

Tender Is the Night and Scott Fitzgerald's Artistic Creativity

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Abstract

Scott Fitzgerald's perspective on the film industry is very complicated. His interest in the visual discourse of the cinema can be regarded as an aesthetic yearning for a meaningful and deliberate discourse that would highlight the importance of visual and spatial descriptions over linguistic ones. This research paper aims to provide some new insight into *Tender Is the Night* (1934). The argument of this article is based on the fact that Fitzgerald's familiarity with the cinematic sphere did not guarantee him artistic success. Nevertheless, he used the cinematic strategies of visual description to add meaning and imagination to his fiction using nonlinguistic details. The cinematic perspective of Dick Diver represents Fitzgerald's inner battle as an artist. In other words, we want to demonstrate that Dick's cinematic conduct reflects Fitzgerald's genuine concern for understanding what is not readily grasped or stated. Dick's cinematic vision allows him to gather different fragments, which is an essential step for both Dick and Fitzgerald since fragments have their origins in the subconscious.

Keywords: Cinematic, Dick Diver, Scott Fitzgerald, Sentimentalism, *Tender Is the Night*

رواية "رقيق هو الليل" والابداع الفني لسكوت فيتزجيرالد

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المخلص

ان المشهد العام (لسكوت فيتزجيرالد) في صناعة الفلم، امر معقد حقا. لهذا يعتبر اهتمامه بالنص البصري في السينما، رغبة جمالية للنص المقصود والمعنوي الذي يمكن ان يلقي الضوء على اهمية الاوصاف المكانية والبصرية حول المستوي اللغوي. يهدف هذا البحث الى تقديم رؤية جديدة لرواية، " رقيق هو الليل" (1934). تعتمد جدلية هذه المقالة على حقيقة ادراك (فيتزجيرالد)، ان الحيز السينمائي لا يضمن نجاح الفني للكاتب. ومع انه كان معتادا على الاستراتيجيات السينمائية في الوصف البصري، لإضافة المعنى والخيال لنصه الروائي باستعمال تفاصيل غير لغوية. ان المشهد السينمائي الى (ديك دايفر) يمثل المعركة الداخلية (لفيتزجيرالد) كفنّان. وكلمات اخرى، نريد هنا ان نبين ان التواصل السينمائي لشخصية (ديك) يعكس اهتماما حقيقيا للروائي (فيتزجيرالد) لفهم ما لا يمكن ان يدرك او ينص عليه بكل يسر. ان الرؤية السينمائية لشخصية (ديك) تسمح له ان يجمع اجزاء مختلفة وهي تمثل خطوة اساسية لكل من (ديك) و (فيتزجيرالد)، لان هذه الاجزاء لها نفس الاصول في بنية اللاوعي لديهما.

الكلمات الرئيسية: السينمائي، ديك دايفر، سكوت فيتزجيرالد، الاحساسية، رقيق هو الليل

Introduction

Shortly after *Tender Is the Night* was published in 1934, Scott Fitzgerald (1994) sent the famous letter to his literary friend, H. L. Mencken, in which he commented on “the special trick” (p. 256) of the work. In this letter, he revealed his life-long aspiration to be an artist, believing that this special technique had been devised by him and Ernest Hemingway:

[A]nd that [the specific trick] has been the biggest “credo” in my life ever since I realized I’d rather be an artist than a careerist. I’d rather leave my imprint . . . on the soul of a people than be known . . . to provide for them. I’d be happy to be as nameless as Rimbaud if I could feel like I’d fulfilled my goal—and this isn’t just emotional yapping about being uninterested. It’s just that once you’ve discovered the intensity of art, nothing else in life will ever feel as significant as the creative process. (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 256)

To understand the term “careerist” as opposed to “artist,” we must look at the preceding section of the letter, which Nowlin (2007) states is “the infrequently cited introduction of” the letter (pp. 113-14): “I’m afraid I’m going to violate your favorite moral code, breaking engagements, because I need to go to New York to discuss how to make a movie out of my work” (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 256). So, it is easy to notice Fitzgerald’s struggle to be an artist: the kind of artist whose lifetime goal was to find “the intensity of art.” With this ambition, he went to Hollywood and hoped to make his work popular. In contrast to other writers contemporaneous with him who were able to create a genuine relationship with the film business, Fitzgerald could not live a happy life in that sector. For example, Ruth Prigozy (2004) believes that “Fitzgerald’s lifelong association with cinema was fluid and usually equivocal” (p. 130).

