Katie Warczak

Professor Unger

ENG 430: Senior Seminar

3 December 2015

Disabled by "Repair:" The Textual and Extratextual Narrative Prosthesis of F. Scott Fitzgerald's

The (Love of the) Last Tycoon

When F. Scott Fitzgerald died on December 21, 1940, he received an unexpected boon. Upon his death, "[n]ewspapers across the country and overseas, which had totally ignored Fitzgerald at least since 1934 and 1935, when his last two books appeared, ran editorials on his passing," and by the middle of the 1940s a Fitzgerald revival was underway (Bryer 209-10). Having lived in obscurity for much of the 1930s, with many believing him to be dead or, in the case of Fitzgerald's unnamed favorite movie star, "a character in a Katherine Brush novel," Fitzgerald's rapid return to the public eye days after his death was unexpected (Schulberg 111). However, this immediate posthumous renown only served as "a harbinger of what was to come," as by the end of the 1950s, Fitzgerald had been entrenched as one of America's literary greats, one whose life had been tragically cut short (Bryer 210).

The abrupt end of Fitzgerald's life is mirrored in the conclusion of his final novel, *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*[1], as he died before finishing the book; however, the end of the author's

---

[1] I use the title *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* to refer to Fitzgerald's text when discussing the novel generally, as disputes have arisen over what title Fitzgerald wanted the work to have. Edmund Wilson first published the text as *The Last Tycoon* in 1941, but since 1993 the book's title has officially been *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western*. The 1993 edition's editor, Matthew Bruccoli, argues "[n]o good case for the title 'The Last Tycoon' can be made on the basis of the surviving Fitzgerald documents" and asserts "The Love of the Last Tycoon" is more in line with Fitzgerald's wishes because this title has an approving check mark by it in Fitzgerald's notes ("Introduction" xvii). For clarity's sake, when referring to specific editions of the text, I will discuss them using the name under which they were published.

life only signaled the beginning of *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*'s controversial existence. The

first edition of the novel to appear was the one Fitzgerald's friend and literary critic, Edmund

Wilson, published in 1941 as *The Last Tycoon*. This edition served as the official version of the

text until 1993 when Matthew J. Bruccoli's *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western* displaced it

as the standard scholarly version of the work. Though the plot of both texts remains the same, the

editions differ in their organization and framing of the work. Wilson, for one, orders Fitzgerald's

written material into chapters and includes a short foreword, a synopsis of the unwritten part of

the text, and transcriptions of Fitzgerald's notes in his version. Bruccoli, on the other hand,

disparages Wilson's editing choices, arguing the use of chapters and the word "'draft' may be

inadvertently misleading, indicating a more advanced document than actually exists"

("Introduction" xiii). As a result, Bruccoli organizes Fitzgerald's text into numbered episodes

while providing additional context through an extensive introduction, the inclusion of facsimiles

and transcriptions of Fitzgerald's notes, and a list of Wilson's editorial changes. While each of

these editions has served a purpose in scholarship, with Wilson's version initiating a study of the

unfinished novel and Bruccoli's adding a new layer to the discussion, a similarity exists in that

both editions purport to "finish" *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*. In reality though, both versions

perpetuate and aggrandize the work's unfinished nature through metatextual "narrative

prosthesis."

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's theory of narrative prosthesis argues every text has a

"discursive dependency upon disability," or relies upon disability and deviance to initiate a

narrative, but unfinished works such as *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* are not simply dependent

upon disability to begin, they are in and of themselves "disabled" (222). Unfinished works lack

the features of a "normal" novel, a type of text that Lennard J. Davis defines as beginning with "[a] normal situation [that] becomes abnormal and, by the end of the novel, normality or some variant of it is restored" (331). In other words, for a novel to be normal, it must have a distinct beginning, middle, and an end that provides an adequate resolution to characters' problems. While unfinished texts may begin normally and appear whole, by their "conclusion" they remain incomplete because such works rarely resolve characters' deviances. Therefore, incomplete texts such as *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* are not only dependent upon beginning with character-related disability to appear normal, but also on extratextual prostheses such as editors. These kinds of works theoretically need individuals such as Wilson and Bruccoli as buttresses because their unfinished nature makes them inherently disabled and, supposedly, in need of an editorial "cure" to make them as whole and normal as possible.

