinah “What conclusions have you come to regarding our United States?” (58/59). However, other areas of the text seem to suggest a “speech” between human and nonhuman animal that

goes beyond the traditional definitions of language itself. In a very Derridian moment (only about ninety years before he uttered similar words in "The Animal Therefore I Am"), Barnes remarks "Three feet of the newest womankind in the world was making me feel—well, awkward to say the least" (59). As with Derrida's "bad time overcoming [his] embarrassment" in front of the gaze of the cat, that Dinah is somehow capable of creating self-consciousness in her human interviewer suggests that her perspective is valid to humanity (372). Barnes later describes Dinah as "looking very much like the other side of a funny camera" (59). Thus, the human recognizes a distorted self in the face of the nonhuman other. Finally, a scene is recounted in which "When [Dinah] laid her head upon my knees, I was not embarrassed but only pleased that she had found something in me, as representative of the women she had come along, to make her trustful" (60). Unlike Derrida, Barnes remarks specifically on *not* being embarrassed under the gaze (and physical contact) of nonhuman animal. Thus, as the article concludes, the humor briefly subsides to make room for the non-verbal discourse that Barnes felt between Dinah. Afterall, what is an interview without communication, whether with words or something else entirely.

Throughout the experience of interviewing Dinah, Barnes is sure to mention the incompetence of the male handlers, once again solidifying "The Girl and the Gorilla" as a satire dependent on female animality. Since a connection between female species has been established, it is as though both turn their gaze in collective ridicule to the male specimen. Dinah, seemingly bored with the interview, begins to "disrespectfully make faces at [Engelholm, her handler]" in front of a gathering crowd (56). Engelholm's masculinity is thus threatened publicly by the female species, forcing a crisis of

dominance between the human and nonhuman, male and female. He finally gets Dinah in his grasp, holding her still so the spectators can be certain of the hegemonic order of things. Having declared Dinah's "mean" nature to the crowd, Barnes observes Engelholm as "[searching] in vain for something that would symbolize Dinah's soul and personality" (56). In making the claim that Dinah has a '*person*ality' beyond the understanding of her male handlers, Barnes is subtly inferring the same experience for her human species. Pushing such a suggestion further, Barnes concludes "The Girl and the Gorilla" by referencing Rudyard Kipling's poem "The Female of the Species" which also critiques gender under the pretext of species.

"The Earth"

In a 1917 short story titled "The Earth," Barnes uses the rural setting to conflate the economic and social implications of animality as it is presented in the narrative. As with so many modernist works, Barnes's choice to place her characters in an entirely agricultural setting aligns with the very real mass migration from such areas into the burgeoning cityscape during her time. As humanity quite literally moved away from nonhuman animals and the natural world, the rising industrial culture of the 1910's and 20's sees a clear shift in thinking of animality directly in correlation with otherness. Amid the dehumanization inherent to industrial production, Barnes's "Earth" recalls a time when agricultural work maintained a sustainable relationship between human and nonhuman labor: a cohabitation both organic and very dependent on the other. Such a relationship is implied in the title of the story, with the earth signifying both a wider global existence and also the microcosms of literal shared earth/dirt which all species tread upon. The theme of labor and cohabitation also extends itself to that of a woman's

ability to labor and birth children—a system of production so important to the pillars of both rural and urban life. As we will see, the plot of "The Earth" intertwines animality, the contractual implications of human relationships, and the system of value placed on a woman's ability (or choice) to have children.

Barnes's story also underscores the consequences of social Darwinism, presenting "The Earth" as a warning against any excuse that exploitation and domination are somehow an intrinsic part of our biological makeup. The story centers on two sisters, Una and Lena, as they go through the monotonous upkeep required of the family farm which was bestowed upon them in equal parts by their late father. Working closely with nonhuman animals, the sisters are at once described in equine terms as "like two fine horses, horses one sees in the early dawn eating slowly, swaying from side to side, horses that plough, never in a hurry, but always accomplishing something" (*Smoke* 99). These opening lines mark both sisters equal in their docile and peaceful animality, both encapsulating a sort of grace in their slow progressions. As the narrative continues, however, such equality between the sisters slowly dissipates as it becomes more and more clear that Una yearns to compete with Lena for land, money, and, finally, a man. On a larger scale, the social Darwinism of the early twentieth century posits that such competition is natural, ensuring that the "strongest" and "most aggressive" of the species will survive. Such an incredible simplification of Charles Darwin's theories on evolution once again validates the oppression of those marginalized and different-abled bodies in the name of progression. Djuna Barnes, assumingly familiar with such systems as a queer woman writer, offers the tale of Una and Lena as an anthem for those whose heads were stepped on so that others could climb the hegemonic ladder.