While Fitzgerald’s (1993) personal perspective on the film industry was quite convoluted, he saw the novel as “the strongest and supplest medium” until “another force, a more dazzling, a grosser power” rose at a rapid rate (p. 78). Fitzgerald’s familiarity with the novel, which did not appear to guarantee him “commercial” success, and his familiarity with the cinematic sphere, which did not appear to guarantee him “artistic” success, represent what Pierre Bourdieu (1996) refers to as “the site of the antagonistic coexistence of two modes of production and circulation obeying inverse logics” (p. 142). Fitzgerald had recognized this creative movement when in 1923, he stated that “[the] cultural universe” is supported by “the fame of two men—James Joyce and Sherwood Anderson” (qtd. in Bruccoli & Baughman, 1996, p. 84). This belief helped him prepare for the ongoing struggle with his artistic identity that he would endure for the rest of his literary career. While Fitzgerald desired to find the intensity of art, his artistic identity depended upon his lifelong equivocal association with cinema. This article sheds light on *Tender Is the Night*’s “creative process.” We want to claim that Fitzgerald’s inner turmoil as an artist is mirrored in the cinematic vision of Dick Diver.

Wolf-like Personality of Dick and Nicole Diver

In *Tender Is the Night*, the narrator highlights Dick Diver's various personalities: "Wolf-like under his sheep's garb of long-staple Australian wool, he pondered the world of pleasure" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 195). His latent "wolf" identity is concealed within his "sheep" identity. Ergo, he must confront his own "wolf"; otherwise, he will be unable to free himself of his "Achilles' heels," which derive from "national illusions, the falsehoods of generations of frontier moms who had to croon falsely, that there were no wolves outside the cabin door" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 117). If wolves can be found at the frontiers, it is strongly related to the psychiatrist Dick Diver's subconscious, which is "the frontiers of awareness . . . [the] frontiers that artists must investigate" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 185). Thus, one can observe that Dick's overt psychological characterization cannot be isolated from his hidden creative characterization. So, it is believable why Cowley (1951) should state that Fitzgerald's original intention was to portray Dick as "a natural idealist, a spoiled priest, giving in for various reasons to the ideas of the haute bourgeoisie, and in his rise to the top of the social world losing his idealism, his talent, and turning to drink and dissipation" (p. 44). Although Fitzgerald's Catholic identification has been much debated, there is another implication in his depiction of Dick as "a spoilt priest." Notwithstanding, when in Joyce's *Ulysses* this "woefully overdone" key phrase, that is, "a spoilt priest," "is ascribed to Stephen Dedalus" (Brucoli, 1963, p. 84), it has its own origins. The intertextuality of *Tender Is the Night* and *Ulysses* requires special consideration since it reveals another facet of Dick Diver's character. So we can analyze the artist's portrayal concealed behind the overt tale of Dick Diver. As Nicole discreetly implies, Dick is fundamentally an artist who uses his "expertise with people" in a manner that is similar to dealing with an "object of art" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 282) based on his earnest desire to "make things" (p. 267).

On the other hand, Nicole shares Dick's wolf-like characteristics. In her instance, it manifests as schizophrenia. Based on a poststructuralist theory of schizophrenia, a "wolf-like life" shares striking similarities with the schizophrenic process of "deterritorialization": "Lines of flight or of deterritorialization, becoming-wolf, becoming-inhuman, deterritorialized intensities: that is what multiplicity is. To become a wolf or a hole is to deterritorialize oneself by following distinct but entangled lines. A hole is no more negative than a wolf" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 33). While the wolf is not inherently bad, the experience of "becoming" a wolf frequently results in "[a] scream of sorrow, the only one Freud hears: Help me not become wolf (or, conversely, Help me not fail in this becoming)" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 33), just as Nicole desperately implores Dick, "Help me, Dick!" so that she would not become fragmented (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 190).