Given the various editions of *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* that have been published, the editorial history of this novel presents a unique opportunity to explore not only the work's textual disability, but its metatextual dependence upon editors as well. This reliance on disability and exterior forces has frequently been overlooked, but an examination of both types of narrative prosthesis, in-text and out-of-text, not only reveals *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*'s dependence on disability and narrative prostheses, but points to our obsession with textual completeness and the need for a new way to read unfinished/disabled works.

A Reliance on Deviance: Traditional Narrative Prosthesis in *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*

The natural place to begin an examination of *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*'s narrative prosthesis is the novel's plot. The text itself is Mitchell and Snyder's focus in their theory, and

The (Love of the) Last Tycoon's characters, particularly the protagonist, are the part of the novel most easily identified as disabled. The book's unfinished nature spirals outward from the textual to the editorial prostheses which have helped keep the work in the public eye for decades, particularly as these two prostheses intertwine at the work's end with the question of whether or not to include Wilson's synopsis. Without Wilson's detailing of Fitzgerald's intentions for the remainder of the novel, *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* relates the story of Monroe Stahr, a Hollywood producer who falls in love with Kathleen Moore, a woman who "did not belong to the Hollywood world," and who is engaged to another man (*The Last Tycoon* 133). Cecelia Brady[2], the jealous narrator and the daughter of Stahr's business partner, Pat Brady, relates Stahr and Kathleen's incomplete affair to the reader along with her own thoughts and experiences. However, without reading Wilson's synopsis, readers do not know Cecelia is telling Stahr's story from a tuberculosis sanitorium or that the producer's love affair with Kathleen ends tragically. The presence or absence of Wilson's synopsis affects the role disability plays in the novel through Cecelia's illness, but the text's dependence on deviance begins with Stahr's work ethic and the social and medical disabilities this ambition induces; disabilities that, unlike in a normal text, *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* refrains from solving, marking the work as disabled.

    The (Love of the) Last Tycoon begins normally, as the book opens with the anomaly of Stahr's work habits, the narrative prosthesis that defines the producer and sets the stage for an isolation that socially disables him. The first page of the book, in fact, identifies the defining deviance in *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*: the ability to understand the movie business. As

---

[2] In Fitzgerald's manuscripts and typescripts, the narrator's name is "Cecelia Brady," but Wilson spells the name more traditionally, as "Cecilia Brady," in his edition. Even after Bruccoli's publication of *The Love of the Last Tycoon*, where "Cecelia" is the spelling of choice, and the accompanying explanatory notes, scholars did not, and have not, settled on a definitive spelling of the narrator's name. I use "Cecelia" throughout this work because this spelling is the one that appears in Fitzgerald's own hand.

Cecelia informs readers, "[n]ot half a dozen men have ever been able to keep the whole equation of pictures in their heads," and Stahr is one of these rare individuals (*The Love of the Last Tycoon* 3). However, while Stahr's ability to see the big picture of the film industry is useful for his work, his talent isolates him from those who do not view movies as he does, and the loneliness he suffers grows to the point where it socially disables him. Stahr is not an individual "born to love and intimacy," and his naturally withdrawn and calculating personality is not one his position as a powerful producer eases (Callahan 390). As a result, when he begins pursuing Kathleen, his dead wife, Minna Davis's, doppelganger, he feels frightened because his natural logic spars with his desire to "stop being Stahr for awhile and hunt for love like men who had no gifts to give" (*The Love of the Last Tycoon* 91). Stahr's logic ultimately wins out though, as when he has the urge to "take [Kathleen] now - tell her and take her away" to the mountains before her fiance can arrive to marry her, he resists this impulse (117). He delays the trip a day because of his logical deduction that"[m]any thousands of people depended on his balanced judgement" and the acknowledgement that he cannot disappear from the studio without giving notice (117). In that small interval of time though, Kathleen's betrothed arrives in California and whisks her away to the altar, preventing Stahr from having her for himself. While a callous nature is not inherently a disability, in Stahr's case his extreme logic hinders him socially and personally. A lack of emotion is appropriate for running a large film studio, but Stahr needs more feeling in order to successfully maintain an interpersonal relationship with someone who is not his employee.

