There is great debate over whether or not Gatsby from F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* was a noble character or not. Many argue that he is not while others, such as Bernard Tanner argue that he is so noble that he even represents a Christ-figure based on his past as a fisherman among other things (Tanner, 468). However, Gatsby is not the actual focus of the book as the title may imply; instead, the focus is on Nick and his self-discovery of his homosexual tendencies. *The Great Gatsby* is about Nick’s infatuation with another man and his homosexual experimentations.

F. Scott Fitzgerald lived in a period of time in which homosexuality was actually becoming quite popular and well accepted, especially in New York City (squidoo.com); which would support the idea of Nick being gay by placing him in such an atmosphere where “Pansy Clubs” were on the rise and surging in popularity (aaregistry.org). Though Nick is never known to have attended such a place, it is no coincidence that he lived and worked where homosexuality was most liberated at the time (xroads.virginia.edu).

It could be argued that *The Great Gatsby* has nothing to do with homosexuality due to Fitzgerald’s own personal distaste for homosexuals and his means of dealing with them in other of his works. “Anyone familiar with [his] biography is well aware that, throughout his life,
Fitzgerald was terrified of being identified as homosexual and uneasy about his sexuality and his sexual performance, and he expressed a vehement hatred of, in his words, ‘fairies’” (Monmouth.edu). This hatred of homosexuality never hindered him from creating homosexual characters and even handling their sexual lives explicitly in his other works such as *Tender is the Night*. Regardless, due to his attitude towards homosexuality, *The Great Gatsby* may have served as a warning against homosexuality in Fitzgerald’s mind as it did in many ways in *Tender is the Night* (Collins, 170); or perhaps it was simply to shed light on the idea that homosexuality did indeed exist since during his lifetime human sexuality was researched more than it ever had been before. The concept of defining a person as a homosexual was relatively new in American culture during Fitzgerald’s life, as humanities scholar Foucault mentions in his, *The History of Sexuality* series of studies (littleadvances.com).

It can be argued that Nick could not have been gay himself since he was in a relationship with Jordan Barker. However, nowhere in *The Great Gatsby* are Nick and Jordan concretely listed as being in a relationship together. Yes, they did spend a fair amount of time in one another’s company, yet nothing they did pointed to an intimate relationship. Towards the end of the novel when Jordan and Nick have their awkward phone conversation, Jordan tells Nick that he has been “dishonest” (186). There is no specific event or dialogue between the two that would paint Nick as dishonest towards Jordan. However, Nick’s attraction to men could be considered grounds for what Jordan considered dishonesty had she been pursuing a heterosexual relationship with Nick. Also, despite being around Jordan, Nick never made any sort of advances toward her that could be seen as intimate or sexual.

It is common occurrence for authors, perhaps even all that is possible for authors, to write about what they know; to write themselves into the story in some way. Fitzgerald may have
possibly done this when writing about Nick and Jordan’s “break-up”. In his own private life Fitzgerald was romantically involved with a woman named Zelda who ended up leaving him “on her suspicions of his homosexuality” (Fessenden, 33). Jordan, through her association with Tom and Daisy, may have discovered or suspected that Nick did indeed have a homosexual relationship with Mr. McKee after leaving the apartment of Tom and his mistress. While on the elevator, “Fitzgerald uses sexually charged language (‘groaned,’ ‘lever’) to describe the scene in the elevator, and suddenly [Nick] is standing beside McKee’s bed, the latter clad only in his underwear” (Gunnink, 8). This experience may be what led Jordan to declare Nick as dishonest towards her. She had assumed he was of the heterosexual orientation, therefore, Nick withholding his homosexual orientation from her could be considered a lie of omission in her mind.

The sexual experience with Mr. McKee holds some deeper meaning concerning the underlying male consciousness during the modern period; loneliness. When McKee and Nick end up together in the bed, they are looking over McKee’s photographs that come from his personal inspiration, titled: “Loneliness”, “Beauty and the Beast”, and Brook’n Bridge”. While “Loneliness” is rather self-explanatory, “Beauty and the Beast” deserves some explaining. The theme that can be drawn from the fairy tale of Beauty and the Beast is that of isolation of man socially due to being misunderstood by those around him. The photograph “Brook’n Bridge” could be phonetically heard as “broken bridge” which implies a lack of desire to carry on an interpersonal relationship. (Kerr, 415).

“‘Homoerotic fantasy, when it occurs in a heterosexual man,” says Richard A. Isay, ”is a defense against heterosexuality, which is perceived as threatening because of the anxiety associated with conventional masculine strivings.” Men who establish their manhood
among men by excelling at sports, making money, and enjoying the attentions of women are sometimes perceived by other men as "competitive and [threateningly] assertive." (Kerr, 415).

In other words, Nick and Mr. Mckee felt themselves to be less than men when around Tom, who was superior in what were considered masculine strivings. Their sexual doings with one another were perhaps the result of a deeper need of feeling accepted by male counter-parts; they needed to feel as though they were men together and not alone in the world.

It could be argued that Nick could not have been homosexual due to what relationship he had with a woman back in the Midwest. It was thought that he was going to marry her; however, Nick had left the Midwest to escape “being rumored into marriage” (24). Not only was he escaping marriage, but he also gives a glimpse into his past when he mentions things such as his upcoming birthday being a “promise of a decade of loneliness, a thinning list of single men to know” (Fitzgerald, 143) and “I was privy to the secret griefs [sic] of wild, unknown men…I have feigned sleep preoccupation or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon” (Fitzgerald, 5-6). This is left very unclear as to its meaning if Nick is to be seen as heterosexual. He even continues on to say, “I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction” (Fitzgerald, 6). The before quoted passage is to mean that Nick had participated in homosexual excursions before, while the latter passage indicates that he is finished with his homosexual excursions with the exception of Gatsby. I will concede that this could mean that Nick was not actually homosexual, but that he had merely participated in homosexual activities prior to his meeting Gatsby;
however, exempting Gatsby from his oath to rid himself of riotous excursions would show that Nick still held those homosexual tendencies.

It is argued that Nick and Gatsby were merely friends and that Nick simply romanticized the ideals the Gatsby embodied. While Nick may have indeed romanticized the ideals Gatsby espoused, he felt more than a friendly admiration for him as seen when Nick tells Gatsby, “They’re a rotten crowd…You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together,” followed by his description of Gatsby, “His face broke into that radiant and understanding smile, as if we’d been in ecstatic cahoots…His gorgeous pink rag of a suit made a bright spot of color against the white steps and I thought of the night when I first…came to his…home,” (Fitzgerald, 162). There are numerous other examples throughout the book in which Nick describes Gatsby in a manner that can be perceived as homosexual; far too numerous to list here.

It has been said that Nick could not have been homosexual due to a relationship he had with a female coworker in New Jersey. Though he did dissolve that relationship, I must concede the point. Indeed, Nick did have heterosexual relationships as well. However, the nature of these relationships, whether real or for public appearance, is unknown. At the very least, Nick Carraway is Bisexual.

Though at a first glance it may seem as though Nick is a heterosexual man who simply struggles in his relationships with women, he is found to be homosexual after a closer reading. He avoids solid relationships with women while expressing a very fond admiration of one specific male. The past of Nick Carraway and his relationships are also ambiguous; yet point towards homosexuality. The most convincing evidence is the sexual experience that Nick has with Mr. McKee.
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