Barnes slowly pushes the competition of sisters to climax by describing Una as what would be considered the more "progressive" thinking sister, in terms of aggressively industrializing culture of the 1900's. Lena, on the other hand, leans more towards an almost transcendentalist-like philosophy, at least for the first half of "The Earth." Una, perhaps inheriting a sense of domination over Lena as the older of the two sisters, is also slightly more educated than Lena. We are told that "Una had gone to school just long enough to learn to spell her name with difficulty and to add" while "Lena had somehow escaped" (101). Clearly, Una is hardly more qualified to run a farm in terms of a formal education on the matter. What's more, Lena's lack of education implies both animality (she has 'escaped' it) and that the knowledge she does have has been acquired outside the traditional designs of humanity. While Una preoccupies herself with borderline imperialistic methods to steal her sister's claim to the farm, Lena is often described in a meditative state. Unconcerned with who would inherent "the chest that would go to the first sister that married" Lena, instead, "would sit for long hours after the field was cleared, saying nothing, looking away into the horizon, perhaps tossing a pebble down the hill, listening for its echo in the ravine" (101). It can be inferred here that she is contemplating nature instead of plotting how she will assert herself over it, and by extension her kin. Lena's closeness to the natural world also entails more of a closeness to nonhuman animals. As an example, it is explained that compared to her sister "Lena dreamed more, if one can call the silences of an animal dreams" (99). Not only is Barnes establishing Lena's connection with the natural-animal world but is also intertwining questions regarding animal consciousness—especially in light of how her human-animal character ultimately redirects the narrative.

The variable that finally pushes Una and Lena's otherwise peaceful life on the farm into a scene of competition is the appearance of a Swedish man who has returned the sisters' Uncle Karl back from his local wanderings. Before getting into the luke-warm battle over the strapping Swede, however, Uncle Karl himself makes for a very interesting peripheral character in terms of animality. Having "gone mad while gathering hay," the uncle is now cared for by the sisters just as they would a queer animal on the farm—perhaps a less productive entity, yet nevertheless deserving of affection (100). Such human animality is particularly evident in the following scene: "Sometimes Uncle Karl would get away from Lena and striding over bog and hedge, dash into a neighboring farm, and there make trouble for the owner. At such times, Lena would lead him home, in the same unperturbed manner in which she drove cattle" (102). Like a dog escaped from harness, Uncle Karl requires the same corralling as the cows and, significantly, of the two sisters it is Lena who is willing to do so. Both madness and any surplus of feminine meditation sees these characters placed alongside nonhuman animal, yet Barnes refuses to suggest such a placement categorizes them as entirely "other." Before Una decides to usurp Lena thus cleaving them of harmonious equality, the narrative maintains the 'they' pronoun when speaking to shared opinions between the two. As such, it is remarked that at the first sign of Uncle Karl's madness, "They did not evince surprise nor show regret. Madness to us [the omnipresent narrator? The reader? Those deemed 'sane?'] means reversion; to people such as Una and Lena it meant progression" (100). Here Barnes is subtly suggesting that concepts such as 'reversion' and 'progression' may intersect and thus complicate each other under the veil of animality *and* madness. It may be a bold claim to suggest that Barnes is tilting her hat to Marx in the character of Uncle Karl who

mysteriously goes mad at the site of labor. Yet, one cannot deny that madness in the modernist period signifies less a classifiable/scientific/psychological status and more so a marked inability to contribute to—particularly through labor—civilized society.

Unlike Uncle Karl, the Swedish farmhand who pushes Una into a competitive state with her sister is described as a particularly desirable economic asset to the women's life. The man is never assigned a name, only referred to in various ways his permanent presence on the farm will boost productivity just as an animal of good stock might be considered at auction. The initial observations of him—presumably made by either of the two sisters—include "a certain keenness of glance," "broad of shoulder," and how "he would turn his head and shoulders from side to side, looking first at one sister and then at the other" (102). Such descriptions can easily be applied to human and animal alike: indeed he performs the same 'side to side' motions of the sisters' opening horse description. The Swede is thus positioned as a potential prize-animal-husband. While Una seems preoccupied by the chance at financial security (he makes "a dollar and a half and board all through the Winter season" to which "Una smiled upon him"), Lena assigns his value more directly to that of a 'workhorse' (102). After the first encounter with the Swede, Lena thinks:

> She liked the Swede too. He was compact and big and 'well bred.' By this she meant what is meant when she said the same thing of a horse. He had quality- which meant the same thing through her fingers. And he was 'all right' in the same way soil is all right for securing profits. In other words, he was healthy and making a living. (103)

Not only does Lena compare the Swede to a ‘well-bred horse,’ she also aligns his character with the soil she ploughs specifically for profit. Lena recognizes his economic value only through the lens of animality and, to further complicate the title of the story, as dirt/earth. Perhaps predictably given these observations, it is Una and not Lena who initially becomes romantically involved with the farmhand.

Yet, Una’s success at having won the affections of the Swedish man only intensifies the competition she feels toward her sister. Not long after the relationship begins, she exploits Lena’s illiteracy and forces her signature on a contract which allocates the entire farm to Una. Having anticipated such a quiet, docile demeanor to yield easily to the new terms, Una “placidly” explains that now Lena is “nothing” but her “helper”—no longer shepherd of the land, but merely Una’s sheep (105). It becomes clear, however, that Una has mistaken her sister’s silent nature as a pledge of subordination, not unlike the appropriation of nonhuman agricultural bodies. Thus provoked, Lena instinctually retaliates by lunging at her sister with a bread knife only to realize that the vengeance she seeks lies within the human endeavor of contract resolution. Just before fleeing the farm, Lena asserts that it is not the official delegation to the position of laborer that has angered her, but that Una has taken away “the fruit trees...crops...harvest” and finally “the place where I go when I die” (106). Lena sees Una's quest for control over both the land and herself as a disruption to the “natural” harmony (cohabitation) they had previously occupied. Pledging to “die for [herself],” she determines to combat the status of commodity by claiming some things as her own (106).

While life on a rural farm has clearly influenced the way both sisters recognize the exchange value of bodies (whether human or nonhuman), it is Lena who ultimately

proves to be aware of the economic yield of the female body, specifically her own. More invested in contemplating the natural world than dominating it, Lena's understanding of animality dismantles the binary of human/nonhuman animal whereas her sister desperately maintains it as validation for her exploitative nature. As such, Una only sees her sister's sudden departure in terms of economic loss: "She was more frightened about the horses than she was about her sister; the horses represented six hundred dollars, while Lena only represented a relative" (106/7). Here Una values her sister/relatives as "less than" the farm's nonhuman commodities and it is this deduction which actually puts Lena at the advantage. Promising to "take from [Una] too" before leaving, Lena returns months later with the Swedish farmhand as husband *and an infant* (106 my italics). Uncharacteristically silent and unemotional as the new family approaches, Una is immediately asked to kiss the baby. After she complies, Lena claims "Now you have left your mark. Now you have signed" (108). Lena has proven the value of biological contract (motherhood, kin) over that of the legal (land, marriage) and it is accomplished by embracing her female animality. If women's bodies are destined to be a commodity "kept" through contract, Lena decides who will do the owning and on what terms. Una's fate remains a mystery as the story concludes: "And in the end they looked like fine horses, but one of them was a bit spirited" (108). While both women are still described in terms of animality, one of them has at the very least used such a status to her advantage.

Nightwood

Barnes joined the growing number of expatriate-modernists in Paris around 1921, incidentally the precise year that the Fitzgerald family did the same. Aptly coined The Lost Generation by Gertrude Stein, these writers centered much of their work on themes

of false-grandiose disillusionment, particularly in terms of the American Dream in the aftermath of World War I. If such themes are somewhat straightforward in texts such as Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby* or Hemmingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, Barnes's *Nightwood* does more to parade the canon through a room of mirrors at the local sideshow. The text is as famously discombobulating to its reader as it is seductive in poetic prose, essentially confounding and enthralling in the same fell swoop. For all of these reasons and more, the following analysis will focus primarily on scenes of female animality as displayed through the character of Robin Vote. In constant pursuit by the other characters in the narrative, Vote is repeatedly referred to as 'beast turning human,' but never entirely one or the other. Such a hybridity sees her character wandering aimlessly (or is it purposefully?) amongst both human and nonhuman worlds, resisting ownership by either.