Stahr's inability to give himself completely over to his affection for Kathleen goes beyond a social disability though, as his deviance manifests itself in a physical malady: heart

trouble, a defect the text discusses, but does not resolve, thereby disabling *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*. Stahr's heart condition is the physical embodiment of his personal and social deviance, as he puts too much "heart" into his work and is simultaneously incapable of using this organ to love. Stahr hints at his heart problems when he is at his Malibu home with Kathleen, but not until his physician, Doctor Baer, visits Stahr do readers realize the seriousness of the producer's condition. By Baer's estimation, Stahr "was due to die very soon now. Within six months one could say definitely," and the doctor acknowledges he "couldn't persuade a man like Stahr to stop and lie down and look at the sky for six months" even to save the man's life because Stahr, if nothing else, is dedicated to the work driving him to death (109-10, 110). Though Stahr's heart disorder is not "the *hard kernel* or recalcitrant corporeal matter" that defines him, the heart condition does represent the core of Stahr's identity in that he is an unemotional workhorse incapable of resting or connecting with the world emotionally without pulling back (Mitchell and Snyder 224). Therefore, while Stahr differs from many disabled characters in that he can pass for able-bodied, his disability keeps with the tradition of deviant literary characters' disabilities "surfac[ing] to explain everything or nothing with respect to their portraits as embodied beings" (225). Unlike other texts whose protagonists may be temporarily disabled though, *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* never resolves Stahr's disability. Instead, at the end of the novel, he remains heartsick because Kathleen has married another man and his heart condition persists. The book, in other words, fails to perform a novel's final function in curing the text at its closure, as "the end represents the plot as strategic abnormality overcome," for Stahr is never able to negate either his social or his physical disability, making both the protagonist and his text eternally disabled (Davis 330-31).

The lack of a resolution is not all that disables *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* at a textual

level though, because in addition to Stahr's heart condition, the way Fitzgerald penned the novel

makes the text deviant in its awkward transitions and breaks in narrative. As Fitzgerald died

before he finished *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*, instances of unpolished prose are unsurprising,

but the text contains several instances where the narration is uncharacteristic to the point of

jolting readers out of the text. The most jarring of these narrative intrusions occurs when

transitioning from the omniscient narrator back to Cecelia, the overarching chronicler who, at

some point, gained this omniscient being's memory and ability to relate Stahr's most intimate

moments with Kathleen. At these transition points, Fitzgerald tends to be too direct for comfort,

with Cecelia interrupting the story's flow by asserting "[t]his is Cecelia taking up the narrative in

person" or "[t]his is Cecelia taking up the story" (*The Love of the Last Tycoon* 77, 99). Such

intrusions pull readers away from Stahr and the novel's plot and make the book appear

fragmented, with certain sections focused on Stahr and others focalized through Cecelia. *The

(Love of the) Last Tycoon*, therefore, is not only disabled because of an incomplete plot, but also

because of a lack of unity and wholeness in the narrative.

