

CONTROLLING THE NARRATOR

The Influence Of Scriptwriting On F.
Scott Fitzgerald's Narrative Technique

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AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT AXES OF FOCUS IS CENTRAL
CONSCIOUSNESS: MOST TRADITIONAL NOVELS MAINTAIN SOME
CONSISTENCY WITH REGARD TO POINT OF VIEW.

Peter J. Rabinowitz
Before Reading

ABSTRACT FOR THESIS

This thesis deals with F. Scott Fitzgerald's handling of point of view and narrative technique in his novels. The true area of focus is the influence of his script-writing experiences (both for theatre and for cinema) on his novels, from the early This Side Of Paradise to his final, incomplete work, The Last Tycoon. The thesis hopes to show a progression in Fitzgerald's career as he first learned to control his narrative voice, then learned to manipulate it for strategic effect. His work on the play, The Vegetable, for example, seems to have had a great deal of influence upon the writing of The Great Gatsby, the first novel in which Fitzgerald shows the ability and willingness to control his narrator. Tender Is The Night turns out to be the problem novel in Fitzgerald's oeuvre in that it contains both the faults of his first two novels as well as some of the promise of Gatsby and The Last Tycoon in the area of narrative control. Tycoon, moreover, would likely have surpassed Gatsby in its control and strategic manipulation of narrative voice had it been completed.

The thesis uses the work of Peter J. Rabinowitz as its jumping off point but the approach is generally close readings of the texts rather than a specific theoretical bent. Because of its status as the "problem text", most time is spent on an analysis of the narrative technique of

Tender. Tycoon, meanwhile, deserves some attention, however speculative that attention must be, as the possible culmination of Fitzgerald's career, his showcase for the progress he has made as a novelist. Brief analyses of several of Fitzgerald's film scripts, as well as The Vegetable, are also included.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

Fitzgerald's handling of narration and point of view in his novels shows very clearly the pattern he followed throughout his career as a novelist. The story is one of growth and development as Fitzgerald learned to control both the personality of his narrator and the movement of his point of view as his career progressed. That growth and development, however, was not continuous. Fitzgerald's control over his narrative technique developed rapidly up until he wrote The Great Gatsby but then, during the nine years it took him to write Tender Is The Night, his progress faltered. His final, unfinished novel, The Last Tycoon, shows signs that Fitzgerald had recovered the control he had exhibited in Gatsby but, left with an incomplete novel, we can never be sure how Fitzgerald's last work might have turned out. Through his experience in theatre and Hollywood, Fitzgerald learned the importance of consistency in narrative distance, point of view and tone. He learned that changes in narrative approach can be strategically effective in a novel but only if they are used for a certain purpose. Film and theatre made him aware of the limitations on, as well as the possibilities of, narrative technique.

Film and theatre both force a writer to work with an objective, relatively static narrative voice. In theatre,

this objectivity is total and uncompromising as the audience actually witnesses the events of the narrative and, except for soliloquies, receives no insights into the thoughts and motivations of the characters beyond what their actions and dialogue suggest. In film, on the other hand, the objectivity of the camera is tempered somewhat by the filmmaker's ability to control what the audience sees and hears, to resort to subjective or point-of-view shots which can be altered to reflect the thoughts or mental condition of the character,¹ to provide a subjective voice-over narration which comments on the action being shown on-screen or to use sound (music or background sound) to give a non-verbal commentary on the visuals. In the cases of both film and theatre, therefore, the narrative approach is restricted to some extent by the nature of the narrative medium. It is no surprise then that after working on both theatre and film scripts, Fitzgerald learned to control the free movement of his narrative point of view and the intrusiveness of his narrator. With The Great Gatsby, he proved that he had learned to control his narrative persona. In Tender Is The Night but especially in The Last Tycoon, Fitzgerald showed that he could not only control his narrative technique, but that he had also learned to manipulate it strategically to reap the full effect from his stories.

¹ F.W. Murnau was an early pioneer in this area. In his 1924 film, Der Letz Mann, he portrayed the drunken state of his character by adopting that character's point of view while deliberately unfocussing the camera.^a

^a John Fell, A History Of Film (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), p. 145.

Any comparison between the two media, film and prose, creates an immediate difficulty with the critical terms to be employed. "Point of View" is no exception. The term has a much more objective meaning in film than it has in prose. For example, when a critic is presented with a prose chapter which opens, "The Knickerbocker Bar, beamed upon by Maxfield Parish's jovial, colorful "Old King Cole", was well crowded. Amory stopped in the entrance and looked at his wrist watch,"² he is not likely to leap to the conclusion that the first sentence is told from Amory's point of view. In strictly objective terms, however, it is: Amory sees that the bar is crowded and stops outside the crowd to check his watch. The average critic, when dealing with prose, ignores such objective point-of-view descriptions, pointing out instead examples of subjective point of view. When, later in the same chapter, Fitzgerald writes, "He was conscious that he was talking in a loud voice, very succinctly and convincingly, he thought," (Paradise, p. 200) the critic immediately points out the fact that much of this statement, especially the phrase, "very succinctly and convincingly", comes from Amory's point of view. The phrase is a subjective comment that is clearly marked as Amory's by the addition of "he thought" directly thereafter. In prose,

² F. Scott Fitzgerald, This Side Of Paradise (New York: Collier Books, 1920), p. 198.
 N.B. All further references to this work will come from this same edition and will be followed in the text of the paper by (Paradise, p.__).

"point of view" carries a subjective flavour; when a character's opinions or beliefs colour the descriptions, the narrative is being told from his point of view. Simple, objective point-of-view descriptions describing the scene which the character sees are ignored as unimportant. In film, on the other hand, the most common point-of-view shot is the objective one. The audience "sees" what a certain character sees, as if the camera had become the eyes of that character. In the opening scene of Fitzgerald's screenplay, Infidelity, for example, the script suggests:

Camera, acting as opera glasses, pans to a dull couple of thirty, utterly bored, staring for amusement anywhere but at each other.³

The camera is taking up the physical point of view of "Rumpled Hair" or "Grey Hair" or both. Presented on-screen, the shot would, by itself, be objective--we literally and precisely "see" what they see. It only becomes subjective when we hear on the soundtrack the two observers' opinion of the couple in the picture:

GREY HAIR'S VOICE: Married.
RUMPLED HAIR'S VOICE: That's too easy.
(Infidelity, p. 200)

This sort of commentary (without a narrative voice-over) is quite original on Fitzgerald's part. Most commonly, the

³ F. Scott Fitzgerald, Infidelity in Esquire (December 1973), p. 194.

N.B. All further references to this work will come from this same edition and will be followed in the text of the paper by (Infidelity, p. __).

film director will simply cut to an objective point-of-view shot in order to orient the viewer with the spatial position of the character or for reasons of suspense, then cut back to an omniscient shot with no comment at all. Unless coloured by sound (including music) or some technical manipulation of the image (blur, soft-focus), the film point-of-view shot remains relatively objective. It can be confusing when the term "point of view" is used for both media, without any distinction between the relative subjectivity or objectivity of the description or shot in question. For that reason, some indication should (and will) be given to differentiate between the typically objective point-of-view shot in film and the more subjective point-of-view piece in prose.

Perhaps the three most important terms used in dealing with narrative technique are tone, distance and point of view. Although all three tend to overlap in meaning, each has facets that the other two lack. Narrative tone, for example, means just what the label suggests: the tone of the narrative. Narrative tone is especially important when dealing with a relatively distant, omniscient narrator. If there is a noticeably strong narrative tone, one might suggest that the narrating persona is taking on a personality of its own, displaying his own feelings towards the people and events which he describes. In the case of a first-person narrative, or of a limited third-person

narrative which is closely allied with a certain character in the story, the narrative tone will necessarily reflect the opinions, feelings and beliefs of that character. Tone, then, means the narrative slant: the reader must ask himself, "Is this narrator objective? Or does he have some kind of personal biases which colour the descriptions and accounts he gives?" Once the reader recognizes the narrative tone, he is capable of breaking through the biases of the narrator in order to see the truth about what is going on in the story.

As we can see, narrative distance plays a large part in narrative tone. The closer the narrating voice is to any character(s) in the story, the more likely it is to have some sort of tone or bias. Narrative distance is not so much spatial but ideological distance. Does the narrator tend to agree with a certain character most of the time, even to the point of using that character's thoughts and beliefs as his own? If so, the narrator is said to be very close to the character. The closer the narrator is to a character, the more limited he becomes, sacrificing his omniscience in order to ally himself with the character. An omniscient narrator must remain relatively distant from the characters in the story in order to be able to enter each character's mind, to know each character's thoughts. This description makes evident how close narrative distance comes to narrative point of view.

The point of view is the position from which the narrator tells the story. If the narrator takes part in the story, the point of view is first-person and it is necessarily limited in omniscience to the thoughts of the narrating character. If the narrator does not enter the story but remains aloof, the story is told in the third-person point of view. Depending on the distance he keeps from the characters in the story, the third-person narrator could be totally omniscient (knowing all, including the thoughts of all characters), partially omniscient, or limited in knowledge. The three facets of narrative technique tend to run together at times but it is useful to try to keep them straight.

F. Scott Fitzgerald seems to have learned a good deal about narrative technique from his work in Hollywood and on plays. His greatest completed novel, The Great Gatsby, features a consistent, first-person narrator whose growth in the process of retelling the story is as important as the story itself. After Gatsby, Fitzgerald struggled somewhat with his narrative technique. Both Tender Is The Night and The Last Tycoon, however, show signs that not only was he learning to control his narrator but he was also learning to manipulate his narrating voice to exact the greatest effect from his narrative technique.

Chapter Two

OUT OF CONTROL IN THE EARLY NOVELS

Fitzgerald's two early novels, This Side Of Paradise (1920) and The Beautiful And Damned (1922), show the author at his most immature stage as a novelist. In both, the narrative technique is inconsistent. The narrator changes from an almost totally objective third person into the extreme subjectivity of a first-person stream of consciousness and back again throughout each novel. The narrative focus, while centred around the protagonist in each case (Amory Blaine and Anthony Patch respectively), shifts from character to character. Although both these early works were influenced somewhat by Fitzgerald's youthful work in the theatre--both, in fact, include entire plays: "The Debutante" appears in Book II of Paradise and "The Broken Lute" in Book II of Beautiful--neither exhibits the strategic control of narrative point of view that Fitzgerald later gained from his work on The Vegetable and in Hollywood.

This Side Of Paradise is Fitzgerald's first novel and, surprisingly perhaps, it remained his most popular novel during his lifetime.¹ The story of the growth of Amory

¹ All biographical information on F. Scott Fitzgerald comes from James R. Mellow's authoritative biography, Invented Lives (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984) and has been verified where possible with reference to Matthew J. Bruccoli's biography, Some Sort Of Epic Grandeur: The Life

Blaine is told more sympathetically the closer the narrative voice gets to the character. Whenever it remains distant and detached from the central character, on the other hand, the narrative voice maintains a tone of sarcasm. This distance, however, fluctuates greatly throughout the novel and is only truly maintained for a prolonged period of time at the beginning of the book and in the play sections. Most of the novel is told (despite a number of slips) in a subjective, limited third-person with Amory Blaine as its central point of focus. It seems, moreover, that the early drafts of the novel, under the title "The Romantic Egotist", featured a first-person narrator in the form of Blaine. Monsignor Sigourney Fay (who appears in the novel as Monsignor Thayer Darcy) wrote Fitzgerald about an early version of Paradise, commending him for "the brutal frankness in the use of the first person. There is always something far more arresting about self revelation than there is about a story told about somebody else."² Although the first-person narrator did not survive intact in the published novel, his effects can still be felt throughout Paradise. His presence in early drafts probably explains why the narrative point of view in the novel drifts from the early, third-person omniscient narrator of the first few

Of F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981). Mellow, p. 233.

² Matthew J. Bruccoli and Margaret M. Duggan, eds. Correspondence Of F. Scott Fitzgerald (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 30.

chapters into a narrator who fluctuates throughout the remainder of the novel.