We first encounter Robin Vote unconscious in a room full of men. It is in her own Paris hotel room that a chasseur has discovered Vote, presumably fainted on her own bed and unable or unwilling to be woken. Alarmed, the hotel messenger runs to the downstairs bar to fetch a fake doctor, Matthew O'Connor who invites fake baron, Felix Volkbein, who both leap at the opportunity to aid an unconscious woman. Once the men are finally gathered in the room, Vote is described as "half flung off the support of the cushions….Her legs, in white flannel trousers...her hands, long and beautiful, lay on either side of her face" (38). It would seem that Barnes makes a point to omit any indication that Vote is doing anything other than sleeping. A woman in distress would be better translated as such in having fainted in a public space, or at the very least, on the floor of her hotel room. In fact, when the men collectively decide the best medical approach to the situation is to toss a pitcher of water on her face, Vote exclaims "'I was

all right,' and [fell] back into the pose of her annihilation" (39). Throughout *Nightwood*, Robin Vote is significantly limited in her own speech and more so presented as an object spoken about by others. As Rohman asserts in the article "Revising the Human: Silence, Being, and the Question of the Animal in *Nightwood*," "Robin's introduction in the novel exhibits a marked divergence from the concerns with naming and placing...She is not only silent but also wholly unconscious and utterly removed from the realm of social and civil distinctions" (60). So, it is significant that at the moment of her returning consciousness in a room full of men that she maintains enough agency to speak and discredit their "services."

Before fully awakening, however, Vote's body is not only described as nonhuman, but with a plant-like quality in its unconscious status. As she lay on a bed surrounded by a "confusion of potted plants, exotic palms and cut flowers," Robin is similarly categorized to the effect of nonhuman vegetation (37). As it is described: "The perfume that her body exhaled was of the quality of that earth-flesh, fungi...Her flesh the texture of plant life...About her head there was an effulgence of phosphorus glowing about the circumference of a body of water" (38). In configuring her unconscious body as plant in this initial scene, Robin Vote seems an entity born of soil—even less human than her eventual displays of animality predicate. Similarly, we are provided exhaustive backgrounds for the other characters in *Nightwood* (the first chapter is dedicated almost entirely to Felix's ancestry), yet we are given no insight into Robin's past. Thus, her entrance into the narrative as a viscerally organic, non-verbal form anticipates the ways in which her character will be a space of projection and desire by others.

When Robin Vote finally awakens, her character evolves from flora to fauna, or rather, into “a woman who is beast turning human” (41). Having voyeuristically lurked in shadows of nearby potted palms while the previous scene played out, Felix is now transfixed on Robin’s newly found sentience, a sentience still not fully human. He quickly asserts that her eyes have, “the long unqualified range in the iris of wild beasts who have not tamed the focus down to meet the human eye” (41). Yet, Robin’s animality does not appeal to Felix in its ‘wild’ or ‘untamed’ manner, but because he sees it as a connection to the past—a “quality of the ‘way back’” as he later describes (44). Given the status of his false title as baron, it is perhaps unsurprising that Felix’s identity is based on a generation-long facade begun by his father. The late Guido Volkbein made false claims to royalty in order to impress (or trap?) Felix’s mother into marriage. Carrying on such a legacy, Felix compulsively collects that which signifies a glorified history in order to atone for such a lack in his personal one whether it be artifacts, the company he keeps, or, in the case of Robin Vote, a wife. Felix observes of Robin,

> Such a woman is the infected carrier of the past: before her the structure of our head and jaws ache—we feel we could eat her, she who is eaten death returning, for only then do we put our face close to the blood on the lips of our forefathers...he felt he was looking upon a figurehead in a museum. (41)

As with many of the previous characters configured as potential female-animal-wives, Robin is categorized as a desirable artifact (‘figurehead at a museum’) to compliment Felix’s collection. Beyond this, his immediate desire to own her, in all her animal appeal, aligns with a carnal appetite (‘we feel we could eat her’). Indeed, taking this to the

‘quality of the way back’ in terms of human evolutionary ancestry, Felix identifies Robin as prey to be hunted and mounted.