Capitalism and schizophrenia are inextricably linked since Deleuze and Guattari characterize the schizophrenic as "the holder of the most touchingly little capital" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 12). It is interesting to consider the schizophrenic components in *Tender Is the Night* in light of Fitzgerald's serious worry about his multifaceted identity as an artist. Schizophrenia proves to be an

acceptable storytelling device for serious artists in general. It is especially desired for Fitzgerald since, as we have seen, “the creative process” is critical to his artistic plans: “[L]iterature is like schizophrenia: a process and not a goal, a creation and not an expression” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 134).

This research paper aims to examine the “creative process” of *Tender Is the Night*. Fitzgerald once acknowledged that he was “really a lone wolf. . . . Everyone is lonely—the artist especially, it goes with creation. I create a world for others” (Turnbull, 2001, pp. 260-61). Thus, it turns out that via the composition of *Tender Is the Night*, Fitzgerald addresses his terrible ego, his inner wolf. In this context, we would like to claim that Fitzgerald’s inner turmoil as an artist is mirrored in the cinematic vision of Dick Diver.

Dick Diver’s Cinematic Vision

Many commentators have weighed in on the application of the cinematic techniques in Fitzgerald’s fiction. Edward Murray (1972), for example, has thematically analyzed Fitzgerald’s “cinematic imagination” in his works, while Edwin T. Arnold (1977) has concentrated on Fitzgerald’s metaphorical use of the cinema to completely articulate his novelistic topic. On the other hand, Alan Margolies (1970) has given the first “lengthy treatment [of] the effect of film and theater upon Fitzgerald” (p. 8) and has elegantly arranged a massive quantity of biographical information in connection to his work. Added to that, Wheeler W. Dixon (1986) has examined the cinematic side of Fitzgerald’s fiction from various perspectives, ranging from books and screenplays to the film adaptations of his works. However, according to Gautam Kundu (2008), “[b]y and large, these critics stop at provocative assertions about the existence of cinematic aspects in Fitzgerald’s novels” (p. 7). While Kundu’s research seems the most comprehensive and revealing on this topic, much more is discovered about Fitzgerald’s equivocal creative approach and the subtle novelistic style it spawned.

While Alan Trachtenberg (1968) observes that Dick behaves “much like an actor or director” (p. 137), other critics have mainly agreed with Dick’s unfavorable perception of movies. They claim that for Dick and Fitzgerald, movies are an “art form dominated by the feminine and devoted to the sentimental, the irrational, the silly” (Fetterley, 1984, p. 218), that they provide “the allure of tricky and trashy entertainment” (Nowlin, 2007, p. 93), and that they are “a summation of everything hostile to his [Dick’s] values” (Stern, 1994, p. 114).

The feminist interpretation of *Tender Is the Night*, which aims to reveal Dick’s worry about an expanding threat of feminization, is the most major and prominent argument addressing the negative side of Dick’s idea of cinema. Judith Fetterley (1984) explains this type of feminist perspective: “[In *Tender Is the Night*], as in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald indicts America, defining the nation as feminine and blaming the ills of American males on the character of American women and the feminization of American society,” (p. 217). Fetterley (1984) remarks that in *Tender Is the Night*, Fitzgerald asks his readers to fight the American women as a common enemy:

To read *Tender Is the Night* is to share in the evocation of pity for Dick Diver, the victim of his culture, as well as resentment toward what has

wrecked him. *Tender Is the Night* wants to perpetuate masculine authority to the degree that our sympathies as readers impact other elements of our life. Thus Fitzgerald is correct: understanding that what matters is power, he has produced a book that matters. (p. 209)

According to Fetterley (1984), “Fitzgerald belabors the fact that the movies reflect ‘women’s worlds,’” that the cinematic technique is offered as a “‘feminine’ approach to life,” and that “*Daddy’s Girl* epitomizes a vision of feminine power in a typical feminine shape” (p. 214).