The narrator is at his most distant from the story, however, in the play sections in Book II. This is a quite natural result of Fitzgerald's use of the play format for the sections. The descriptions of setting and characters aside, there is little in these sections to suggest the presence of a narrator at all. The characters are simply left to act and speak as they will without any commentary. This effect gives the reader a rather clear, objective picture of the events and people being presented as there is no filtering consciousness through which the information comes. The narrator does indulge in a number of personal opinions within the stage directions, however, and these comments help to colour our impressions of the scene. They also serve to show how immature was Fitzgerald's knowledge of scriptwriting at this point in his career. He spends a great deal of time using exposition to describe his characters, a luxury that scriptwriters should not enjoy. On page 171, for example, the narrator comments that Rosalind "loves shocking stories; she has that coarse streak that usually goes with natures that are both fine and big" (Paradise, p. 171). This sentence, and the many others like it, not only define our impressions of the character but they also represent the kind of physical and psychological description which is normally impossible on-stage. Such

things as the character's love for shocking stories would have to be presented physically on-stage or suggested through dialogue for the audience to understand them. Even in the confines of this play-within-the-novel, Fitzgerald had proven himself incapable, at this point in his career, of controlling the narrative voice of his work.

The distance of the narrator from the story in the play scenes is starkly contrasted by the relative nearness of the narrator through much of the rest of the novel. Amory's hallucinations in Book I are told from a position just outside the character by a limited third-person narrator. Despite the fact that what is described in the section entitled "In The Alley" (Paradise, p. 114) is made up entirely of the thoughts of Amory, the narrator continues to use "he" and "Amory" in reference to the character. The distance between character and narrator is obviously much narrower here than it is in the play sections but some distance does still exist. Surprisingly, Fitzgerald maintains the distance between Amory and the narrator while trying to portray the disturbed state of Amory's mind, a state which might come across more effectively through the use of a total shift to the first-person point of view.

Fitzgerald is not afraid to use such a drastic shift in point of view, however, as he proves later in Paradise, for a much less interesting effect. Amory is slowly pulling his

life back together late in the book as he walks through the city. After portraying a question-and-answer dialogue in Amory's mind, Fitzgerald provides a bridge into straight stream of consciousness:

This dialogue merged grotesquely into his mind's most familiar state--a grotesque blending of desires, worries, exterior impressions and physical reactions. (Paradise, p. 258)

What follows is precisely what the second part of that quotation suggests: a catalogue of interior and exterior impressions from Amory's mind. This section is not in sentences and many of the bits of sentences contain no subject. This implies that the sentence fragments represent Amory's thoughts. For example, midway through the stream-of-consciousness section, the following fragment appears: "Wonder what Humbird's body looked like now" (Paradise, p. 259). The structure of the fragment suggests that the subject "I" is implied, as in "I wonder...", but the form of the verb "looked"--past tense--suggests that the third-person narrator is still in control. The fragment is a clear example of Fitzgerald's inability to control the movement of the narrative point of view in this novel: in one sentence, he shifts from a first-person, present-tense statement into the regular third-person, past-tense narrative. In addition, the first-person, present-tense stream-of-consciousness technique is largely wasted here as the subject matter is hardly shocking and no great

psychological discoveries are made in this section. Fitzgerald refused to use the first-person stream earlier in the novel when it would have effectively portrayed, emphasized in fact, the shattered psychological condition of his protagonist; late in the novel he reduces it to a mere gimmick which appears for its own sake rather than for its effect on the narrative.

The point of view revolves around Amory but, at times, Fitzgerald lets it slip away to other characters. Eleanor, one of Amory's great loves, draws the narrative to herself after the two lovers part. The passage, "she will have no other adventures like Amory, and if she reads this she will say..." (Paradise, p. 222), for example, not only brings the narrative into a more omniscient form by allowing the narrator to know the thoughts (and futures) of characters other than Amory, it also forces the reader to realize that he is reading a written account. The effect is interesting, as we are allowed to see her reaction as it would happen, but it still represents a serious fluctuation in the narrative pattern. Later in the same section, Fitzgerald crosses this line again. After beginning an examination of Eleanor's background, he stops abruptly as if realizing that he has slipped away from his protagonist, stating, "I see I am starting wrong. Let me begin again" (Paradise, p. 223). He immediately returns to Amory but the breach is real;³ the

³ Fitzgerald would be plagued by his own narrative playfulness in Hollywood too. His treatment for "Lipstick"

reader's attention is once again drawn to the mechanics of the fiction and away from the story itself. These sorts of deviations of the narrative point of view (away from the central character, away from the story) may not seem serious--in fact, in many cases, they do not detract from the reading of the novel--but they do exemplify Fitzgerald's early failings in the area of control and manipulation of his narrative voice.

The deviations are also disappointing in view of the promising fashion in which Paradise begins. In the first chapter, "Amory , Son of Beatrice", the narrator maintains a consistent distance from the characters and a consistently sarcastic, undercutting tone. In this first chapter, Fitzgerald's playfulness is effective in creating irony: in describing Beatrice, the narrator states that "a brilliant education she had--her youth passed in renaissance glory, she was versed in the latest gossip of the Older Roman Families; known by name as a fabulously wealthy American girl..."(Paradise, p. 3). The irony of her "brilliant

(1927) begins: "School was over. The happy children, their books swinging carelessly at strap's end, tripped into the Spring fields--Wait a minute, that's the wrong story."^a This sort of comic touch is impossible to duplicate in film, especially in silent film. It only detracts, therefore, from the impact of the screenplay as a serious effort at writing for the cinema.

^a F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Lipstick" in Fitzgerald/Hemingway Annual 1978 eds. Matthew J. Bruccoli and Richard Layman (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1979), p. 3.

N.B. All further references to this work will come from this same edition and will be followed in the text of the paper by ("Lipstick", p.__).

education" of gossip and her fame for being wealthy is not lost on the observant reader as Fitzgerald seems to be writing an indictment of the American upper classes. But after the first chapter, the distance between the narrator and the characters diminishes considerably and the tone of sarcasm and irony all but disappears. It seems that Fitzgerald, as his protagonist became more and more an image of himself and less an image of the American aristocracy, grew to like Amory Blaine and lost the ironic flavour that marks the first part of the novel. Once again, the author allows the control of his narrative voice to slip away from him; This Side Of Paradise begins with biting irony but ends with loving triumph and self-knowledge.

Fitzgerald's second novel, The Beautiful And Damned (1922), shows some improvement in the author's control of his narrative voice but not much. In fact, the two novels are remarkably similar in narrative form. As Paradise does, Beautiful begins with a third-person narrator who stands at some distance from the characters in the story and tells the reader of the protagonist's family history. Missing from the first novel, however, is the ironic tone of this opening exposition. While the descriptions of Anthony Patch and his family are definitely playful, littered with comic touches such as "Now Adam J. Patch..."⁴ and "she was a lady who

⁴ F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Beautiful And Damned (New York: Collier Books, 1922), p. 4.

sang, sang, sang..."(Beautiful, p. 6), they lack the scornful sarcasm that marks the first chapter of Paradise. Thus, there is no disorientation in losing that tone as the novel progresses. The narrative voice is relatively ambivalent towards Anthony at the beginning of the novel and remains so throughout. This ambivalence is especially effective as the novel closes, moreover; the irony of the final scene with a tortured, wheel-chair ridden Anthony claiming victory over the world is much more effective because the reader is left to feel the irony for himself without a narrator to point the way. Although the distance between the narrator and the protagonist does fluctuate throughout the novel, and although the narrative point of view also tends to drift between Anthony and Gloria, the narrative technique of The Beautiful And Damned is an improvement over that of This Side Of Paradise at least in the area of consistency of tone.

In fact, Beautiful also improves over Paradise in its consistency of point of view. Where, in the first novel, the narrative seems to drift from character to character, in the second it remains relatively static, focused on Anthony and later on both Anthony and Gloria. One could argue that, as Gloria comes to share Anthony's life as his wife, she also earns a share of the narrative spotlight. Later,

N.B. All further references to this work will come from this same edition and will be followed in the text of the paper by (Beautiful, p__).

however, as Anthony and Gloria seem to drift further apart in their relationship, Fitzgerald gives them separate chapters of their own. The result is a rather unsettling movement at the start of chapter two of Book III. This chapter jumps not only from Anthony to Gloria alone but also back in time to the moment of Anthony's departure for the South. The first section of the chapter deals entirely with Gloria, filling in briefly the details of her time spent alone while Anthony is in the army camp. Its purpose is evidently to explain Gloria's strange behaviour and her rather startling descent into depression but the chapter is itself a rather strange and startling descent into another time and character. Fitzgerald continues this disturbing manipulation of point of view later in the same chapter in a section entitled, appropriately, "Gloria Alone" (Beautiful, p. 369). The point of view alternates throughout the remainder of the novel as Gloria and Anthony drift from each other, finally coming to rest upon Anthony on the deck of the boat. The result is, once again, a novel whose focus changes in the middle. Originally, Anthony is alone at the centre of the narrative, sharing the spotlight with Gloria only when she is emotionally and physically close to him. As the novel progresses, however, it finds a second focus, Gloria, who gains prominence as her relationship with Anthony deteriorates. The effective final scene is surprising, then, in that Gloria is nowhere in sight ("She was here a minute ago," Beautiful, p. 448). Anthony is left

alone in the spotlight as the novel ends. The reader wonders why Gloria, since she plays such a minor role at the end, is given so much attention in the middle and later stages of the novel.

The Beautiful And Damned is still, like Paradise, an extremely literary novel. Fitzgerald seems to enjoy using other forms of writing to enhance his story. In both early novels, he uses songs, poems, letters and even diary entries to help develop the action or the personalities of his characters. Paradise even contains a chart that Amory wrote in university to define the differences between "The Slicker" and "The Big Man" (Paradise, p. 36). The tactic is effective in characterizing Amory as it shows how he judges others but it also stands as evidence of another deviation in narrative technique. Amory is literally allowed to take over the narrative in the form of his chart. The same can be said for letters and poems: both are effective in portraying various aspects of characters and events but both also hand over the narrative power to outside forces. This is especially true in Beautiful in a section entitled "The Diary" (Beautiful, p. 144) in which Fitzgerald provides actual excerpts from Gloria's diaries. The reader is once again carried out of the novel and into a different form of narrative. Thus the limitations of the narrator are brought into question. As has been mentioned, the narrators in Fitzgerald's first two novels are, much of the time, limited

in omniscience to the thoughts of one or at the most two characters at a time. The ability to reproduce entire documents (such as a diary) suggests that the narrator is much more powerful than we at first suspected and we therefore call into question any later indications of his limitations. Fitzgerald's dependence on these other forms of writing also gives some warning as to the difficulties he would have when asked to write scripts--films and plays have difficulty presenting diaries or long letters in any interesting and dramatically effective fashion.

This Side Of Paradise and The Beautiful And Damned show Fitzgerald at the beginning of his career as a novelist. Both books contain fluctuating, inconsistent narrators who seem to work outside the author's control. Both novels also deal with the psychological development of their central characters, sacrificing excitement (in the form of action) for character analysis. Fitzgerald seemed unaware of the inconsistency of his narrative approach, indulging himself throughout the two novels with narrative shifts and changes of narrative focus. The two early novels are immature in narrative technique, a fact that Fitzgerald himself would soon learn from his work on the play, The Vegetable.

Chapter Three

THE PLAY'S THE THING: IMPROVEMENT IN GATSBY

Fitzgerald's weaknesses as a writer came to light when he finally decided to write a major play in 1924-25. His Broadway hopes rested on his comedy entitled The Vegetable which eventually flopped in its only run off-Broadway. The Vegetable contains many of the weaknesses of the play sections of his first two novels--weak plot, over-intricate and literary stage directions and a reliance on exposition for characterization rather than on action or dialogue--but it does represent a turning point in his career as a serious writer. From The Vegetable he learned the lessons that would make The Great Gatsby great--the necessity for a strong, consistent narrative voice and the importance of a consistent point of view and narrative distance. As a completed novel, The Great Gatsby stands as Fitzgerald's single most successful work. Only The Last Tycoon, had he completed it, stood any chance of rivalling Gatsby for the power and consistency of its narrative voice.

As a play, The Vegetable is a failure. It does, however, provide some interesting insights into how Fitzgerald would later approach the motion picture screenplay. He begins with a detailed, expository description of the setting and its lone occupant, Jerry Frost. The description lasts for a number of pages and

contains such playful, though relatively useless comments as "Those walls--God!"¹ and "Against my will, I'll have to tell you a few sordid details about the room" (Vegetable, p. 4). Unfortunately, much of the comedy of The Vegetable is contained within the stage directions and, therefore, never comes across on stage. Fitzgerald did not seem to understand that the a play's most clever parts should be on stage, not in the script for only the actors and actresses, the director and set-designer to enjoy. The stage directions are very much like the prose at the start of Paradise; they are the words of a sarcastic, playful narrator.