Not long after their initial meeting, Felix and Robin marry and have a child. However, *Nightwood* being a book uninterested in such easy happy endings, the threat of a captive family life sends Robin on a series of ‘wanderings’ which continue until the climatic final scene of the book. Within the first ten days of marriage, it becomes clear to Felix that Robin is completely bored with her circumstances: “He felt that her attention, somehow in spite of him, had already been taken by something not yet in history” (48). Fearing Robin might decide to flee the “destiny for which he had chosen her,” Felix desperately hopes that “she might bear sons who would recognize and honour the past. For without such love, the past as he understood it, would die away from the world” (49). Quite the contrary, it is when Robin realizes she is with child that marks the beginning of her wanderings—as a dog denying the leash. Disappearing for days at a time and often returning drunk, Robin’s behavior during pregnancy conflates fictional villainy with a nonfictional exploration of the biological and psychological issues specific to a female readership.

The narrative of Robin’s pregnancy and motherhood in *Nightwood* challenges traditional values of procreation which depend largely on the reductive concept of “natural maternal instinct,” an *instinct* once again solidified by the collision of Freud and Darwin. Instead, Barnes elects to rewrite women’s bodies and psychologies through Robin, a character whose animality marks her more clearly as a space for challenging humanist expectations. Scenes of childbirth are so often depicted (fictionally and non) as the ultimate “female mystery” to be hidden behind closed doors until it can be written

over as a romantically simplistic step into motherhood. So even including the scene of Robin's labor acts as a significant push against such stigma and the evocative style in which it is written challenges the reductive implication of "natural maternal instinct." When the contractions begin, Robin is drunk and becoming verbally abusive toward Felix's ineptitude at comforting her. The moment of childbirth is then described as:

> Amid loud and frantic cries of affirmation and despair Robin was delivered. Shuddering in the double pains of birth and fury, cursing like a sailor, she rose up on her elbow in her bloody gown, looking about her in the bed as if she had lost something. "Oh for Christ's sake, for Christ's sake!" she kept crying like a child who has walked into the commencement of a horror. (52)

Robin's animality edges on the monstrous as she attempts to grapple with the immediate psychological and medical fractures to a woman's identity upon birthing a child. Despite the infant being a boy (Guido Jr.), it is stated that *Robin* has been delivered 'amid affirmation and despair' suggesting that the trauma of the experience has birthed a new, haunted identity for the young mother. Accordingly the scenes to follow present Robin as clearly suffering from postpartum depression—a valid, psychological condition which during the 1930's would more than likely stamp "hysteria" onto her medical form instead of properly diagnosing it. Within the first week of motherhood, Felix finds Robin "standing in the centre of the floor holding the child high in her hand as if she were about to dash it down, but she brought it down gently," a jarring scene only exacerbated by the use of 'it' to describe Robin's son as the almost-victim of her postpartum depression (52). The pronoun shifts on the next page as Robin herself screams "I didn't want him!" before

hitting Felix across the face and then asking "Why not be secret about him? Why talk?" (53). Suggesting that Robin would have preferred abortion to motherhood, Barnes brings in yet another confrontational topic at the site of women's bodies. Overall, Barnes is only able to explore such taboo issues through Robin's medium as nonhuman other—thus presenting them at a "safe distance" from "human realities."

After leaving both husband and child, Robin's wandering eventually finds her at the Denckman circus where she will meet her next lover, Nora Flood. While it is not the first time that the circus plays into *Nightwood*, the scene in which Robin Vote is in attendance is by far the most haunting. The trope of carnivalesque pushes for a reversal of roles: between self and other, civilized and savage, human and nonhuman animal. Capitalizing on the uncanny, the circus and sideshow of the modernist period drew crowds by insisting that the spectator identify with spectacle however unsettling that might be. For the hybrid figure of Robin Vote, whom the line between self and other is never stable, the performance proves particularly unnerving. As the scene opens, the clowns are described as moving "as if they were in the belly of a great mother where there was yet room to play" (59). The connection between these comedic/tragic figures and the maternal womb potentially underscores the postpartum depression that is motivating Robin's perpetual wandering. Alongside the infancy of clowns is a menagerie of animals carrying out acts inconsistent with a species barrier. As "tiny dogs ran about trying to look like horses" the horse itself stands on two legs, in this case performing humanity in the face of Robin's animality (59). Like her, the horse is beast turning human.