Even the sections where Cecelia fully controls the chronicling of Stahr's story are not

exempt from fragmentation, as Fitzgerald's own voice occasionally intrudes on Cecelia's point

of view, furthering the text's incompleteness. The most prominent instance of this authorial

narrative disruption occurs when Cecelia visits Andrew Jackson's home, the Hermitage, in

Tennessee with the screenwriter Wylie White and a depressed film man, Mr. Schwartze. Though

Wylie and Cecelia return to the airport for their flight to California after a few moments outside

the locked Hermitage, Schwartze stays, presumably to commit suicide and Cecelia points out

that "[a]t both ends of life man needed nourishment - a breast - a shrine. Something to lay himself beside when no one wanted him further, and shoot a bullet into his head" (13). At this point in the novel, Cecelia is only 18, and while she may say "wise things," her words about a shrine and suicide are more reflective of the depressed Fitzgerald's take on life than that of a young woman (12). Even Cecelia's later tubercular self is unlikely to make this observation, as during the course of the novel she falls in love with Stahr, but never idolizes him or any other object or person. Fitzgerald's intrusion into the narrative at this juncture fragments the novel by breaking its narrative cogency and bringing exterior forces into the interior of the text. However, these insertions also point to larger extratextual intrusions in *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*, ones that affect whether individuals see Cecelia and, by extension, the plot as a whole, as inherently disabled.

While Stahr has a debilitating ambition and heart condition in both the Wilson and Bruccoli versions, how important disability is to the text varies depending upon which edition one reads. In Wilson's version, readers know Cecelia's disability is the reason she is telling Stahr's story, whereas the Bruccoli edition leaves readers unsure of the circumstances surrounding the text's narration. As Wilson's synopsis reveals, and Fitzgerald's notes elucidate, the only reason readers have Stahr's story is because a twenty-five-year-old tubercular Cecelia relates the tale to two of her fellow sanitorium patients who admire Stahr and see him as the "Christ in Industry" (Fitzgerald, "Notes" 145). The narrative's overarching sanitorium setting and the implied mortality of the text's chronicler taints the entirety of the story with its connection to medical disability, as the book becomes not only a tale about a deviant man with a heart defect, but a story told by a fatally ill and disabled woman. Bruccoli's text does not reveal

this disability though. Instead of moving into the post-story explanatory synopsis that characterizes *The Last Tycoon*, Bruccoli's edition introduces the section of the book dedicated to facsimiles of Fitzgerald's notes. Bruccoli, unlike Wilson, did not interpret Fitzgerald's notes as his final plans for the novel, arguing the author's "undated last outline provides only topics or ideas for the thirteen unwritten episodes," which, for Bruccoli, means Cecelia's tubercular state was not set in stone ("*The Last of the Novelists*" 4). As a result of this editorial discrepancy, *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* becomes disabled beyond the bounds of the events in the text. In the case of *The Last Tycoon*, Wilson's ending makes the story more complete by relating Stahr's death, Cecelia's time in the sanitorium, and Kathleen's isolation, but it also makes the book more obviously dependent on disability. Bruccoli's version, on the other hand, removes the story's dependence on Cecelia's illness from readers' view, but his method also makes the text less of a technical whole. Each version relies on the editor to lend coherency and completeness to the unfinished work, but the fact that two vastly different editions exist only disables the text further because of questions about authenticity and correctness that arise whenever more than one version of a literary work exists.

The Editorial Struggle for Authenticity

The differences between the two primary editions of *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* are due to scholars' influence, as academics such as Wilson and Bruccoli have not only helped shape Fitzgerald's reputation, but the perception of his works, making these individuals another prosthesis propping up *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*. Traditionally, "[a]ll valid meaning is authorial meaning" in creative works, but in the case of Fitzgerald's incomplete final novel this

supposed certainty about what the author means, or at least writes, does not exist as a result of

Fitzgerald's early death (Parker ix). Therefore, editors have been able to step in and make the

text what they believe Fitzgerald wanted it to be, falling into the intentional fallacy in the

process. While Wilson and Bruccoli may have believed they were doing Fitzgerald justice, as

Hershel Parker points out, "[i]n revising or allowing someone else to revise a literary work . . .

authors very often lose authority, with the result that familiar literary texts at some points have

no meaning, only partially authorial meaning, or quite adventitious meaning unintended by the

author or anyone else" (4). Parker's assertion holds true in the case of *The (Love of the) Last*

Tycoon, as the changes Wilson and Bruccoli made to the text transmit messages Fitzgerald never

would have included, despite the editors' claims of loyalty to authorial intent, primarily because

many of these alterations reveal more about the editor than the author's wishes for the novel.