Once he gets into the play itself, however, Fitzgerald proves capable of allowing his narrator and the stage directions to disappear. As with most plays, The Vegetable has no discernible narrating voice when it is portrayed on stage. The characters and events in the plot are set before the audience without any outside commentary; the audience is thus able to judge for themselves all elements of the story. Fitzgerald rarely indulges himself, inserting only brief bits of stage direction throughout the dialogue, each containing one or two words at the most. After the initial passages of characterization in the stage directions, he

¹ F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Vegetable (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), p. 3.

N.B. All further references to this work will come from this same edition and will be followed in the text of the paper by (Vegetable, p. __).

accepts the limitations of the medium and tries to use the actions and dialogue of the characters to reveal their personalities to the audience. Late in the play, for example, the desperate Charlotte reveals her agitation through a gesture: "She springs up, clasping her hands together" (Vegetable, p. 141). The eloquence of her action need not be described; it literally speaks for itself. It is in The Vegetable that Fitzgerald learned to characterize through actions, a technique which, as Winston Wheeler Dixon points out, he uses so well in his 1937 screenplay, Infidelity.² Lacking an intrusive narrator through whom to describe his characters' emotional and psychological states, Fitzgerald learned from this play the power of action and also of dialogue. By forcing Fitzgerald not to rely on his narrator, The Vegetable allowed him to experiment with his narrative style. With the knowledge he gained from this experience, he created Nick Carraway, the limited, first-person narrator of The Great Gatsby.

"It is important to recognize that the formal excellence of The Great Gatsby derives mainly from the skillful use of Nick Carraway, the narrator,"³ states Matthew J. Bruccoli, one of the leading Fitzgerald scholars. Indeed, The Great Gatsby represents a great step forward for

² Wheeler Winston Dixon, The Cinematic Vision Of F. Scott Fitzgerald (Ann Arbor: U.M.I. Research Press, 1986), p. 25.

³ Matthew J. Bruccoli, The Composition Of Tender Is The Night (Pittsburgh: University Of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), p. 39.

Fitzgerald in the area of narrative technique. Nick Carraway's position inside the world of the text gives his opinions, observations and descriptions a new dimension, a sense of distance from the authorial voice. Thus, Fitzgerald gains a second level in the novel--not only does the reader watch the Gatsby/Buchanan plot unfold, he also follows the growth of the narrator. As A.E. Elmore suggests, the story is "presented through the medium of Nick's consciousness and...that consciousness reflects, in the course of the novel, a growing understanding of the nature of the human experience it observes."⁴ This second level of meaning is not, however, the only improvement in The Great Gatsby. Fitzgerald, through the use of the first person narrator, also manages to achieve a degree of consistency in the three major areas of narrative technique: narrative distance, narrative point of view, and narrative tone. It is no coincidence, moreover, that Gatsby follows directly on the heels of the play, The Vegetable, and represents the culmination of five years of continuous production and development in Fitzgerald's fiction. The lessons taught by This Side Of Paradise, The Beautiful And Damned, and The Vegetable are all clearly evident in The Great Gatsby.

⁴ A.E. Elmore, "Nick Carraway's Self-Introduction" in Fitzgerald Hemingway Annual 1971 eds. Matthew J. Bruccoli and C.E. Frazer Clark, Jr. (Washington: NCR Microcard Editions, 1971), p. 130.

Fitzgerald establishes the distance between his narrator and the action of the plot early in Gatsby. The extended exposition introducing Nick Carraway at the start of the novel is reminiscent of the openings of the first two novels, except for the fact that Carraway tells his own story. The narrative distance in Gatsby is not simply one of physical space (Nick is outside the minds of Gatsby, Daisy and the rest) but also one of time. The first introduction of Jay Gatsby ("the man who gives his name to this book")⁵ is in the past tense, indicating that the man is dead. "Only Gatsby...was exempt from my reaction-- Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn" (Gatsby, p. 2), Nick states early in the novel. The reader understands that the story of Gatsby is to be told from a vantage point in the future and that Nick will enjoy the advantage of hindsight in his judgements of the events. Fitzgerald quite effectively gives Nick, as the narrator, the immediacy of the first-person along with some of the omniscience of the third-person point of view. The narrative distance of the novel is thus more complex than it was in earlier novels, dealing now with both time and space, but it is also much more consistent. Nick maintains his position of an involved, intelligent commentator throughout the novel while remaining decidedly in the future. This

⁵ F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York: Collier Books, 1925), p. 4.

N.B. All further references to this work will come from this same edition and will be followed in the text of the paper by (Gatsby, p. __).

effect, moreover, allows Fitzgerald to speed up the action of the plot by bridging slow sections with such comments as "one Saturday night" (Gatsby, p. 113) and "It was dawn now" (Gatsby, p. 152). He further enhances the distance of the narrator from the action with the following interesting passage:

Reading over what I have written so far, I see I have given the impression that the events of three nights several weeks apart were all that absorbed me. On the contrary, they were merely casual events in a crowded summer, and, until much later, they absorbed me infinitely less than my personal affairs. (Gatsby, p. 56).

The passage seems odd in the context of a smoothly running narrative but its effect is two-fold: the idea of Nick "rereading" the story reinforces in the reader the fact that the narrator is examining the story from a vantage point in the future and, thus, probably rethinking it in his own mind; and the statement that the plot to that point had originally interested him "infinitely less" than his own affairs establishes a certain distance between the narrator, even at the time of the story, and the events he retells--he is, in fact, a relative outsider. The Great Gatsby shows just how aware of his narrative technique Fitzgerald had become; his use of Nick Carraway as the first-person narrator who maintains a consistent distance, in time and space, from the action is one of the factors that make Gatsby great.

Nick also helps to maintain the consistency of the point of view in the novel. It is, after all, his point of view through which much of the information is filtered. Fitzgerald rarely allows the narrative power to slip out of Carraway's control, even when the plot requires information that Nick has no realistic reason for knowing. Dixon criticizes Fitzgerald for his occasional slip in this area, the occasional time when Nick seems to know things which are beyond his scope of experience. "In these instances, Nick displays omniscience in relation to the narrative framework of the novel,"⁶ Dixon points out, suggesting that this "omniscience" contradicts Nick's position as a limited, first person narrator. One might defend Fitzgerald simply by pointing out that Nick is looking back on the events of the novel and may have investigated in the interim to fill in the gaps in his knowledge. The story of Gatsby's murder, for example, is told in the clipped, impersonal tone of a police or newspaper report (*Gatsby*, pp. 161-163), suggesting that Nick had actually read the reports to augment his own inferences into what had happened. The distance in time of the narrator gives Fitzgerald an easy loophole to explain Nick's sometimes unrealistic knowledge and understanding of the characters and events of his story.

⁶ Dixon, p. 26.

Dixon, moreover, notes that "Fitzgerald did indeed take great pains to justify Nick's knowledge of events to which he was not witness."⁷ It is, in fact, those "great pains" that represent the few instances in the novel when the point of view slips away from Nick Carraway. Much of the background of the mysterious Jay Gatsby emerges in the form of two flashbacks, both of which are very carefully marked as stories told to Nick by other characters in the novel. Jordan Baker, for example, takes over the narrative briefly at the end of chapter four (Gatsby, p. 75) in order to recount the first meeting of Daisy and Gatsby. The section begins without quotation marks, suggesting perhaps that Nick is paraphrasing from memory the story Jordan told him, but Fitzgerald is careful to make clear that the source of the information is Baker:

"One October day in nineteen-seventeen ----
 (said Jordan Baker that afternoon...)"
 (Gatsby, p. 75).

Fitzgerald sacrifices the consistency of his point of view in order to fill in required background information without compromising the limited nature of his narrator. While this instance is relatively easily defended, Fitzgerald later provides background information on Gatsby in a much less dextrous manner. At the beginning of chapter six, Nick explains the transformation of James Gatz into Jay Gatsby in his own words--he maintains control of the narrative point

⁷ Dixon, p. 28.

of view--yet punctuates his story with "I suppose" (Gatsby, p. 99) to suggest that he infers as much about Gatsby's background as he knows for certain. Fitzgerald covers himself by adding an explanatory paragraph at the end of the flashback:

He told me all this very much later, but I've put it down here with the idea of exploding those first wild rumors about his antecedents, which weren't even faintly true. Moreover he told me it at a time of confusion, when I had reached a point of believing everything and nothing about him. So I take advantage of this short halt, while Gatsby, so to speak, caught his breath, to clear this set of misconceptions away. (Gatsby, p. 102)

The paragraph not only explains how Nick acquired all this knowledge, ("He told me all this"), it also adds to the uncertainty as to the story's veracity with the suggestion that Nick, when he was told the story, was willing to believe "everything and nothing" about Gatsby. Nick, as the first-person limited narrator, is covered in two ways: the reader can believe that the story is simply what Nick "supposes" to be true or that the story is as Gatsby himself told it to Nick, or even both. Fitzgerald took great pains to preserve the consistency of his point of view in The Great Gatsby and it is Nick Carraway, the narrator, who "accounts in large measure for at least the technical superiority of Gatsby to Fitzgerald's other novels."⁸

⁸ Elmore, p. 136.

The limited nature of the first-person narrator, despite his ability to "fill-in" his knowledge with research after the events of the story, plays a very important role in the creation of that aura of mystery so important to the character of Jay Gatsby. The passage quoted above, in which Nick suggests that at one point in his life he was willing to believe everything and nothing he heard about Gatsby's past, is just one example of how Nick's limited nature helps to add to the mystery. Our first real glimpse of Gatsby in the novel, for example, is enveloped in mystery:

The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight, and turning my head to watch it, I saw that I was not alone--fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens. (Gatsby, p. 21)

The description begins as an objective point-of-view shot, describing for the reader precisely what Nick can see. It becomes subjective only as the point where Nick interprets the meaning of the man's "leisurely movements". The reader, too, suspects that the man is Gatsby but, like Nick, he is left to interpret the surface details of Gatsby's appearance. Nick's need to "guess" who the man is and what he is doing stresses his limitations as a narrator, limitations which effectively nurture the reader's curiosity

about Gatsby. Just following this passage, Fitzgerald introduces one of the key symbols of the novel--the green beacon--but it too remains mysterious for both the narrator and the reader.

But I didn't call him, for he gave the sudden intimation that he was content to be alone--he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily, I glanced seaward--and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. (Gatsby, pp. 21-22)

The passage contains a number of details which should peak the reader's curiosity: Gatsby's stretched arms, his trembling, and the light. All of these details remain a mystery for much of the novel, as does the true character of Gatsby. Nick's limitations as a narrator add to that mystery--he becomes the detective who carries the reader along with him as he sets out to discover the truth. The rumours Nick hears about Gatsby's past further enhance this sense of mystery as both he and the reader must sort through them to decide what to believe and what to discard. Fitzgerald chose the perfect narrative approach for the mystery of Jay Gatsby: by limiting the reader to the knowledge held by a limited, first-person narrator, Fitzgerald makes the story of Gatsby much more effective.

Fitzgerald stresses the limited nature of his narrator with the second major symbol in the novel, the eyes of

Doctor T.J. Eckleburg. The Eckleburg billboard first appears on page 23 and its appearance too is shrouded in mystery. Not once in the paragraph describing the eyes (Gatsby, p. 23) does Fitzgerald mention the fact that the eyes are on a sign--the eyes gain a life of their own, referred to as "them" as they "brood on over the solemn dumping ground" (Gatsby, p. 23). The eyes gain an aura of omniscience, the omniscience which Nick as the narrator lacks, to the point where Wilson calls them "God" (Gatsby, p. 160). "God sees everything," Wilson assures the reader, adding that he had warned his wife Myrtle that she would be punished for her sins with Tom Buchanan. The eerie effect of the eyes adds to the sense of foreboding in the story; the eyes also serve as a point of contrast with the narrator. Unlike Nick's eyes, the eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg see everything.