However, if we closely inspect the nuanced actions of Dick Diver, the artist in diverse circumstances, we will notice the positive qualities of the movies. Fitzgerald uses cinematic techniques in fiction that should not be dismissed as a sign of defeatism or self-mockery. One of the most critical steps in determining if Fitzgerald succeeded in discovering any form of the artistic intensity in writing *Tender Is the Night* is to analyze his use of cinematic approaches in a favorable light. Although Milton R. Stern (1994), writing about Dick, believes that “[i]n his fine social touch he is, as a friend and a host, a movie director,” Dick’s persona is “extremely complicated” in the light of Fitzgerald’s mixed stance toward the cinema business (p. 114).

Nevertheless, to realize the significance of the cinematic in *Tender Is the Night*, we attempt to examine Dick’s conflicted feelings about the movies. So, it is worthwhile to examine the scene in which *Daddy’s Girl* comes to the fore:

Women would forget the dirty dishes at home and weep, even within the picture one woman wept so long that she almost stole the film away from Rosemary. . . . But Rosemary triumphed . . . and Rosemary showing what it took with a face that had not yet become mask-like. . . . There was a break once and . . . Dick said to her sincerely: “I’m simply astounded. You’re going to be one of the best actresses on the stage.” (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 70)

One noticeable feature of this passage is that it does not depict the film’s concrete narrative. Even though *Daddy’s Girl* repeatedly appears throughout the narrative, the narrator withholds a full explanation of its substance, as if such material does not matter. The narrator subjectively expresses how the film impresses its audience, notably Dick, rather than objectively recounting its plot. Another fellow, apart from Rosemary, makes an equally powerful impression. Dick is mainly taken by the crying woman, who “wept so long that she almost stole the film away from Rosemary” (70). In this case, sentimentalism is strongly tied to the excessive number of tears, notably in the discourse of melodramatic cinema.

Ann Douglas (1978) defines the cultural importance of sentimentalism, particularly regarding capitalism:

A relatively recent phenomenon whose appearance is linked with capitalist development, sentimentalism seeks and offers the distraction of sheer publicity. Sentimentalism is a cluster of ostensibly private feelings which always attains public and conspicuous expression. Privacy functions in the rituals of sentimentalism only for the sake of titillation, as a convention to be violated. Involved as it is with the exhibition and commercialization of the self, sentimentalism cannot exist without an audience. It has no content

but its own exposure, and it invests exposure with a kind of final significance. (p. 254)

Douglas believes that sentimentalism is closely associated with the commercialization of private life. Nevertheless, we should be wary of Dick's ambiguous approach toward sentimentality. The supreme moment of Dick's "carnivals of affection" (p. 27) occurs with "the rare atmosphere of sentiment" (p. 35), the sophisticated type of sentimentality, in the party scene at Villa Diana. Similarly, even though the film's plot results in degraded sentimentality, Rosemary stands in stark contrast to the other sentimental mode mainly associated with conventional representations of femininity. The sobbing woman embodies everything Dick associates with sentimentalism, and Rosemary must challenge her because her mother believes that Rosemary is "economically . . . a boy, not a girl" (p. 40). This statement signifies not just Rosemary's financial wealth but also that her job as a movie actress does not necessarily demand the sentimental exposure and marketing of the self, similar to the weeping lady.

Rosemary does not have to be a commodity in the framework of sentimentalism, which is connected with capitalism. She is beyond "any such spurious substitutes as the excitations available on all sides" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 31). The narrator accurately explains her situation when he says, "she was in the movies but not at them" (p. 31). When Mrs. Speers says Dick Diver is "the real thing" (p. 31), she is referring to the aesthetic sincerity that may separate "vicious" qualities of art. It does not imply that both Dick and Rosemary completely reject sentimentalism in any form, but rather that they can recognize and appreciate the potential of sentimentalism that might take them into some "true" creative domain. For Dick, who appreciates the cinematic perception over feminine sentimentalism, the cinematic implies more than the emotional and the illogical. We aim to demonstrate that Dick's cinematic perception indicates his significant concern for understanding what is not simply grasped or expressly communicated.