Each editor has attempted to "finish" the book in his own way and present it in as authentic a

light as possible. However, these efforts have only made *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*'s

prostheses multiply because while each edition encourages a certain view of the text, none of

them makes the novel more whole or authentic. The work ceased its progression toward

completeness when Fitzgerald died in 1940 and while no editor has laid claim to replacing him

as the book's final author, editors nonetheless continue attempting to remain "true" to Fitzgerald

while simultaneously "curing" the work with extratextual additions such as introductions,

synopses, and alterations to the text itself.

  Though each editor has attempted to "finish" Fitzgerald's final text using a variety of

methods, the first partial "cure" readers encounter is the introduction, an extratextual prosthesis

that reveals how Wilson and Bruccoli each view authenticity. The struggle for authority through

authenticity appears first in the introductions to the texts because this part of the book is what

readers encounter first. While both Wilson and Bruccoli include a foreword, the content of their

respective introductions reveal vastly different interpretations of what is "correct" for the text.

Wilson's introduction, for example, is merely two pages long and contains mostly background

information on Fitzgerald and a few notes about *The Last Tycoon*, including the disclaimer that

"[t]his draft of *The Last Tycoon*, then, represents that point in the artist's work where he has

assembled and organized his material and acquired a firm grasp of his theme, but has not yet

brought it finally into focus" (Wilson ix). Though Wilson admits the work is unfinished and in

an "imperfect state," he ends the foreword with the claim that "[i]t has been possible to

supplement this unfinished draft with an outline of the rest of the story as Fitzgerald intended to

develop it, and with passages from the author's notes which deal, often vividly, with the

characters and scenes" (x). This claim to authenticity and authority through staying true to

Fitzgerald's intentions is quick though, and Wilson rapidly gets out of readers' way at the end of

the foreword, allowing them to get into the story with great alacrity. The point of Wilson's

introduction is to give readers context and reaffirm *The Last Tycoon*'s immense potential, a

technique that precedes, but still echoes, Malcolm Cowley's desire to avoid making his

introduction to the revised *Tender Is the Night* "a thrusting forward of the editor that will cut off

the reader's view of Scott" (Cowley to Harold Ober, 13 July 1951). Wilson, in having a brief

foreword before getting to the text, suggests a desire to allow readers to come to their own

conclusions about the work, as he makes few significant claims in his preface outside his

assertion that *The Last Tycoon* is Fitzgerald's "most mature piece of work," a brevity Bruccoli's

introduction lacks (Wilson x).

Bruccoli's extensive introduction to *The Love of the Last Tycoon* represents a much different approach to prefacing a novel, as the editor actively works to shape readers' perception of the text, a move that indicates Bruccoli had a different idea about what elements were necessary to make *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* complete. While Bruccoli's introduction shares the purpose of Wilson's foreword in providing information about the text, the more recent introduction runs to excess. Bruccoli's preface is 83 pages and includes not only background information on Fitzgerald and the text, but also arguments as to why *The Love of the Last Tycoon* is superior to *The Last Tycoon*. Bruccoli even suggests scholarly evaluations of the text "ha[ve] been impeded because the working drafts have heretofore been published only in the cosmeticized text edited by Edmund Wilson more than fifty years ago," as Wilson made changes to the work that Bruccoli does not retain in his edition ("Introduction" xiii). This long introduction and Bruccoli's extensive criticism of Wilson suggest that in Bruccoli's mind, a "whole" text is one that makes readers privy to the "entire" story, including its different editions, the changes editors made, and the history behind the text in addition to the literary work itself. Where Wilson was content to let *The Last Tycoon* stand more or less on its own with his additional synopsis and endnotes, Bruccoli chooses to engage the text more widely, including transcriptions of letters and Fitzgerald's notes, as well as facsimiles of these sources in addition to the text of *The Love of the Last Tycoon*.