It is in the area of narrative tone, perhaps more than in any other, that Gatsby excels beyond the scope of Fitzgerald's earlier work, however. As A. E. Elmore documents in his article "A Sort Of Moral Attention: The Narrator of The Great Gatsby", Nick Carraway not only retells the story, he also reveals his own personal growth in the process. The consistency of the tone of The Great Gatsby, then, comes not from a static, unchanging narrator but from the steady development of that narrator. While Nick's feelings toward Gatsby may change drastically from

the beginning of the novel to the end, or from the time of the events to his vantage point two years later, that change occurs realistically before the reader's eyes. Nick is "a narrator-participant who judges not only the other characters but himself as well"⁹ and in so judging he learns as much about himself as he does about the story he retells. The narrative tone of the novel is, therefore, one of intellectual introspection as Nick attempts to understand Gatsby, Tom and Daisy and, through them, himself. The ending of the novel holds some interesting surprises in this respect: Nick approaches the death of Gatsby with the dispassionate tone of a police report, then reveals some of his own melancholy over Gatsby's demise through the tone of the final few chapters; he attempts to understand Tom Buchanan, stating that he "couldn't forgive him or like him, but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified" (Gatsby, p. 180); and he finally comes to the conclusion that Gatsby was wrong, that his dream "was already behind him, somewhere back in the vast obscurity beyond the city" (Gatsby, p. 182). This conclusion is a big step from Nick's rueful praise of Gatsby earlier in the book:

"They're a rotten crowd," I shouted across the lawn. "You're worth the whole damn bunch put together."

I've always been glad I said that. It was the only compliment I ever gave him, because I

⁹ Elmore, p. 136.

disapproved of him from beginning to end. (Gatsby, p. 154)

The last comment in this passage is difficult to reconcile with Nick's evident sadness at the death of Gatsby and at the pitiful turnout for his funeral. Although Carraway obviously comes to the conclusion at the novel's end that Gatsby was wrong in thinking he could recapture the past, the final pages of the book carry some indication of Nick's admiration for Gatsby. Perhaps this admiration stems from the fact that Nick so despises Tom Buchanan, Gatsby's nemesis, or perhaps it is the result of hindsight and rethinking. It is real, however, and it contradicts Nick's statement that he "disapproved of [Gatsby] from beginning to end." Fitzgerald has proven extremely successful in making the inner turmoil of Nick Carraway a major part of the novel, to the point that the narrator's struggle to come to grips with his own feelings towards Gatsby becomes the focal point of the book. The consistent growth and struggle within the mind of Nick Carraway proves the most interesting aspect of the novel and proves moreover that his experience with The Vegetable helped Fitzgerald understand the limitations and possibilities of prose narrative technique.

Chapter Four

TURMOIL AND TENDER IS THE NIGHT

Fitzgerald's production fell off after 1925 and The Great Gatsby. His life entered a period of great turmoil which did not truly end until his death in 1940. Gatsby proved a "financial failure"¹ and Fitzgerald had to turn to short stories to support himself, his rapidly deteriorating wife Zelda, and their daughter, Scottie. He also managed a number of relatively unsuccessful trips to Hollywood: in 1927, when he produced "Lipstick"; from September 1931 to the spring of '32 when his main task was The Red-Headed Woman; and finally in 1937 and '38, his most successful trip, when he earned a screen credit for his work on Three Comrades and wrote his best and most personal screenplay, Infidelity. Fitzgerald only finished one novel in the last fifteen years of his life--Tender Is The Night. As much a step backward as it is a step forward, Tender features, at times, the narrative skills Fitzgerald had learned with The Vegetable and Gatsby as well as the new knowledge he had gained from film writing. It also, however, appears to be influenced by the chaotic state of his life. Written over a nine year period, Tender Is The Night is a confused and somewhat confusing account of the lives of an actress, a psychologist, and his patient/wife.

¹ Mellow, p. 233.

Fitzgerald's work on the screenplay called "Lipstick" shows just how many of The Vegetable's lessons he had forgotten. The screenplay is "a slight an improbable idea, and the scenario aimed at clever writing that was hardly practical for the film medium."² It is more a short story than a screenplay. Its plot is more social than action-oriented, dealing with the uneasy romance between a popular college boy and an ex-convict girl. As he had in the novels This Side Of Paradise and The Beautiful And Damned, Fitzgerald uses a variety of written media to advance the plot, a technique that is relatively ineffective in film.³ When we first see her, Dolly Carrol stands in a jail cell with the walls covered with newspaper articles and pictures. These articles ("Miss Mimi Haughton presented to society at dinner dance at the plaza," "Flapper Army besieges Mayor for Mother's Relief," "Contest winner gets lead in "Amorous Love,"" etc. "Lipstick", p. 7) are intended to characterize Dolly, to suggest that, psychologically at least, she lives not in her jail cell but in "the world outside" ("Lipstick", p. 8). It is doubtful, however, whether the audience will understand this visual metaphor, will interpret the presence of the newspaper articles on the wall as meaning that Dolly is planning for a better life outside the prison. In order

² Mellow, p. 285.

³ Innovations in film-style by such artistic directors as Jean-Luc Godard have proven in recent years that written media, like letters, sign-boards and newspaper articles, can be used effectively in film. Classical Hollywood cinema, however, concerned as it was with telling a clear, rapidly-paced story, avoided extended written accounts which the directors thought slowed the action of the film.

to allow the viewer even to see and read the headlines themselves, the director would have to linger on each for three or four seconds, thus slowing considerably what should be a fairly quick establishing shot. Fitzgerald seems not to understand the needs of the film medium. He goes so far as to reinforce the metaphor's effect in his script by adding the expository statement: "These [newspaper headlines] are life to her" ("Lipstick", p. 8). Later on in the same scene, Fitzgerald employs one of his favourite narrative tricks, a letter, to further reveal Dolly's character. Dolly receives a letter from her uncle which plays a key role in the plot of the screenplay. The letter reveals to the audience that Dolly is innocent, that her self-sacrificing nature had sent her to jail in place of her guilty uncle. It also introduces a container of lipstick to the story (hence the title). This lipstick contains a love potion which allows Dolly to capture Ben Manny in the first place; upon it the entire plot hinges. Knowing, through the contents of the letter, that Dolly is innocent of any crime, the audience is supposed to fear that she will be punished a second time for a crime she did not commit, this time by losing her lover in public humiliation. Fitzgerald reveals his dependence upon the written word by placing two of the plot's most important features in a letter, one long enough that it would take several intertitles to portray in a readable form for the viewer. Fitzgerald seems to have already lost his sense of pace and his ability to

characterize through action by the time he came to write "Lipstick" in 1927.

"Lipstick", however, is not without filmic value. As the romance between Dolly and Ben progresses, for example, Fitzgerald shows them walking in the moonlight:

Ben and Dolly go along the University Arms which is separated from the street by a tall iron grating. Once inside they hesitate--he wants nothing except to kiss her again, but the moon throws the shadow of the iron grating across her face, as if she were behind prison bars, and sadly now, he turns away. ("Lipstick", p. 25)

The visual effect is valuable--it shows the continuing influence of her past upon Dolly's life and it shows the possible problems that past might cause in her relationship with Ben--and suggests that Fitzgerald was capable of effective screenwriting. Unfortunately, there are many more examples of bad writing than there are of good in the screenplay. More often than not, Fitzgerald succumbs to his love for a clever narrator, adding sarcastic or judgemental remarks which could not be translated onto the screen. His last two paragraphs are typical of this problem:

I must add that the lipstick was found by a little coloured girl delivering laundry, who in consequence grew up and had a perfectly enormous family.

Ben and Dolly were never known to care.
("Lipstick", p. 33)

The value of these comments to the story is debatable and they would have no place in a film. Like much of the humor in "Lipstick", these last two paragraphs work only in the written story. Fitzgerald evidently had not yet understood the demands of the film medium and had forgotten many of the lessons he had learned in writing The Vegetable.

Fitzgerald's work on Tender Is The Night continued through his Hollywood experiences but could in no way be counted as steady, disciplined writing. Matthew J. Bruccoli documents the extensive work Fitzgerald put into Tender in his valuable study, The Composition Of Tender Is The Night, which traces the novel through 17 drafts and three different plotlines. Bruccoli's study makes it obvious that Fitzgerald struggled with Tender and especially with the narrative technique of the novel. In 1925, for example, Fitzgerald began to write several drafts of the novel with Francis Melarky as the central figure: "in these first two drafts the story is told in a straight third-person narrative."⁴ Later, Bruccoli states: "In 1926 Fitzgerald recast the story so that it is told by a narrator who is passively involved in most of the action."⁵ This version of the novel is often referred to as the "matricide version", as the main character contemplated killing his overbearing mother. The narrator in this version, Bruccoli later adds, "is a very different figure from Nick [Carraway] and a much

⁴ Bruccoli, Composition, p. xxii.

⁵ Bruccoli, Composition, p. xxii.

weaker technical device" and "is no more skillful or economical here than the use of the omniscient third-person narrative form."⁶ By 1930, however, Fitzgerald had dropped the narrator character and returned to the third-person point of view in which the published novel is told.⁷ The final, published version of the novel carries sections from all three early versions, a fact which explains perhaps the narrative complexity and the inconsistency of point of view in Tender Is The Night.

Fitzgerald's novel is broken up into three books, each of which centres on a different character: the first on Rosemary Hoyt, a young actress; the second on Dick Diver, psychiatrist; and the third on Nicole Diver, Dick's wife and preferred patient. The narrator is ostensibly third-person but, as in the two early novels, he generally tends to identify himself with the central character of the section. "It is not an alternation of viewpoints which can be observed, but rather of characters upon which the narrative is focused," argues Wheeler Winston Dixon. "We do not "see" events through the eyes of Dick, Rosemary and Nicole."⁸ Brucoli chooses to disagree with Dixon, stating that "though the final version of Tender Is The Night does not have a narrator, its first third has a decided point of view. It is seen through Rosemary's eyes, and it may well

⁶ Brucoli, Composition, p. 40.

⁷ Brucoli, Composition, p. xxiii.

⁸ Dixon, p. 41.

be that Fitzgerald's experiment with the narrator of the matricide version was at least partially responsible for the use of Rosemary as an observer."⁹ He later adds that "Part III is as much as possible seen through Nicole's eyes,"¹⁰ suggesting the exact opposite of what Wheeler concludes-- although the narrator is capable of seeing beyond the limited scope of the central character of each section, he remains as close as possible to that character. This allows Fitzgerald to colour the narrative with the thoughts of the central character, giving the first section the sense of newness and innocence of Rosemary, the second Dick's intelligence and his feeling of slow dissipation, and the third the feelings of growing strength and independence that Nicole experiences as she slowly pulls away from Dick. The novel is necessarily confusing because of this alternation of point of view and these changes in narrative tone; the main question remains, however, as to how consistent the narrative focus remains in each section and whether or not Fitzgerald's narrative manipulation is strategically effective.

Book I of Tender Is The Night focuses on Rosemary Hoyt, a young actress on her first trip to Europe to enjoy the fruits of her Hollywood success. The section begins with a relatively objective narrator who describes the beach and the Gausse Hotel on the French Riviera. The visual quality

⁹ Brucoli, Composition, p. 41.

¹⁰ Brucoli, Composition, p. 132.

of the description has the effect of a film's establishing shot; it establishes for the reader the time and place in which the action of the story will occur. Quickly, however, the novel's narrator "zooms" in to take up a position near the newly-arrived Rosemary and her mother. The first description of the two women finishes with the subjective comment: "she was almost eighteen, nearly complete, but the dew was still on her."¹¹ The narrator has, by this time, taken his place beside Rosemary and is ready to slip into her thoughts. He starts to describe the beach as she sees it, then makes his move: "Feeling the impactive scrutiny of strange faces, she took off her bathrobe and followed" (Tender, p. 3). From this point on, the story is told as filtered through the mind of the character, with the objective narrator dropping out of sight altogether. New characters are introduced with passages describing how Rosemary feels about them, allowing each a certain air of mystery as we, the readers, are not entirely convinced of this naive young girl's ability to analyse people. We question her judgements and, in many cases, we are correct in doing so. Her reaction to Dick Diver, for example, is coloured by the instant love she feels towards him: "He seemed kind and charming--his voice promised that he would take care of her, and that a little later he would open up

¹¹ F. Scott Fitzgerald, Tender Is The Night (New York: Collier Books, 1934), p. 2.

N.B. All further references to this work will come from this same edition and will be followed in the text of the paper by (Tender, p.__).

whole new worlds for her, unroll an endless succession of magnificent possibilities" (Tender, p. 15). The last two books of the novel prove these judgements false. The proximity of Rosemary to the narrator forces us to strip away Rosemary's naive and emotional reactions to people and events in order to see them for what they really are. The effect is interesting and would add to the impact of both the character of Rosemary and the events and characters she encounters were it consistent throughout the section.