The climax of the circus scene comes when the nonhuman animal gaze is turned on the human spectator. Barnes describes the transaction through the perspective of Nora Flood who looks on as it happens. Her attention is suddenly on Robin "because the animals, going around and around the ring, all but climbed over at that point. They did not seem to see the girl, but as their dusty eyes moved past, the orbit of their light seemed to turn on her" (59). There are a few ways to read this moment, one of which is that the literal spotlight which is presumably on the animal performers has now collected Robin in among them. Another is that the animals are unable to see from their 'dusty eyes,' but 'the orbit of their light' represents some sort of ethereal connection to Robin's animality. Either way, it is clear that the first time Nora sees Robin there is a proximity to nonhuman just as there was upon Felix's first encounter with her. Such animality is amplified as the lion cage is brought onto the scene:

> As one powerful lioness came to the turn of the bars, exactly opposite the girl [Robin], she turned her furious great head with its yellow eyes afire and went down, her paws thrust through the bars and, as she regarded the girl, as if a river were falling behind impassable heat, her eyes flowed in tears that never reached the surface. (60)

Thus, the tragedy of both female and feline circumstances transcends the bars of her cage *and* the species boundary. Despite her wanderings Robin constantly runs up against the bars of captivity, as the lioness does pacing her "small strong box" (59). Both human and nonhuman are permitted merely a sense of freedom as they claw desperately at their enclosures, unaware that such a minor escape would still see them under the canopy of oppression. Unable to maintain such an intense revelation alongside the nonhuman other,

Robin dashes out of the tent hand-in-hand with Nora Flood who only moments before placed her among the circus animals.

Robin's desire to be kept/safe without feeling owned finally leads in an effort to abandon traditional constructions of her gender altogether—to return fully to the 'beast' that has tried and failed to comply to 'human' standards. The concluding chapter of *Nightwood*, aptly titled "The Possessed," opens as Robin once again flees the possessive nature of her most recent and particularly abusive lover, Jenny Petherbridge. Instead of wandering into the arms of another, however, Robin opts to move from one church to another "as one renouncing something" (176). As the short chapter unravels, it becomes clear that the 'something' she wishes to ceremoniously renounce is humanity. Robin eventually abandons the constructions of manmade sanctity in favor of the natural countryside where she begins to "[speak] in a low voice to the animals...those that came near, she grasped, straining their fur back until their eyes were narrowed and their teeth bare, her own teeth showing as if her hand were upon her own neck (177). The scene reveals the disturbing quality of desperation that Robin feels to escape the status of female/human by seeing herself as fully animal. The mistreatment of these nonhuman animals is the same Robin sees done upon herself ('as if her hand were upon her own neck'), yet also reinforces the human compulsion to exploit those that fall lower on the hegemonic scale regardless of species or gender. The full abandonment of humanity *or* animality will always involve a rupture of cohabitation in favor of oppression, for both human and nonhuman others.

A complex hybrid figure throughout *Nightwood*, Robin Vote's climactic failure to turn completely beast in the final scene highlights the futility of disavowing humanity in

the face of animality. Robin's countryside wanderings find her sleeping in the woods and sometimes under a "contrived altar" in an abandoned church (178). She is described as having returned to the organic, dormant state in which we first met her so long ago in the Paris hotel room, with a "fixed stillness" of "obliteration" (177/8). The final scene therefore translates as another moment of birth for Robin, the labor for which is induced by the far off barking of a dog—specifically Nora Flood's dog. As the dog and Nora approach the abandoned chapel of Robin's renounced humanity, she rises up from obliteration to receive both owner and owned. The moment she strikes down Nora, Robin "began going down...until her head swung against [the dog's]; on all fours now, dragging her knees" while "the dog reared as if to avoid something that troubled him to such agony that he seemed to be rising from the floor" (179). As the human goes down, the beast rises up, exchanging the traditional qualities of human and nonhuman animal. The scene culminates in the uncanny final paragraph of *Nightwood*:

> Then she began to bark, also, crawling after him—barking in a fit of laughter, obscene and touching. The dog began to cry then, running with her, head-on with her head, as if to circumvent her; soft and slow his feet went padding. He ran this way and that, low down in his throat crying, and she grinning and crying with him; crying in shorter and shorter spaces, moving head to head, until she gave up, lying out, her hands beside her, her face turned and weeping; and the dog too gave up then, and lay down, his eyes bloodshot, his head flat along her knees. (179/80)

So, Barnes leaves the reader with a disquieting scene suggesting that both female-human and nonhuman animal are unable to 'circumvent' the tragedy of their social, economic,

and political position. As with the Denckman circus, the oppressive tent of Western patriarchal construction reaches beyond the immediate cages of our personal experience. Yet, the character of Robin Vote (and Djuna Barnes herself, for that matter) inspires *resistance* to the traditional trappings of female/human/animal—a resistance still quite unfathomable to the general imagination almost one hundred years later.