The inclusion of more primary sources, and a greater variety as well, in Bruccoli's version seems, however, to be an unsuccessful attempt to compensate for the text's unfinished state. Fitzgerald's actual story is only 130 pages, but *The Love of the Last Tycoon* runs to 432, including the introduction and appendices. This additional material informs readers about various

aspects of the text's history, from Fitzgerald's drafting process to the book's posthumous editing, but while this extra information increases reader understanding of the text and its history, it makes the story no more complete. Readers still do not know what happens to Stahr, Kathleen, or Cecelia, and the resolution of these characters' stories is, technically, the characteristic that qualifies a book as "finished" (Wallen 125). Bruccoli's text accomplishes no such feat in spite of its facsimiles and extensive documentation of the drafting process. In fact, by both Davis's and Wallen's definitions of "finished," the now largely ignored 1941 version would be the more technically complete edition, as the synopsis that follows the end of this version clearly outlines what happens to the text's characters: Stahr dies in a plane crash, Kathleen is alone in Hollywood, and Cecelia enters a tuberculosis sanitorium (*The Last Tycoon* 132-33). In short, for all of Bruccoli's attempts to make *The Love of the Last Tycoon* complete, in the traditional sense of a finished novel, he falls short compared to Wilson and his synopsis.

The ways in which Wilson's and Bruccoli's editing manipulate readers' interpretations of the work is not limited to extratextual material though, as both editors have gone inside the text itself in order to make alterations and keep the book "true" to Fitzgerald's intentions. Wilson, as Cowley did in 1951 with *Tender Is the Night*, "styl[ed] the punctuation, correct[ed] spelling, and alter[ed] names (Pedro Garcia to Pete Zavras)" in the text itself (Bruccoli, "Introduction" lxxii). Fitzgerald was a poor grammarian and speller throughout his life, and even Cowley and Fitzgerald's daughter, Frances "Scottie" Fitzgerald Lanahan, agreed the author "was a pretty terrible proofreader at his best" (Cowley to Lanahan, 21 May 1951). Therefore, the edits Wilson undertook, such as making the use of the name "Pat Brady" consistent throughout the novel, were necessary for textual comprehension (Bruccoli, "Introduction" lxxxvi). However, Wilson

also "replaced words" within the text, and although "he did not rewrite sentences" in his edition, he nonetheless pushed editorial boundaries, as certain alterations are significant (lxxii). For example, when Stahr meets with a movie director named Red Ridingwood to scold him, *The Last Tycoon* indicates the director "recognized the indication of displeasure - he had used it himself. He had had his own studio once and he had used everything. There was no stop Stahr could pull that would surprise him. His task was the delivery of situations, and Stahr by effective business could not outplay him on his own grounds" (50). However, this detailed and polished description is a far cry from what Fitzgerald wrote, as indicated in *The Love of the Last Tycoon* where Ridingwood "recognized the indication of displeasure - his own metier was largely the 'delivery' of situations through mimetic business. He didn't know what the trouble was but he was a top director and was not alarmed" (49-50). While both versions express essentially the same message in that Ridingwood realizes Stahr is unhappy with his work, but remains confident in his ability to handle the producer's anger, Wilson's description is far more polished than the same passage in *The Love of the Last Tycoon*. This textual discrepancy between the editions illustrates the larger differences in editorial style between Wilson and Bruccoli in regards to this novel. In his edition, Wilson focuses more on what the text would have become with further development while Bruccoli uses a base-text editorial technique that "preserve[s] authorial lapses, secretarial or compositorial errors, and house styling," though emendations for clarity's stake still occur (Bruccoli, "Introduction" lxxix). However, while alterations such as Wilson's may be inappropriate for finished works, questions arise about how unsuitable they are for an incomplete piece.