Rosemary's control over the narrative point of view is not consistent, however. As early as page 23, the narrative focus changes three times in rapid succession. From Rosemary, we quickly move into a paragraph about her mother: "Her mother was pleased that she had done so accurately what she was told to do, but she still wanted to launch her out and away. Mrs. Speers was fresh in appearance but she was tired" (Tender, p. 23). The next chapter, moreover, begins with Nicole Diver as the narrative focus--"Feeling good from the rosy wine at lunch, Nicole Diver folded her arms" (Tender, p. 23). The narrator has abandoned Rosemary's point of view completely, showing his omniscience by examining the thoughts of other characters; his distance from the section's main character is inconsistent throughout the first book, making the limited, naive nature of Rosemary's judgements of other people seem out of place in the narrative. Fitzgerald was evidently aware of his

narrative inconsistency, adding such heavy-handed remarks as "To resume Rosemary's point of view it should be said that...she and her mother looked about appreciatively" (Tender, p. 26) to indicate that he was in control. The remark seems even more heavy-handed in light of the observation which follows it; the narrative has indeed returned its focus to Rosemary but the observation that "she and her mother looked about appreciatively" is not necessarily from Rosemary's "point of view." Fitzgerald's narrator could easily have slipped without comment back towards Rosemary to describe her and her mother's reaction to their surroundings. The addition of "To resume..." is, nonetheless, proof that Fitzgerald was conscious of the movement of his point of view even if he was incapable of controlling that movement.

One of the most interesting examples of narrative movement in the first book of Tender Is The Night appears at the beginning of chapter thirteen. The chapter begins with Dick Diver as the focus of the narration while a fairly objective, distant narrator describes his movement through a network of trenches. The narrator, at this point, is omniscient; he is capable, for example, of knowing that Dick "was full of excitement" (Tender, p. 55). The description follows Dick through the trenches toward the group; it is, for all intents and purposes, a filmic establishing shot which pans across the setting before settling on the central

character. Dick Diver's role in the first two establishing paragraphs is little more than the role of the extra who leads the camera to the recognizable star in so many of Hollywood's narrative films. As soon as he speaks his first words to Rosemary, moreover, she resumes control of the narrative; he remains in the scene only because she wants him to be near her. The effect is interesting for its filmic qualities even though it represents another slippage of the narrative focus away from Rosemary. It also foreshadows her eventual disappearance from the narrative centre which occurs, surprisingly, not at the beginning of Book II as we might have expected, but at the beginning of chapter twenty of the first book. Rosemary re-emerges from time to time, thereafter, to retake control but always drifts into the background soon after. Fitzgerald seems to be trying to capitalize on her innocence at the end of Book I, for example, by recounting the discovery of the dead negro, Peterson, from her perspective (Tender, pp. 109-110). The result is more confusion than anything else, however, as the reader has been thrown from one point of view to another so often in the previous chapters that he is lost; once Rosemary gives up the narrative focus in chapter twenty, her effectiveness as an innocent filter for the narrative is also lost. Her reaction of shock and dismay at discovering the body is completely understandable but the reader has seen too much from a point of view beyond Rosemary's scope to accept the imposition of a limited narrator at this point

in the novel. Fitzgerald would have been better off settling for the limitations of a narrator who is attached permanently to Rosemary throughout the first book. The inconsistency of his narrative distance and point of view greatly detracts from the effect of the first book of Tender Is The Night.

The most pertinent question, however, is whether or not Fitzgerald used the movement of his narrative voice for any discernible purpose. As we suggested earlier, for example, the movement of narrative focus and control back to Rosemary for the murder of Peterson was probably motivated by Fitzgerald's narrative strategy; he realised that the discovery of Peterson's body on Rosemary's bed would be most effectively retold from Rosemary's point of view so that the reader could share in her shock and alarm. Leaving the narrative in Dick's hands would have wasted the moment; the manipulation of the narrative voice here seems to be a strategically motivated move on the part of Fitzgerald, even if it does add to the confusion caused by the vast number of narrative changes made to that point.

Other changes of narrative focus in Book I are less defensible. The initial movement from omniscient objective narrator into Rosemary's point of view is natural and rather common in the modern novel. The constant movement that follows, however, is neither common nor effective. Fitzgerald refuses to accept the limitations of his chosen

narrative form and allows his narrative voice to roam uncontrolled throughout the first book. The movement, quoted above (Tender, p. 23), to Rosemary's mother is, for example, inexplicable. The section told from the mother's point of view is too short and contains too little information of value to warrant the confusion created by the change of focus. In addition, Rosemary's mother plays a relatively minor role in the novel, a role too small to carry the narrative for any length of time. The movement of the narrative voice to a position somewhere between Nicole and Dick Diver, which occurs for the first time at chapter twenty, is also unwarranted. Fitzgerald seems to have planned to move the narrative focus to the Diver's in Book II; why, then, did he abandon a relatively sound narrative plan and move it earlier? The natural break in the narrative flow created by the change from Book I to Book II provides the perfect opportunity to make the move unobtrusively--a shift of narrative focus and point of view at that point would probably have passed unnoticed by most readers. The reader is unable to ignore the tennis-ball-like movement of the narrative focus late in Book I; from a comfortably consistent narrative voice in the form of Rosemary, the reader is tumbled into a disjointed, uncontrolled narrative with no real focus by the end of the first book.

The novel's second book sees the emergence of a much stronger, more distant narrator. This narrator assumes control in the very first line of the book and, although the distance he maintains from Dick Diver and Nicole Diver fluctuates greatly, he rarely lets the reader forget he exists. "In the spring of 1917..." (Tender, p. 113) the second book begins, introducing a flashback that will continue for the first ten chapters of the book. The presence of this flashback in the narrative caused a great deal of confusion on the part of critics when the book first appeared,¹² but its effect in establishing control over the narrative voice is a welcome change over the first book. The narrator displays his omniscience over time as well as knowledge by transporting us back to Dick Diver's past, to the time in his life when he first meets Nicole. Rosemary Hoyt, firmly entrenched in the future, plays no role in the flashback and is effectively eliminated as a point of narrative focus. This move is logical--Rosemary has already served her purpose in the novel by introducing us to the

¹² As Matthew J. Bruccoli explains in detail in The Composition Of Tender Is The Night, critics greeted the novel with skeptical comments about its supposedly complex chronological structure. The confusion was so great, in fact, that Malcolm Cowley, a friend of Fitzgerald's, actually released what he called the "author's final version" of Tender in 1951. In this version the story is rearranged into chronological order, with the flashback at the beginning. As Bruccoli points out, however, "it is...noteworthy that the flashback structure is the only scheme represented in the manuscripts" of Tender Is The Night, suggesting that Fitzgerald may have succumbed to critical pressure in allowing the change but that the novelist created the flashback structure as an integral part of his novel. Bruccoli, Composition, p. 103.

Divers and creating a decidedly misleading image of them in our minds. The omniscient narrator now steps in to reveal to us the errors in judgement that we have made. As our knowledge and understanding of Dick grows, the narrative voice moves closer and closer to him. As his relationship with Nicole develops, Dick grows more and more willing to share the narrative focus and point of view with her. The omniscient narrator, however, employs various tactics to maintain control over the narrative process early in Book II, to remind the reader that he remains independent of the Divers as the story-telling agent.

The narrator, for example, reinforces our sense of his independent presence at the end of the first chapter, stating, "the foregoing has the ring of a biography," and then finishing the chapter, "best to be reassuring--Dick Diver's moment began now" (Tender, p. 116). The narrator is obviously in control of the story at this point and is even gaining a personality of his own, making comments that reflect his relaxed state of mind, such as "best to be reassuring." Here, the reader and narrator are dealing with each other on a one to one basis, without the benefit of a character whose mind filters the narrative for us. It is not until midway through the next chapter that this narrator enters Dick's thoughts and thus gives up at least part of his narrative control. "Suddenly," the narrator states, Dick's "thoughts swung to the patient, the girl" (Tender, p.

119). The narrator takes up Dick's point of view, at least momentarily, getting close enough to the character to add "the girl" to represent, quite subtly, the fact that Dick's interest in Nicole Warren is something more than professional. The distance between narrator and character grows, however, directly thereafter--the omniscient narrator produces a precise and exact rendering of the letters Nicole had sent to Dick, right down to the page numbers. Dick, as a character of limited power, would not be capable of producing such precise replicas of the letters, trapped as he is in another man's office. By performing a feat which is beyond the capabilities of the character, the narrator has once again established a certain distance between himself and the focus of his narrative as well as reinforcing the reader's sense of his control over the story.

Chapter three of Book II holds another example of the narrator's omniscience as he paraphrases a story that Dick hears from Dr. Gregorovius; the narrator retells the story without quotation marks, suggesting that he is adapting the story to the needs of his narrative. By giving credit for the story to Dr. Gregorovius, however, ("he told Dick the story" Tender, p. 124), the narrator draws himself closer to Dick's limited knowledge. The implication is that the narrator, like Dick, learns the story of Mr. Devereux Warren from Dr. Gregorovius, that the narrator is, in some manner,

limited. The narrator later moves back once again and re-establishes his omniscience. This omniscience is made especially clear when, in chapter six, he jumps the narrative forward in time: "Six months later he thought the same way" (Tender, p. 138). The section is isolated--the narrative jumps forward for only one paragraph, then settles back into the "normal" time frame of the flashback. The narrator of Book II slides back and forth, from omniscient to limited, from distant to relatively close to the character. His presence is a unifying force in the first part of Book II but, unfortunately, when the flashback comes to an end in chapter ten, the narrator loses his unifying power and the narrative loses any sense of consistency.

Strategically, the use of the omniscient narrator at the beginning of Book II is sound--he provides the groundwork for the reader's understanding of Dick Diver, the centre of the book, and eases us into the character. Like the narrator at the beginning of Book I, this narrator serves to establish a stable base from which the narrative later takes flight. The reader little expects, however, the gut-wrenching movement brought on by the onset of the stream-of-consciousness effect in chapter ten. Bruccoli suggests that the use of Nicole Warren's free-association stream-of-consciousness passage to bring the narrative out of the flashback and back to its present shows "considerable

skill."¹³ The passage is, however, staggering to the mind of the unsuspecting reader; however effective it may be at bridging the time between flashback and present, the stream-of-consciousness passage destroys any consistency of narrative voice that the earlier narrator may have created. The passage fills in a great deal of important information quickly and effectively; it also shatters the reader's trust in the power of the narrator by demanding that he surrender his control over the narrative completely to Nicole Warren. She is allowed to speak directly to the reader, using the first person, without any influence whatsoever from the formerly omniscient narrator. From this point on, Book II threatens to become a patchwork quilt of narrative voices and points of view as the narrator, Dick, and others struggle for control. The section's saving grace is that Fitzgerald seems to have remembered that he intended Dick to be the centre of Book II and, despite the many slips, he manages to keep Dick in the story's focus.

Fitzgerald's intention of keeping Dick in the centre works to his advantage later in the book. With the romantic encounter between Diver and Rosemary in chapter twenty, Fitzgerald may have been tempted to switch, once again, to the girl's point of view, hoping to take advantage of the emotional effect of her innocence in the face of a possible sexual adventure. This effect would be similar, in fact, to

¹³ Bruccoli, Composition, p. 105.

the effect Fitzgerald did reach for in the Peterson murder scene: innocent youth facing an adult world. The author wisely chooses to ignore the temptation to try for the cheap emotional effect in this case in favour of consistency of narrative point of view. Dick maintains control of the narrative, to the extent that Rosemary's phone call is presented as a one-sided affair--as Dick does, the reader hears only Rosemary's side of the conversation (Tender, p. 210). The narrator is so close to Dick, in fact, that the gap between the two is almost nonexistent: "Now she lowered the lights for love. Why else should she shut off his view of her?" (Tender, p. 210). The explanation of Rosemary's action and the question which follows it certainly come from Dick's consciousness; they are his thoughts as he prepares for the seduction. The narration centres on Dick as he deteriorates throughout Book II, although the narrative distance fluctuates throughout.

It is no surprise then that the book ends with the narrative shared between Dick and another character. By the time Book II comes to a close, Dick has deteriorated to the point of being a brawling drunkard, depending upon his friends to save him from the authorities. The surprise is that he shares the narrative point of view not with Nicole, who will take over completely in Book III, but with Baby Warren, Nicole's sister. The relationship between Dick and Baby has not been an amiable one up to this point; the fact

that the two now share the point of view, that Dick depends on Baby, provides an ironic commentary upon Dick's decline. The shift in narrative point of view, the shift of narrative power here highlights the irony of Dick's situation. As he has fallen, he has surrendered his place as the centre of the novel to a detested bit-player in his life and in the novel. Strategically, this is one of the high points of Tender Is The Night: like his friends and, later, his wife, Dick Diver's narrator has abandoned him, leaving him in the power of a relatively hostile person.