First, we should not overlook the importance of Keatsian poetics in Fitzgerald's aesthetics, which is in turn linked to Dick's cinematic imagination. When Dick and Collis Clay go out to eat at an Italian restaurant:

Dick evoked the picture that the few days had imprinted on his mind, and stared at it. The walk toward the American Express past the odorous confectioneries of the Via Nazionale, through the foul tunnel up to the Spanish Steps, where his spirit soared before the flower stalls and the house where Keats had died. (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 220)

Dick's vision, as implied by phrases like "toward," "past," and "through," is a moving picture. Here, the narrator follows Dick's path like a movie camera and inserts "the home where Keats had died" at the end of this description, like the ending of a film. The narrator emphasizes Dick's strong awareness in contrast to Collis Clay's: "Dick was always vividly conscious of his surroundings, while Collis Clay lived vaguely, the sharpest impressions dissolving upon a recording apparatus that had early atrophied" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 220). Thus, the readers comprehend Dick's recording mechanism, which is significantly different from

Collis's, who has the ambition "to get in the movies" (p. 223). In this way, *Tender Is the Night* presents an intriguing fusion of the lyrical and the cinematic.

On another occasion, when Dick sees Nicole Warren's face, he uses his cinematic perception:

Her face, ivory gold against the blurred sunset that strove through the rain, had a promise Dick had never seen before: the high cheek-bones, the faintly wan quality, cool rather than feverish, was reminiscent of the frame of a promising colt—a creature whose life did not promise to be only a projection of youth upon a grayer screen, but instead, a true growing; the face would be handsome in middle life; it would be handsome in old age: the essential structure and the economy were there. (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 141)

Dick notices "a promise" in Nicole's face that he "had never seen before," and it is something that cannot be contained entirely within "a projection . . . upon a grayer screen." This example shows that Dick's cinematic method of viewing the world is tied to what slips through perception. If this is the case, the cinematic image can be compared to Dick's psychological capacity. Just as the cinematic Dick notices "the promise Dick had never seen before," the psychiatric Dick notices "darker rhythms" (p. 123) in Nicole's letters, eliciting "more than Franz would have guessed of the story" (p. 121).

In Book One, the shooting at the Gare Saint-Lazare is a pivotal moment in which Dick's cinematic perception of the universe reveals something dark and inexpressible. Maria Wallis, a young woman, shoots an Englishman, an unexpected disturbance because Mary North, Rosemary, and the Divers all feel uncomfortable, while "to bring everyone back to quietude," Dick sarcastically interprets the situation as if portrayed by an actress named Maria Wallis. Dick remarks that the latter "has a good sense of decor—not to mention rhythm," and asks, "Will any of us ever see a train leave without hearing a few shots?" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 86). However, Dick's cinematic attempt to "resolve things into the pattern of the holiday" (85) highlights the intangible impacts of the traumatic encounter on the characters.

Abe's departure and Mary's impending departure for Salzburg this afternoon had ended the time in Paris. Or perhaps the shots, the concussions that had finished God knew what dark matter, had terminated it. The shots had entered into all their lives: echoes of violence followed them out onto the pavement. (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 86)

The narrator warns the reader that the story should have some unmistakable significance in the narrative, but he maintains an ambiguous tone, using the term "perhaps" to leave some confusion. The actual cause of the incident, only labeled "God knew what dark matter," remains unknown. The shooting that permeates their lives has an incredible dark power that Dick's cinematic attempt to depict its actual severity falls short.

As these examples demonstrate, Dick's cinematic perspective of the universe paradoxically shows the existence of objects that would otherwise be imperceptible. From this perspective, it is essential to analyze the early cinema's

aesthetic role, which Susan McCabe (2005) concisely describes as a medium for dealing with “a phenomenology of fragmentation” (p. 6). McCabe emphasizes that the early films have a revolutionary method to represent “a body never visible before—one that is at once whole and in pieces,” revealing “a paradox at the heart of modernism—the desire for bodily immediacy and the consciousness of its necessary fragmentation within both poetry and film” (p. 231). Also, the cinematic imagination of *Tender Is the Night* depicts certain pieces, such as the brutal shooting that Rosemary witnesses as “shell fragments” (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 86). It is no surprise that Dick is defined by his cinematic conduct and keen feel for fragments. Dick Diver’s unusual characteristics can be linked to his creative aim to portray something “never visible before,” or, in Fitzgerald’s (1994) words, “something genuinely NEW in form, thought, structure—the model for the age that Joyce and Stien [sic] are hunting for, that Conrad didn’t discover” (p. 108).