Unfinished texts, unlike their completed counterparts, rarely appear before an editor's eyes, meaning changes such as the ones Wilson made can be justified on the principle of intent. *The Last Tycoon*'s short introduction largely removes Wilson from the text, and his emendations, synopsis, and notes all focus on what Wilson believed Fitzgerald *wanted* the text to be: the story of a strong Hollywood man's unjust and untimely descent from the top. While Wilson undoubtedly falls into the intentional fallacy in attempting to make *The Last Tycoon* complete by Fitzgerald's standards, his changes based on assumptions regarding intent are not as egregious as they would be if the text had been a completed book. While "the idea of a 'definitive' edition, in the sense of an absolutely stable text, is illusory" in terms of even finished works, incomplete texts lack wholeness to an even greater degree (Young 639). Therefore, Wilson's changes to *The Last Tycoon* are acceptable to an extent because he was doing the editing Fitzgerald and Scribner's would have had to undertake if the author had lived to complete the novel. We have no idea what alterations Fitzgerald would have made to the text had he not died when he did and as such scholars cannot automatically condemn Wilson for changing the work's wording because these alterations may have been ones Fitzgerald would have made himself.

However, while academics may not be able to immediately chastise Wilson for making large changes to *The Last Tycoon*, when read in conjunction with Bruccoli's edition, these two versions present a conundrum that disables *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* further by creating a lack of certainty about whether to look at the work from Wilson's or Bruccoli's perspective. As Bruccoli asserts in *"The Last of the Novelists"*, "Wilson formed chapters out of episodes; but the reader of the Wilson text has no way of knowing how much editorial improvement he is absorbing" (3). Wilson tends toward the authenticity of what he assumes Fitzgerald's finished

product would be, while Bruccoli criticizes such intentional presumptions and focuses more on the material Fitzgerald left behind, though, as his introduction indicates, Bruccoli's edition is not without bias or fallacious claims to being the "correct" version of *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*. However, the fact that both Wilson's and Bruccoli's texts have each been accepted as the "official" version of *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*, albeit at different times, indicates that no "right" way exists to edit an unfinished work. As a result, the text of Fitzgerald's incomplete novel becomes even more disabled because not only does "[s]peculation about the unwritten portion of the novel soon [become] futile" but discussion about what the text "should be" stalls as well (4). In other words, scholars' "what if?" musings about *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* morph into the additional question of "how should we look at it?" because no definitive way exists to examine disabled and unfinished texts. Yet, I would argue much could be learned about not only these unfinished works, but also scholarship itself, from examining disabled pieces of literature in a new light; one that adapts to these texts' limitations in terms of plot and comprehension.

Reading Disabled and Unfinished Texts

Disability studies criticism has, traditionally, been applied at the plot level to examine characters with physical or mental abnormalities, both explicit and implied, yet if we have developed a lens with which to examine literary works about, or pertaining to, disability, why can we not extend this method to the textual level? In unfinished works such as *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*, each edition is dependent upon its own prosthesis to make it "complete." As a result, the text remains disabled not only because the book is literally incomplete, but the

different prostheses that attempt to make each edition whole have yet to be dealt with. Given this continuing disability, evaluating *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* and other works in similar situations leads to the kind of conclusions often utilized when discussing individuals, both fictional and real, with disabilities. No one asks what a text's incompleteness says about itself, but instead questions what the text was going to be. With the literal death of an author though, this inquiry becomes both pointless and fruitless, indicating that we need a new approach to examining disabled texts in order to fully appreciate their value.

A partial model for an effective way to read unfinished texts almost appeared in 1953 with Fitzgerald's literary agent, Harold Ober's, idea about how to publish *The Last Tycoon* in the omnibus *Three Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, and while Ober did not get his way with this text, his idea nonetheless provides a base on which to build a more effective platform for examining unfinished texts. As Ober would have liked the 1953 edition of *The Last Tycoon*, the text had the potential to stand on its own and partially resist the disabled label. Printed as part of the Fitzgerald revival of the late 1940s and 1950s, *Three Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* included *The Great Gatsby*, Cowley's 1951 edition of *Tender Is the Night*, and Wilson's version of *The Last Tycoon*. However, significant editorial dispute arose over the state in which *The Last Tycoon* should appear in the omnibus, as Ober wanted Scribner's "to reprint the 'The Last Tycoon' without the Wilson Introduction, without the closing synopsis, which he thinks was too highly conjectural, and without the concluding notes. He wants the reader to be permitted to form his own impression of it as an unfinished intention" (Wallace Myers to Cowley, 11 Jan. 1951). In this respect, Ober was ahead of his time in terms of presenting a disabled text without any pretension of wholeness, but even if Ober had had his way with *The Last Tycoon* in *Three Novels*

of F. Scott Fitzgerald, the overall manner in which the text would have appeared would have remained problematic.