Fitzgerald makes a big step forward over Book I in the second book, first with the omniscient narrator in chapter one and later with the use of Baby Warren as narrator to comment on Dick's decline. The second book manages to keep Dick in the centre of the narrative, foreshadowing the emergence of Nicole as focus with the stream-of-consciousness section. Although the narrative distance and point of view both fluctuate throughout the book, both are much more consistent here than in Book I; that fact, along with the relative consistency of narrative focus in the second book, suggests that Fitzgerald improved in his strategic handling of narrative technique even in the nine-year process of writing Tender Is The Night.

Book III picks up where Book II leaves off--with a relatively minor character as the focus of the narrative.

From Baby Warren, we move to Franz Gregorovius and his wife, Kaethe. The section proves an advantageous beginning to the book as it links Dick Diver's dissolution--Kaethe states that "Dick is no longer a serious man" (Tender, p. 239)--to Nicole's recovery and growing power--Kaethe, once again, suggests that "Nicole is less sick than any one thinks--she only cherishes her illness as an instrument of power" (Tender, pp. 237-238). The chapter forms a bridge as the narrative focus changes slowly from Dick to Nicole. It also allows the reader some insight into how even Dick's close friends, like Dr. Gregorovius, are beginning to doubt him. The break between the books allows the transition of narrative focus to occur smoothly, without undue shock to the reader. The Gregorovius' perform something of the same function as had the narrator at the beginning of each of the novel's first two books: they introduce the climate in which the action will take place. In this case, however, it is the psychological/social climate which is introduced, not the physical and temporal setting.

Fitzgerald is very careful to return quite quickly to the Divers as the narrative focus, beginning chapter two with Dick and his trip to meet the supposedly dying Devereux Warren. This trip without Nicole, in fact, represents the last extended period in which Dick stands alone at the centre of the narrative. Once Nicole joins him, the narrative quickly switches to the use of the inclusive term,

"the Divers" (Tender, p. 254), suggesting that Nicole has joined Dick at the centre of the narrative and is ready to wrest control from him. Fitzgerald recalls his work on "Lipstick" early in the fourth chapter, using the phrase "Regard them" (Tender, p. 255) to direct our attention to the couple. This phrase, along with the long exposition in which it appears, once again suggests the presence of an omniscient narrator, an objective narrator like a camera, who is directing our glance, controlling what we see. The objectivity of the narrator, however, does not last long as Nicole, stronger and growing more independent by the page, finally takes over the narrative focus at the beginning of chapter five. Fitzgerald's consistency slips at times but he seems intent upon bringing Nicole into the centre of the narrative as soon as possible.

Fitzgerald left ample evidence to suggest that the substitution of Nicole for Dick as the narrative focus in Book III was a planned effect, that it was based on Fitzgerald's narrative strategy for the novel. Fitzgerald "flatly states [in a summary of Book III] that the withdrawal of Dick Diver from the center of the narrative, which has puzzled some critics, was the intended effect."¹⁴ Matthew J. Bruccoli includes in his book, The Composition Of Tender Is The Night, a copy of Fitzgerald's "Summary of Part III (1st Half)" of the novel which outlines Fitzgerald's

¹⁴ Bruccoli, Composition, p. 14.

narrative strategy for the final book: "Part III is as much as possible seen through Nicole's eyes...From now on [Dick] is mystery man, at least to Nicole with her guessing at the mystery."¹⁵ The strategy is effective: what better way to view the decline of a once-great man than through the eyes of his wife, who is his greatest supporter but is still at least partially responsible for his fall? The switch to Nicole's point of view also reminds one of Rosemary's narrative in Part I; in both cases, Fitzgerald attempts to make strategic use of the limited nature of the character's understanding of the world around her to heighten the effect of the story. In the case of Nicole, however, the technique is further enhanced by the fact that the narrating character is herself undergoing a tremendous psychological change. The reader is brought right in close to watch Nicole Warren gather herself together and make that one final push away from her illness and away from the man had come to represent the illness itself. The effect is reminiscent of Fitzgerald's use of Nick Carraway as the first person narrator of The Great Gatsby. The development of the narrating character is as important as the events that narrator describes.

Fitzgerald calls attention to the fact that Nicole has become the sole focus of the narrative early in the fifth chapter, retelling a rather sensational scene involving Dick

¹⁵ Brucoli, Composition, p. 132.

and the cook from Nicole's limited point of view. "Because of an obstruction of an awning she could see only Dick's head and his hand holding one of his heavy canes with a bronze knob on it" (Tender, p. 263), the narrative states, limiting itself to what Nicole can see. The obstruction is important in that it shows just how little distance there is between the narrator and Nicole--all sense of narrative omniscience is sacrificed to Fitzgerald's desire to identify the narrator with the character. The description is basically an objective, point-of-view piece of the type so prevalent in film. No subjective overtones are present; the reader is given only the visual and aural data that the character enjoys. The situation takes on a second importance as we notice that, perhaps for the first time, Nicole challenges Dick's authority in any real manner. With Dick cornered by Augustine's knife, Nicole does not ask her husband what she should do, she instead takes the initiative herself. "'Shut up and get out!'" interrupted Nicole. 'We'll get the gendarmes'" (Tender, p. 263). Although her action fails to achieve its desired effect, it stands as an example of Nicole's growing strength and independence.

The growth of Nicole continues through the next two chapters until, by chapter seven, she is strong enough to take over absolute control of the narrative centre. In chapter six, for example, Fitzgerald quite clearly points out the growing distance between Nicole and Dick: "She was

glad when he left her, for almost the first time in her life--his awful faculty of being right seemed to have deserted him at last" (Tender, p. 273). Later in the same chapter, Nicole once again asserts her independence and, this time, the narrator is close enough to her to sense her own tension in doing so. As happens so often in Fitzgerald's fiction, insignificant objects or events take on grave psychological meanings for the characters involved. In this case, a jar of camphor rub comes to represent Nicole's independence: against her husband's stated wishes, Nicole gives the entire jar to Tommy Barban. The reaction from both Divers is immediate and important: Dick resigns himself to silent quiescence, stressing in doing so his anger at her rebellion; Nicole, meanwhile, loses her nerve, "aware of the sin she had committed against him" but suddenly aware also that she is continuing her "dry suckling at his lean chest" (Tender, p. 276). The reader senses the tension between the two characters but more importantly the tension within Nicole. As she is slowly taking the narrative focus away from Dick, so too is she removing herself, emotionally and psychologically, from his control. Nicole is suddenly realising how powerless she has been and the reader senses that she intends to change the situation. It is not surprising, then, that she takes over the narrative completely and irrevocably in the very next chapter.

Nicole takes over the narrative focus at the precise moment that Rosemary re-enters the story. Rosemary's telegram (Tender, p. 277) warns the Divers of her imminent return to the Gausse Hotel without her mother; it is a brief, relatively ambiguous note, one that, significantly, is short enough to fit easily into the rapid pacing of a Hollywood film. The contents of the note, moreover, are revealed only as Nicole reads them, and not before. The reader is left to discern the sender--there is no indication of the telegram's source in the text. The short section that contains this telegram (beginning on page 276) is an important bridge section in the narrative scheme. The telegram warns of the return not only of one of the novel's major characters but also of a possible source of division in the Diver household. Nicole's self-contradictory reaction to Rosemary's arrival--"I'll be glad to see her," Nicole said, grimly" (Tender, p. 277)--foreshadows just how divisive the young actress will be in their lives. The narrative focus, moreover, is now completely devoted to Nicole; the distance between the narrator and Nicole has narrowed to the point that the narrator's (and therefore the reader's) knowledge is limited entirely to the scope of Nicole's experience. From this brief passage at the end of chapter six, the reader is ready to leap into chapter seven, where the story is told through Nicole's eyes and where Rosemary pulls the Divers further apart.

Chapter seven, however, begins with Nicole still worried about Dick's reaction to the camphor cream incident. "But..." (Tender, p. 277) the chapter begins, calling attention immediately to the uncertainty of Nicole's situation and to the fact that the reader must now share her uncertainty. "But she went to the beach with Dick next morning with a renewal of her apprehension that Dick was contriving at some desperate solution," states the narrator, now closely allied with Nicole. "Since the evening on Golding's yacht she had sensed what was going on" (Tender, p. 277). She understands that she stands "delicately balanced...between an old foothold that had always guaranteed her security, and the imminence of a leap" (Tender, p. 277) away from Dick and that security. The section delves deeply into Nicole's consciousness, exploring her fears and her desires. It finds, however, Dick's mind impenetrable: "The most unhappy aspect of their relations was Dick's growing indifference, at present personified by too much drink; Nicole did not know whether she was to be crushed or spared" (Tender, p. 277). The tension mounts as to what Dick will do as the chapter and the book progresses; every action is filtered through Nicole's mind and the reader must make do with her explanations for every incident. As in film, where the narrator-camera can only show the actions of the characters, the later parts of the novel force the reader to interpret Dick's actions for himself, or to accept Nicole's interpretations. The

technique would have been extremely effective if Fitzgerald had maintained narrative consistency through the rest of the novel. Unfortunately, he does not and Nicole's effectiveness as a limited point of focus is greatly reduced.

Fitzgerald stays with Nicole as his narrative focus through the scene of Dick's physical failure at aquaplaning (Tender, pp. 280-282) but thereafter switches, inexplicably, back to Rosemary Hoyt. The deviation lasts for no more than two pages in the text and holds no important data that could not have been relayed had the narrative focus remained consistently on Nicole. It begins with a brief flicker back to Dick, who is said to be "amused when Mary perceived Rosemary" (Tender, p. 283); the narrator had evidently gained access to Dick's mind for a brief moment as Mary North snubs him. From Dick, Mary and the narrator turn toward Rosemary--the movement is bridged by a brief, two line dialogue--into whose thoughts the narrator immediately leaps. "She, too, saw how Mary had walked through the Diver's to talk to her, and a sense of obligation kept her unenthusiastic. No, she could not dine to-night" (Tender, p. 284). The narrative distance is so small that Rosemary's words are represented without quotation marks; the presence of the word "No", outside quotation marks yet unmarked as a response to a question, suggests that the narrator has now taken up Rosemary's point of view completely. Later the

relationship between the narrator and Rosemary becomes even clearer as the narrator presents her thoughts and her memories directly in the text. The shift to Rosemary's point of view is so complete that it is disorienting for the reader; that disorientation is enhanced by the fact that, with a simple ellipsis, Fitzgerald shifts right back to Nicole's point of view just as the narrator/Rosemary relationship reaches its most intimate stage--where scenes from Rosemary's imagination are presented in the text.

Even after Fitzgerald returns the narrative focus to its natural place, Nicole, he proves incapable of maintaining a consistent point of view. The reader, already disoriented by the brief movement to Rosemary, finds himself now bounced back and forth among the characters for the rest of the novel. The focus does remain on Nicole after the Rosemary digression, however, long enough to reveal some interesting facts about Nicole's development. After sharp words with Dick and Rosemary, Nicole feels suddenly "a sense of being cured and in a new way. Her ego began blooming like a great rich rose" (Tender, p. 287). Nicole has at last reached the point where she can let Dick go completely, where she can act on her own. This new found independence manifests itself later in her affair with Tommy Barban which eventually leads to her divorce from Dick. Fitzgerald also returns to his effort to establish a certain distance between the reader and Dick, distance which creates tension

because we do not know what he is planning to do. Nicole, the narrator tells us, is "afraid of what was in Dick's mind" (Tender, p. 287), but we are not allowed to know what actually is in his mind. Thus, we share her feelings of tension. This effect hinges, naturally, on the consistency of Nicole as the narrative focus--we must be consistently limited to her knowledge in order to accept the narrative distance from Dick. When the narrative focus jumps from one character to another, as it does on pages 283 to 285 and again later in the novel, the reader is less likely to accept any kind of limitations on the narrator. By jumping from character to character, the narrator shows his omniscience: how can we then accept that he is limited at the same time?