CONCLUSION

> "For man also is flesh for woman; and woman is not merely a carnal object; and the flesh is clothed in special significance for each person and in each experience. And likewise, it is quite true that woman—like man—is a being rooted in nature; she is not more enslaved to the species than is the male, her animality is more manifest; but in her as in him the given traits are taken on through the fact of existence, she belongs also to the human realm."
>
> Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

While working on this project, I was often requested to casually explain its general argument to satiate the curiosity of those around me. So much so, I began to play at an unofficial social experiment. The term "animality" alone was enough to perplex and discomfort most listeners into a state of polite impartiality. I once stammered out the full title at a bar only to have a man previously uninvolved in the conversation chime in ironically: "such bullshit." Naturally we all laughed, perhaps in partial agreement regarding the title specifically, but mostly because we, as women, wouldn't want to "start anything" as offensive as intellectual banter at a place of crude alcohol consumption. And yet, for every dismissal there was another person (indeed, usually a female person) that would return excitedly to explain some revelation of female animality that they had observed since our previous discussion. I can only hope that anyone bold enough to have read the previous pages might agree that the collision of animality studies and feminist

thought reveals something very unsettling but entirely important regarding the traditional foundations of our contemporary society.

What makes the investigation into animal studies so uncomfortable for many is that it calls attention to our participation in systems of exploitation through our personal relationships with nonhuman animals. I, for one, have avoided reading Peter Singer's 1975 book *Animal Liberation* because it I know it will make me feel terrible. I currently consume the occasional animal product, I demand "my" dog walks on a leash and comfort me whenever needed, I once owned a seasonal pass to SeaWorld. Reading texts which explicitly call attention to the systemic mistreatment of nonhuman animals for human *convenience* and not much else, thus, overwhelms me with feelings of guilt and disgust. So I avoid these truths—temporarily, I tell myself—until I am more prepared to face them and adjust my lifestyle accordingly.

Perhaps such a confession will not strike as a horrific declaration—or maybe it will—regardless, similar narratives have been used to validate the systemic oppression of *all* that are socially and culturally categorized as nonhuman other. When do animal rights become human rights and vice versa? The answer to such a complex and sensitive question might begin by analyzing human animality—particularly as it has developed during the rise of consumerist culture, as this project seeks to do. When we begin to recognize the commodification and exploitation of human bodies alongside nonhuman animal, the veneer of "civilized" capitalism slips away to reveal a much more violent system of social, economic, and political oppression. In *Making A Killing: The Political Economy of Animal Rights*, Bob Torres agrees:

> Much as we live in an economic and social order that is structured to exploit people, we live in one that is structured to exploit animals…Understanding this order, and the roots of domination within it, is essential for understanding how all these oppressive forces have their foundations in the economic dynamics of capitalism. If we're to be successful fighting oppression—whether based on race, class, species, or gender identity—we're going to need to fight the heart of the economic order that drives these oppressions. (Ch. 1)

Beyond fighting the good fight against capitalism, as Torres's book aims to do, recent scholars have adopted the lens of human animality into the specific theoretical fields of 'race, class, species, [and] gender identity.' Recent works, such as Bénédicte Boisseron's 2018 *Afro-Dog: Blackness and the Animal Question* and Sunaura Taylor's 2017 *Beasts of Burden: Animal and Disability Liberation*, carefully discuss animal rights alongside basic human rights.

With these influences in mind, female animality comes to be understood in the ways women's bodies are translated as commodities within patriarchal capitalism. The rise of American consumerism and mass marketing at the turn of the twentieth century, in particular, worked to quickly stifle the liberation of the New Woman in the service of masculine ownership. Scott Fitzgerald's depictions of female-animal-characters in *Flappers and Philosophers* and other works greatly contributed to the branding of the American flapper and, thus, reveals Zelda as the ultimate trophy-animal-wife. She becomes the mascot-by-product of commercialized desire, her nontraditional or wild behavior validating the heteropatriarchal compulsion to control, domesticate, and finally

institutionalize her. So often the social, economic, and political pressures forced on women see her forced to comply in systemic subordination through legal contract as wife and/or the biological contract of motherhood. Yet, the work of Djuna Barnes suggests that a cognizance of female animality within such a system offers a path to resistance—an alternative narrative that sees women resist commodification in name of independence.

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