On the one hand, Dick is, throughout *Tender Is the Night*, in the habit of collecting the fragments. On the other hand, according to his unique perspective, life is fundamentally fragmented. He recognizes that “the totality of a life may be different in quality from its segments, and also that life during the forties seemed capable of being observed only in segments” (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 245). Therefore, Dick sees segmentation or fragmentation as a fundamental trait of life. At the same time, he also has a keen instinct for gathering fragments, arranging them, and blending them into specifically significant schemes. Through his professional competence, Dick can grant a dynamic totality to a collection of pieces. In Book Two, for example, he uses faculty to retrieve incomplete information on Franz and Nicole. When Franz leaves Dick in his office for a while, the latter gathers these bits and pieces in the following manner:

Left alone Dick wandered about the room and tried to reconstruct Franz from the litter of his desk, from his books and the books of and by his father and grandfather; from the Swiss piety of a huge claret-colored photo of the former on the wall. (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 121)

The narrator then remarks on the letters that Nicole has written to Dick:

The letters were divided into two classes, of which the first class, up to about the time of the armistice, was of marked pathological turn, and of which the second class, running from thence up to the present, was entirely normal, and displayed a richly maturing nature. For these latter letters Dick had come to wait eagerly in the last dull months at Bar-sur-Aube—yet even from the first letters he had pieced together more than Franz would have guessed of the story. (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 121)

On both of these occasions, the narrator demonstrates Dick’s excellent understanding of a heap of fragmented information and his polished talent at acquiring some “totality” that others have overlooked.

However, it should be emphasized that “the motif of the ‘dying fall’” (Fitzgerald, 1994, p. 256) of Dick Diver lies at the heart of *Tender Is the Night*. Put differently, Dick’s capacity to achieve a totality from fragments proves ineffective. Nicole eventually escapes Dick’s grasp as something “above the psychoses and the neuroses,” as something “beyond the psychoses and the neuroses” (Fitzgerald,

2003, p. 302). What is critical in *Tender Is the Night*'s cinematic design, we want to emphasize, is the declaration that the fragments do not indicate a totality.

We agree with Michael Nowlin's (2007) argument that the central theme of *Tender Is the Night* is the search for an authentic, undiscovered creative intensity. Nowlin says:

I would go so far as to argue that *Tender Is the Night* is thematically predicated on Fitzgerald's faith in a cultural gold standard—an artistic "real thing," as he called an up-and-coming Ernest Hemingway— somehow inhering in the best that had been thought, done, and said within a very compressed modernist epoch. The novel may want to suggest prophetically that "the real thing" will reassert itself through the coming economic disaster its characters remain blind to. (p. 90)

Although Nowlin's (2007) perspective varies from ours in that he does not place a high value on the cinematic in *Tender Is the Night*, we concur with his assessment that Fitzgerald's text is a fictional work about "the real thing." Notwithstanding, in *Tender Is the Night*, Fitzgerald has not formulated any innovative artistic method, much alone put it into effect. Rather than accomplishing "the world's rarest work," Fitzgerald, like Dick Diver, has just predicted it. Throughout the novel, he intends to demonstrate the process of achieving the intensity of art in the same way as Dick strives to convey it to "the scabbed anonymous woman-artist" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 243) for whom he "[threw] as much wan light as he could into the darkness ahead" (p. 242).

If it is not the artistic accomplishment but the artistic process that counts in the poetics of *Tender Is the Night*, it is believable why some critics such as Robert N. Wilson (1957) should have compared Dick Diver to "Icarus." Dick is strongly associated with this mythic figure due to his desire to "fly too close to the sun," the outcome of which is not other than his "dying fall." Like Icarus in Greek mythology, Dick labors throughout Fitzgerald's novel to complete "the world's rarest work," but he inevitably fails, which results in his "dying fall." As a result, Fitzgerald foreshadows the eventual impossibility of artistic achievement in *Tender Is the Night*. However, it is the creative process on which Fitzgerald puts more emphasis; as Trachtenberg (1968) interestingly points out, *Tender Is the Night* is basically "a novel of process" (p. 128), and "the truth about Dick is not a mystery or a puzzle but a process" (p. 134).