Only at the very end can Fitzgerald's narrative manoeuvring be defended. After the break between Nicole and Dick, after Dick's plans have lost their importance (since Nicole has escaped him), it is no longer necessary to maintain the distance between Dick and the narrator. Fitzgerald, in fact, finds it more advantageous to use his narrative point of view to stress the division between Nicole and Dick. Thus, at the end of the novel, the narrator alternates between the two, telling first, in expository form, how Dick leaves home to take one last look at his beach. The narrator has the power to describe for the reader how Dick feels about his children--"He was glad he

had given so much to the little girl--about the boy he was more uncertain" (Tender, p. 309)--displaying the fact that the narrator is no longer limited to the thoughts of a single character. He then leaves Dick in favour of Nicole. The narrator remains relatively omniscient through the entire scene, entering both Nicole's and Baby Warren's minds: "The sisters sat in silence; Nicole wondering in a tired way about things; Baby wondering whether or not to marry the latest candidate for her hand and money" (Tender, p. 310). The conversation of the two ladies directs the narrative attention back towards Dick, who sits on a rock above the beach. Dick's conversation with Mary Minghetti follows, coloured by Dick's opinions and feelings as the conversation progresses. When, finally, Dick acknowledges that he "must go" (Tender, p. 312), he removes himself forever from the narrative focus. The focus drifts, like a camera, down to the upturned faces that watch him from the beach, zooming immediately in upon Nicole and Tommy. "I'm going to him," Nicole states in one last moment of compassion for her fallen husband (Tender, p. 312) but Tommy will not let her go. The final, brief chapter contains an expository denouement which comes from Nicole's point of view. Once again Dick fades into the background, as if his fate no longer matters to Nicole.

It is obvious that Fitzgerald had in mind a definite narrative strategy for the third book of Tender Is The

Night. He meant to remove Dick Diver from the narrative centre and tell as much of the story from Nicole's point of view as possible. The strategy is sound: by creating a distance between the narrator and the declining doctor, Fitzgerald would make Dick's decline all the more effective. He also would gain, as he had in The Great Gatsby, a second level of meaning in the story. The growth and development of Nicole Diver as an independent being would take its place beside the story of Dick Diver, complementing it as well as providing a stark contrast, a story of growth set against a story of decline. Fitzgerald is, however, only partially successful in creating these effects. The lack of consistency in his narrative point of view and distance in the third book once again detracts greatly from its effect. The strategy depends, for example, on the reader's acceptance of the fact that the narrator is limited to Nicole's point of view and her scope of experience; once the narrator proves this "fact" false by appearing omniscient at points within the third book, the reader is no longer willing to accept his limitations elsewhere in the narrative. The effect is lost. Had Fitzgerald been able to control his narrator, to maintain a consistently limited point of view, the story of the decline of Dick Diver and the rise of Nicole would have proven much more effective.

Tender Is The Night is marred by the inconsistency of its narrator. Evidently, Fitzgerald had forgotten the

lessons he had learned from The Vegetable and had used so effectively in The Great Gatsby. His fourth and final completed novel, however, does show that he was, at least, conscious of the possibilities for narrative manipulation and was thinking strategically about his narrative technique. Caught up as it was in the turmoil of his life, Tender Is The Night is both a step forward and a step back in Fitzgerald's career as a novelist. Many of those forgotten lessons he seems to have relearned while writing the movie scripts, Three Comrades and Infidelity, and many of the mistakes he made in Tender he tries to correct in The Last Tycoon. It is not impossible to believe that Tycoon, had he completed it, would have been Fitzgerald's best, most controlled novel, surpassing even The Great Gatsby in its brilliance of narrative technique.

Chapter Five

SIGNS OF SUCCESS: INFIDELITY AND THE LAST TYCOON

The last three years of Fitzgerald's writing career (1937 to 1940) were taken up, for the most part, by Hollywood in one fashion or another. He spent a good part of 1937 and 1938 in the film capital, working on a number of projects. Most successful among these was Three Comrades, a film adaptation of Erich Maria Remarque's novel upon which Fitzgerald worked with Ted Paramore.¹ The script was produced, after numerous changes and adjustments by producer Joseph Mankiewicz, in 1938 and turned out to be the only screen credit Fitzgerald would receive in his career in Hollywood. How much of the script is Fitzgerald's work is uncertain--he would claim anywhere from a third of it to just a few lines--a fact which makes it difficult to gauge his improvement as a filmwriter based on this script. More telling, however, is the script Fitzgerald penned by himself in December of 1937 called Infidelity. Although never produced, Infidelity shows Fitzgerald in command of the medium, using the camera and montage to strategic effect. Fitzgerald, in this script, seems much more comfortable working with an objective, unintrusive narrator than he had been in earlier film and theatre work. The experience in Hollywood probably influenced Fitzgerald's final novel, the

¹ Mellow, p. 462.

unfinished work The Last Tycoon, both in subject matter and in narrative technique. In the portion of the novel that exists today, there is ample evidence that Fitzgerald had learned to control and manipulate his narrator for full effect and, even further, that narrative technique had established itself in Fitzgerald's mind as one of the most important aspects of the writing process.

Infidelity shows Fitzgerald in total control of his narrative medium. His control of camera, dialogue and character movement surpasses anything one could have expected based on his earlier work in Hollywood. Fitzgerald employs a narrative structure similar to that of Tender Is The Night: he introduces his characters and their present situation at the start of the piece; he then uses an extended flashback sequence to fill in the background information on those characters and their lives; and finally, he returns the narrative to the present to show the painful breakup of the relationship between the two characters. Infidelity also bears some resemblance to Gatsby in that much of the story is taken up creating an aura of mystery around the main character(s) so that the audience's curiosity is piqued and interest in the story remains high. We can, therefore, see a relationship between Nick Carraway and the film camera as narrators: both are limited in knowledge to what they see and hear. In both cases, too, Fitzgerald uses his narrator's limitations to

help create that sense of mystery. In Infidelity, Fitzgerald cleverly employs the two observers, Grey Hair and Rumpled Hair, to add a subjective commentary to the objective narration in the first part of the film. The two men, limited in knowledge about the Gilberts, ask the question that Fitzgerald hopes his audience will take up: "What do you think of them?" (Infidelity, p. 194). Fitzgerald introduces this question to set the viewer's mind working, then effectively uses dialogue and action to enhance the viewer's impression that something is not quite right about the couple.

Fitzgerald's new found ability to characterize without using exposition proves that he has matured as a screenwriter. Comfortable now with the medium, Fitzgerald makes effective use of sound, camera movement, dialogue and action instead of exposition to give some idea of character and situation in Infidelity. The tension that exists between Nicolas and Althea Gilbert, for example, comes through to the viewer in several ways. Fitzgerald stresses that his formerly active camera/narrator should remain "entirely stationary" (Infidelity, p. 194) once it approaches the Gilberts for the first time in a wide two-shot, thus creating a visual tension between this static shot and the movement in the earlier part of the film. He uses the soundtrack and background action to enhance that feeling of tension: the Soprano on the Waldorf Roof sings

about absent love, "There's love around the corner, But I don't go there any more" (Infidelity, p. 194) and the ventriloquist makes jokes about marriage, including a foreboding reference to "the fatal leap" (Infidelity, p. 194). The reference not only suggests the leap into marriage but also Nicolas' fatal leap into an affair with Iris. The polite but distant nature of the Gilbert's conversation suggests further the unnamed problem between them and Nicolas' considerate but guilty actions towards Althea create the impression that he is to blame for the problem. Most eloquent of these actions is Nicolas' breaking of the andiron (Infidelity, p. 195) which Fitzgerald follows with an effective close shot stressing the butler's startled reaction. Fitzgerald later enhances this sense of division between the two by using a montage of five silent cuts, from Althea's room to Nicolas' room and back again (Infidelity, p. 195). As he had in Tender, Fitzgerald alternates narrative focus in rapid succession to stress the distance between his two major characters. In Infidelity, he creates a sense of that distance in purely filmic fashion, using no exposition whatsoever. The improvement over The Vegetable and "Lipstick" is obvious.

Perhaps most impressive about Infidelity is Fitzgerald's control over his narrative voice, which remains relatively consistent throughout the script. Fitzgerald seems to understand that his narrator is the camera and that

the camera is both limited and objective. He puts these qualities to good use, both in creating an aura of mystery to surround the Gilberts through the first part of the film as well as to maintain a sense of distance between the viewer and the characters. This distance allows us to watch impassively as the marriage dies and rules out any chance of audience identification with Nicolas.

"Because Fitzgerald makes restrained use of point-of-view shots in Infidelity, it gives their ultimate appearance greater impact."² The consistency of the objective, limited narrator in the script, as Dixon points out, places an even greater emphasis on the few point-of-view shots, either subjective or objective, that do appear. The subjective point-of-view shot early in the film for which the two observers give a voice-over commentary seems to prepare the viewer for extensive use of subjective or point-of-view camera. The technique, however, appears only three more times in the script: in the two montage scenes, showing first the happiness of the Gilbert's married life and later the change their lives underwent after Nicolas' affair; and in an extremely effective scene when Althea discovers Nicolas and Iris over breakfast. In the first instance, Nicolas' brother Harrison provides a subjective, voice-over commentary to describe the visual montage (Infidelity, p. 196); in the second, Nicolas himself adds the subjective

² Dixon, p. 67.

commentary as the visuals are an ironic "reminiscence of our first sequence" (Infidelity, p. 296). In both cases, Fitzgerald uses visuals and dialogue to fill in information that, in novels, would have been delivered in an expository passage. The two montage sequences also suggest that Fitzgerald had a handle not only on film editing techniques but also on the effectiveness of visual echoes in film. Fitzgerald uses another eloquent visual symbol in the screenplay--the image of Althea's handkerchief--to represent the love Nicolas has destroyed and his ill-founded hope of finding that love again. The third and perhaps most important point-of-view shot in the script involves Althea's discovery of Nicolas and Iris. It is no coincidence that it appears at the climax of the flashback and draws the viewer momentarily close to Althea in her suffering. The camera moves from Nicolas' point of view, where it had allowed us to share his shock at Althea's sudden appearance, to Althea's, causing the two lovers to stare directly into the camera. The camera is in no way distorted--it remains objective despite the fact that it takes up the characters' positions. We must marvel at Fitzgerald's self-control as the entire scene is eloquently silent (even Nicolas says "My God" "soundlessly," Infidelity, p. 296). For once, in a time of great tension and dramatic impact in Fitzgerald's work, the narrator remains silent. This firm control over himself and his narrator is a great step for Fitzgerald, so great that it makes one believe that, had he been able to

complete it, The Last Tycoon would have been Fitzgerald's greatest, most controlled narrative.

The fact that The Last Tycoon was never finished makes it a rather unreliable source. As his experience with Tender Is The Night shows, Fitzgerald was quite capable of numerous rewrites and exacting editing when producing a novel. The version of The Last Tycoon that was published by Charles Scribner's Sons in 1941 is simply a fragment, incomplete even as an early draft of the novel. We cannot be sure exactly how the novel would have turned out once Fitzgerald had taken his editing pen in hand, even with the benefit of his rather extensive notes. Those notes, in fact, are in some ways more important than the fragment itself: they tell us what was happening in Fitzgerald's mind. They also show us how narrative technique had become a major concern of Fitzgerald's, even in the planning stages of a novel.

Fitzgerald's plans for The Last Tycoon seem to indicate that he had carefully considered the narrative structure of the novel. His plan calls for a frame structure and different narrators at the different levels of the structure. The frame part of the structure stands at a distance of five years from the events in the story of Monroe Stahr and has a male narrator in the first-person. As had Conrad in "Heart Of Darkness", Fitzgerald planned to

use this frame narrator to introduce the main narrator, the person who was to tell the main story. Thus, the frame narrator could give the reader some idea as to the psychological make-up of the main story teller. The frame structure was also valuable in creating the sense of a novel about the act of story-telling: we have one character telling the story of another character, who in turn tells the story of a third character, Monroe Stahr. What better way to deal with Hollywood in the 1930's when it was emerging as the world's story teller?

The most telling aspect of Fitzgerald's plans for The Last Tycoon is the incredible detail in which he planned his main narrator, Cecilia Brady.³ In a letter written to Kenneth Littauer on September 29, 1939, Fitzgerald very carefully outlines his plans and motivations for his narrator: "She was twenty when the events that she tells occurred, but she is twenty-five when she tells about the events, and of course many of them appear to her in a different light."⁴ The effect is similar to the effect he achieved in Gatsby. The narrator remains distant in time from the events of the story, allowing his own personal growth to take on an importance of its own in the novel. In other words, the maturing of Cecilia is to be as important

³ Cecilia's last name is in no way consistent in the early plans of the story, in the same way that the names of Monroe Stahr and Kathleen Moore change from one minute to the next. For clarity, I will employ the names as they appear in the fragment.