A Deconstructive Approach to *Tender Is the Night*

Tender Is the Night foreshadows Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist project that appeared nearly a generation later. Derrida (1973) profoundly changed Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, exposing "a metaphysical presupposition" veiled behind a "phenomenological necessity, the rigor and sophistication of Husserl's analysis" (p. 5). Consequently, he deconstructed "the source and guarantee of all values, the 'principle of principles': i.e., the initial self-giving proof, the present or presence of sense to a complete and primal intuition" (p. 6). As a result, Derrida concluded that "[there] never was any 'perception', and 'presentation' is a representation of the representation that longs for itself" (p. 103). Derrida reached this conclusion by repeating a passage from Husserl's work that

described “the Dresden gallery.” In the gallery, there is a “painting by Teniers” that “displays a gallery of paintings,” and “[the] paintings of this gallery would represent in their turn paintings, which on their part showed legible inscriptions” (p. 104). Although Husserl regarded this as “a unique example of experience,” Derrida has taken it as the pinnacle of the universal truth about “perception.” Derrida (1973) says:

Nothing like this has ever happened before. Nothing will be able to stop it. It is not apprehended by intuitions or presentations, as Husserl would want. Outside the gallery, in the broad sunshine of the present, no sense is offered to us or surely guaranteed to us. The gallery is a labyrinth with its exits: we have never encountered it as if it were a specific example of experience—the one Husserl feels he is describing.

So it is up to us to speak, make our voices reverberate throughout the halls to compensate for the [suppleer] loss of presence. The phoneme, or akoumenon, is the labyrinth’s phenomena. This is true in the case of the phone. The path of Icarus is to rise toward the light of the present. (p. 104)

As a result, Derrida informs us [that] “contrary to what phenomenology . . . has tried to make us believe . . . the thing itself always escapes” (105). Accordingly, when Fitzgerald forbids his protagonist, “Dick-Icarus” (Wilson, 1957), from attempting to achieve “the real thing,” his job is a deconstruction of his phenomenological assumptions as both a psychiatrist and an artist. In addition, Rosemary tries to cope with the fragments left by the violent confrontation at the Gare Saint-Lazare. However, the fact that what she experiences is not more than “a wave of disbelief” is another deconstructive technique that adds to the significance of Fitzgerald’s artistic process. In Fitzgerald’s text, we read that Rosemary must cope with the fragments left by the violent confrontation at the Gare Saint-Lazare:

[Nicole and Rosemary] were both horrified, and both of them deeply wanted Dick to make a moral comment on the matter and not leave it to them. This wish was not entirely conscious, especially on the part of Rosemary, who was accustomed to having shell fragments of such events shriek past her head. But a totality of shock had piled up in her too. (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 86)

Fragments of horrific experiences have crushed these two women, especially Rosemary. The critical point is that the fragmented shocks and the consequent construction of a totality occur in the “not entirely conscious” realm. Their “unconscious” is greatly influenced by the fragments and the creation of a totality. The narrator, Fitzgerald, does not explain what “subtle objectives” this act serves to the audience, other than to remark that “echoes of violence” have significantly affected Rosemary and Nicole (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 86). According to Derrida (1973), violence enters their lives as “the phoneme, the akoumenon,” which substitutes for “the fragmentation of presence,” (p. 104). As a result, when Nicole and Rosemary slip into vague unhappiness, they are unconsciously faced with this “breakup of presence.” In a nutshell, the fragments of *Tender Is the Night* represents the “breakup of presence.”

Through fragments and a totality, this incident is related to Jules Peterson's murder scene, in which Rosemary nearly repeats a similar epistemic experience. The turning point occurs when "Rosemary made a departure that she had learnt early, and on which no director had ever sought to improve." She eventually "realized that she was not alone" in her room (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 109).