⁴ Brucoli, Correspondence, p. 547.

as the story of Monroe Stahr. Later in the same letter, Fitzgerald states that "by making Cecilia, at the moment of her telling the story, an intelligent and observant woman, I shall grant myself the privilege, as Conrad did, of letting her imagine the actions of characters. Thus, I hope to get the versimilitude of a first person narrative, combined with a Godlike knowledge of all events that happen to my characters."⁵ Fitzgerald hoped to accomplish with Cecilia even more than what he had accomplished with Nick Carraway. As Tycoon is a novel about Hollywood, the world's emerging story-factory, it makes sense that Fitzgerald's novel should be as much about the story-teller, Cecilia, as it is about the characters in her story. Tycoon, through Fitzgerald's effective use of a frame structure and a first-person, distant narrator, was to be an examination of the way stories are told with Hollywood, the great story-teller, as its setting. This approach also allows Fitzgerald's main narrator a certain amount of imaginative latitude; if Cecilia was incapable of knowing what happens at a certain point in the story, she will simply imagine the events for the narrative. The fragment contains a clear example of this narrative tactic in chapter III. Cecilia states that she is "determined to give you a glimpse of him functioning, which is my excuse for what follows. It is drawn partly from a paper I wrote in college on A Producer's Day and

⁵ Bruccoli, Correspondence, p. 547.

partly from my imagination."⁶ What follows is a seemingly objective, realistic account of a day in the life of Monroe Stahr and the reader soon forgets that much of it is invented by the narrator. Like the camera in a film, Cecilia presents events in such a fashion that the reader takes it on faith that they are true and accurate renderings of reality. This technique allows Fitzgerald, as he expected it would, to present the story with Godlike omniscience even though it is told through a limited, biased narrator.

The fragment, however, does not contain a consistent narrator. Cecilia too often drops out of the story, giving the story up to an omniscient, third-person narrator without any prior explanation or warning. These slippages force Fitzgerald to resort to such awkward techniques as the one which appears on page 98 to return the narrative voice to Cecilia. Once some unknown narrator has recounted in vivid detail Stahr's rendezvous with Kathleen in his incomplete beach house, Cecilia must announce her return: "This is Cecilia taking up the story" (Tycoon, p. 98). The movement is a shock to the reader, and we must wonder who had taken up the story before her. Later in the fragment, moreover, after Kathleen had left Stahr for her husband, Cecilia

⁶ F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Last Tycoon ed. Edmund Wilson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), pp. 28-29. N.B. All further references to this work will come from this same edition and will be followed in the text of the paper by (Tycoon, p. __).

admits that she "knew nothing about any of this" (Tycoon, p. 117) and the reader's confusion grows. Although Fitzgerald obviously planned Cecilia's role in great detail, it is evident in the fragment that he had not quite worked out all the bugs in his plan. The finished novel would likely have seen a number of revisions that would give Cecilia total control over the story.

Fitzgerald's own notes suggest that he was planning to employ a frame structure in the novel. Editor Edmund Wilson includes in the 1941 edition of Tycoon many of the bits of prose Fitzgerald had intended to include, somehow, in the finished novel. Among these bits, which Wilson calls "fragments" (Tycoon, p. 144), is an extended section which the editor suggests "was originally written to stand as an introduction to the story" but which Fitzgerald later decided to include at the end of the book (Tycoon, p. 144). This section has a dual narrator in the form of two men who work at the sanitarium where a tuberculosis-stricken Cecilia was to eventually end up. The sense of Cecilia looking back upon the events with a new understanding would be greatly enhanced by a frame structure and the reader would be fully aware that, for her at least, the world has indeed changed in the five year period between the events of the story and her retelling it. The structure would also allow Cecilia to fill in gaps in her knowledge; as Nick Carraway had, by way of further investigation after the fact; she could simply

suggest that one of the characters involved in a particular event at which she was not present had described to her at some later date what had happened. This explains the lapse cited above, where the narrative includes information which Cecilia "knew nothing about" (Tycoon, p. 117) at the time of the events. It was not necessary for Fitzgerald to mention the sanitarium at the start of the novel--he eventually chose simply to begin the frame in an ambiguous manner, then fill in the details of Cecilia's misfortune at the end of the novel. The fragment that Scribners published in 1941, in fact, follows this frame structure. Cecilia gives the reader a very strong sense of her presence as the controlling narrator in chapter one of the fragment:

"Though I haven't ever been on the screen I was brought up in pictures" (Tycoon, p. 3), the novel begins. To end that first paragraph, Cecilia actually mentions the act of writing ("I put this down" Tycoon, p. 3), further emphasizing her position beyond the story she is about to retell. By page eleven, Cecilia has completed the first half of the frame structure by indicating that the story took place "five years ago" (Tycoon, p. 11). Thus, Cecilia's position in relation to the events of the story is clearly established: she is actually telling her story from a vantage point five years in the future. Fitzgerald seems to have already revised the novel far enough to eliminate the depressing nature of his sanitarium opening and the author had also decided, as Wilson points out, that "the

picture of Cecilia in the tuberculosis sanitarium was...to appear at the end of the book" (Tycoon, p. 144). This picture of Cecilia at the sanitarium would fit neatly, after a revision, as the closing section of Fitzgerald's frame structure, fitting in with Fitzgerald's stated intention to tell the story through Cecilia's eyes while reconciling to that plan the presence of the dual-narrator in the fragment.

Winston Wheeler Dixon, however, feels that Fitzgerald intended to use Cecilia as "a pretext for a shifting narrative stand point."⁷ He states that he believes Fitzgerald intended his narrative focus and point of view to shift constantly in Tycoon. "Precisely how Fitzgerald would have handled these changes in perspective remains unclear, but it is apparent that Fitzgerald was interested in a number of shifts of perspective, giving his tale repeated adjustments of narrative viewpoint."⁸ The fragment of the novel that exists supports, as it stands, Dixon's supposition--its narrative focus and point of view do shift regularly. The ending that Fitzgerald describes in the letter to Kenneth Littauer also seems to suggest the need for a narrator other than Cecilia: how could she know about the children who find the bodies and especially about how the possessions those children find "symbollically determine their attitude toward their act of theft"?⁹ This section

⁷ Dixon, p. 96.

⁸ Dixon, p. 93.

⁹ Bruccoli, Correspondence, p. 547.

evidently required a third-person, omniscient narrator. We must remember, however, that Tycoon is an incomplete work and that Fitzgerald's notes, detailed as they are, were subject to change by the author. Fitzgerald also has the added advantage, described above, that Cecilia is in a position to imagine what had happened, augmenting her imagination with information she had gleaned from newspaper accounts and other investigations. If Fitzgerald truly did plan to make his novel an examination of the act of storytelling, this ending would fit naturally into that approach. Cecilia is a young woman, raised in the fantasy-land that is Hollywood. Her imagination is quite capable of coming up with the ending Fitzgerald had planned, and her romantic nature would demand it of her. A character like Cecilia would be unwilling to believe that Monroe Stahr's death could be so meaningless--her imagination might just create the story of the three children in order to give Stahr's death some meaning. The reader, absorbed as he would be in the story, would probably accept Cecilia's inventions as "true" anyway, believing that she had once again augmented her knowledge of the events of her story with newspaper and other accounts. In any case, Cecilia's control over the narrative would be similar to the camera's control in a film: the reader's natural inclination is to believe what she says without question. Only after time and thought would the reader realize that much of the story is a mixture of "fact" and Cecilia's imagination. The frame structure

drives home the idea that Cecilia is telling a story, that it is not all necessarily "true". The story of Hollywood would become, at the level of narrational technique, a story of how stories are told.

That idea is the key to The Last Tycoon: it is the story of a story-telling medium; a fantasy about a fantasy land. The piece that Fitzgerald abandoned as an opening but meant to incorporate into the ending of the novel, the picture of Cecilia in the sanitarium, is telling in this regard. The section is punctuated by the plea: "Tell us" (Tycoon, p. 144). It is a demand for a story, for a narrative, which is precisely what Cecilia will provide. Tycoon becomes a quilt of different narratives, told by different characters, with, not Cecilia, but the two attendants acting as the central unifying narrative voice. The unrevised piece in the sanitarium finishes with the warning: "We were sure, nevertheless, that some time she would tell us about it--and so she did. What follows is our imperfect version of her story" (Tycoon, p. 145). Fitzgerald warns that the story is an imperfect one, as all recounted narratives are; he also adds a third level of filtration to the story, the two men, who try to present Cecilia's words as accurately as they can. The novel now works on three distinct plains, on three different, imperfect levels: the story itself (truth); Cecilia's partially imaginary version of the story, of the truth; and

finally the two sanitarium attendants' admittedly inaccurate version of Cecilia's version. The frame narrator is different, as was Conrad's, from the narrator of the actual story.

How Fitzgerald would have managed his narrators is a difficult question: without a finished copy of the novel, we may never know. The novel as it exists is littered with numerous stories within the story, beginning no later than on page five with the story of the young actress. That story also serves as an introduction to Cecilia's imagination which will play a major role in the remainder of the novel. After the stewardess has told Cecilia the story of the actress, Cecilia admits: "The proposition pleased me. I conjured up a pretty picture of the actress and her mother..."(Tycoon, p. 5). Monroe Stahr tells his own story, meant to be didactic, to an uncomprehending pilot later in the chapter (Tycoon, p. 19) and many other characters are given the same opportunity to insert their own narratives into the main one. The reasoning seems to be that Hollywood is a place for wild stories and vivid imaginations, where very little is real, like the sheep on page nine. Fitzgerald has chosen a complex narrative scheme, with story inside story and narrator inside narrator, in order to represent accurately the sense of Hollywood as a land of fantasy, where imagination dominates over reality.

His use of Cecilia (as well as the two attendants) as narrators, moreover, enhances that sense of unreality. The distance, in both time and space, of the narrator and reader from the principals of the Monroe Stahr story is reminiscent of the distance between movie star on the screen and the common man in the theatre seat. As he had in Gatsby and in parts of Tender, Fitzgerald uses his narrative point of view to enhance the mysterious, larger-than-life nature of his main character. The fact that Cecilia is in love with Stahr only adds to the effect: once again, the reader must strip away the emotional infatuation of a love-struck young girl in order to see the truth about a seemingly perfect male character. Slowly but surely we realise that Stahr is burning himself out, that his compulsion for work will destroy him and allow his corporate enemies to succeed. This fact seems to be one of the major lessons Cecilia has learned in the five year interim between the time of the story and the time of the narrative frame. Cecilia's ability to enter the mind of Dr. Baer late in the fragment is evidence of her new-found understanding of Monroe Stahr. As a youngster of twenty, she had no idea that Stahr was working himself to death. At twenty five, she understands his compulsion well enough to understand what Stahr's doctor must have been thinking: Stahr "was due to die very soon now...You couldn't persuade a man like Stahr to stop and lie down and look at the sky for six months. He would much rather die" (Tycoon, p. 108). This passage is a clear

example of how Cecilia's imagination can dominate the narrative--from the knowledge she had gained in the five year interim between the story and its retelling, she is capable of imagining what Stahr's doctor must have been thinking and saying about the producer's health. With revision, Fitzgerald would probably have utilised Cecilia's imagination to a much greater extent, eliminating the need for other, inexplicable narrators. The narrative focus and power would stay in one place, with Cecilia, providing The Last Tycoon with as consistent and effective a narrator as any novel Fitzgerald had written.

The Last Tycoon is a difficult, often misleading member of Fitzgerald's oeuvre. As his final major work, it should be the culmination of all that he had learned through the experience of his career. If his development to that point is any indication, Tycoon should have been Fitzgerald's most controlled, most effective novel, just as Infidelity is his most effective screenplay. The notes and fragments he left behind indicate that Fitzgerald was more concerned about his narrative strategy for Tycoon than he was for any of his other novels, even The Great Gatsby. The fragments that do exist, then, must be judged as misleading, early draft material that would have been revised and edited to bring them in line with Fitzgerald's plan for a controlled, consistent narrator in the form of Cecilia Brady and the two attendants. It is unfortunate for Fitzgerald's reputation

that he did not complete Tycoon; Tender Is The Night is a flawed work and does not deserve to stand as Fitzgerald's final, complete novel. With Tycoon, Fitzgerald would have surpassed The Great Gatsby, especially in the area of effective and controlled use of his narrating voice. Infidelity proves that Fitzgerald had learned to work with the limited, consistent narrator of film, the camera, and Tycoon would have proven to the world that he was able to transpose that control and consistency into his prose. The signs are there in the fragments and notes but Fitzgerald's death in 1940 robbed him of the chance to make The Last Tycoon his crowning, narrative achievement.

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