There are refracting objects in an inhabited room that are only half noticed: varnished wood, more or less polished brass, silver, and ivory, and beyond these, a thousand conveyers of light and shadow so mild that one hardly thinks of them as such . . . appealing to equally subtle reflexes of the vision as well as those associational fragments. But when she realized it, she whirled quickly in a ballet step and found a dead Negro laid out on her bed. (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 109)

This time, the power of fragments, linked to "the subconscious" and the totality, culminates in the shocking scene in which Peterson's dead body is found on Rosemary's bed. Here the emphasis on "the vision" is more crucial than the evident Freudian usage of "the subconscious." In other words, visual fragments, such as a "thousand conveyers of light and shadow," take priority over linguistic fragments, such as the "innumerable cardboard letters" in Dick's trunk that were used to "play anagrams" (Fitzgerald, 2003, p. 109). This predilection for visual fragments over linguistic fragments demonstrates the reality of a subtle and creative process in *Tender Is the Night*.

Derrida (1973) traces the unique spatial and visual features that Husserl excludes from the realms of expression. "Sense wishes to be signified"; it can only be expressed in a meaning that is nothing more than a self-description of the "presence of sense" (p. 35). This explains why anything that does not originate from pure spiritual intention or "the will" is prohibited from meaning and expression. Therefore, facial expressions and gestures, the whole body, or the entire visible and spatial realm are excluded. Visibility and spatiality, in and of themselves, can only ruin the self-presence of volition and spiritual liveliness that allows for conversation. They are the "death knell for that self-presence" (Derrida, 1973, p. 35).

This could be interpreted as a phenomenological remark that the totality of the visual fragments in Rosemary's room depicts the "death" represented by Jules Peterson's dead body. Derrida (1973) extends Husserl's discussion with psychoanalytic explanations, writing, "What Husserl here affirms concerning gestures and facial expressions would certainly hold a fortiori for preconscious or unconscious language" (p. 35), and later redefining expression as everything that cannot be brought into meaningful and deliberate speech" (p. 36). Fitzgerald's keen interest in cinematic discourse might be seen as an artistic longing for this meaningful speech capable of rescuing the fragmented visibility and spatiality from the phenomenological crypt. When Derrida (1973) asserts that "nondiscursive signification (music, non-literary arts generally)" create modes of sensation which do not refer to any imaginable objects (p. 99), he is pointing to the path Fitzgerald must take to attain the intensity of art. Fitzgerald (1994) saw in his cinematic vision the urgent potential of communicating what no one has ever been

able to convey in novelistic discourse, predicated on the presumption that such an endeavor is doomed to the ultimate “dying fall” (p. 256).

Conclusion

Fitzgerald’s passionate ambition to become an artist who knows the intensity of artistic expression reflects Dick Diver’s intense desire to become a great psychologist. Dick takes in as much visual and spatial information as possible before embarking on an unprecedented adventure. His cinematic vision allows him to gather various fragments: this is a crucial step since fragments belong to the subconscious mind, a remote region where concealed qualities are ready to be chosen, studied, and conveyed. When Dick meets Nicole, the ideal mate and deadly lover, in her face, he sees all the excitement in the world. Such a vision is dangerously close to the brutal sentimentality that the cinematic memory implies typically. However, this is not the whole case; Dick can utilize his cinematic memory to evoke a distinctive form of sentiment from the emotional. Nicole elicits significant feelings in Dick, not just because she is fragmented but mainly because she possesses something beyond Dick’s cinematic vision, as if she were a promising means to an end. In a nutshell, Nicole embodies everything Dick has sacrificed through his cinematic perspective.

Fitzgerald did not abandon his desire to discover anything other than sentimentality. If the success of *Tender Is the Night* is measured by whether or not it exposes what this something is, it may be considered a failure. Nonetheless, Fitzgerald intended to reveal, or thus recognize, the absolute futility of attempting to comprehend the ultimate truth in a work of fiction. *Tender Is the Night* embodies Fitzgerald’s artistic creativity in a unique way that foreshadows the postmodern deconstruction of the metaphysics of expression.

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