While under Ober's direction *The Last Tycoon* may have appeared without Wilson's extratextual editorialization, this edition still would have had Wilson's chapter designations as well as appeared alongside finished texts, an act that highlights *The Last Tycoon*'s incompleteness and disability. Even without Wilson's foreword, synopsis, and selected notes, his "silent emend[ations]" would remain, allowing his influence to persist in the form of textual alterations and chapter designations (Bruccoli, "Introduction" xiv). More damaging than Wilson's changes to the text though, is the fact that *The Last Tycoon* would have appeared in conjunction with finished works. *Three Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* as Scribner's published it in 1953 juxtaposes Fitzgerald's unfinished novel with two of his completed works, highlighting *The Last Tycoon*'s unfinished nature and calling attention to its disability by putting the text's incompleteness on display. Ober may have wanted to omit Wilson's extratextual additions, but he had no objections to publishing *The Last Tycoon* alongside finished works. Therefore, while his vision for *The Last Tycoon* alone was progressive, his desire to situate it within the context of a volume that contained two other complete stories indicates that as a general policy for reading unfinished works, Ober's recommendation is lacking.

Though Ober's conception of *Three Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald* has its flaws, his desire to allow readers to come to their own conclusions about the text is suggestive of what may be the most responsible way to read unfinished and disabled texts. Publishing a work such as *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* without the tagline of "unfinished," forewords, introductions, notes, or facsimiles allows readers to see the text as a whole before passing judgment on it on the grounds

of incompleteness, undermining the normal/disabled textual binary. The disability would not be hidden, as examining the critical discussions surrounding the text, or even a quick Google search, would reveal a work's incomplete status, and unfinished pieces' sudden conclusions are likely to prompt readers to investigate the unfinished work. In this manner, readers could learn about a particular text and its disability, but only after consuming the book as a "whole." This method of readership would remove the "speculat[ion] about whether Fitzgerald [or any other author of an unfinished text] would have succeeded or failed in making the promise [of a book] good" and move discussions about unfinished works in a new direction (Moyer 238).

The unfinished nature of *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* has, as Kermit W. Moyer claims, stalled criticism of the text, as analysis of the book has been largely limited to comparing it with finished works, such as *The Great Gatsby* and *Tender Is the Night*, as well as lamenting its incomplete status (239). Taking *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* out of conversation with Fitzgerald's other works would severely inhibit scholarship, but removing the dominant "what if?" or "if only" dialogues from critical evaluations of the text could be beneficial to the study of the novel and other unfinished works. Eliminating these questions from the conversation allows individuals to read and analyze a text as a whole and normal book first, without knowing from the start they are unlikely to read about the characters' ultimate fate. The text as a "fragment *is* fragmentary, but it is also an undecidable totality, providing all the evidence, while simultaneously pointing to the absence of *all* evidence" and publishing unfinished texts in and of themselves reveals the fragment and the absence while preserving the work's self-contained wholeness (Braune 254). However, because this absence or lack would not be immediately evident when readers open the novel, they would assume the text is normal until proven

otherwise, a technique that may appear to hide disability, but in fact reveals the instability of all texts.

Though some may argue removing the "unfinished" tagline and other evidence of disability from unfinished works is a kind of erasure, a refusal to use identifying marks or notations has the potential to do much for the disruption of the normal/disabled binary in textual studies. Works of literature such as *The Last Tycoon* have been split into traditionally normal chapters and while the prose may not be as polished as in a standard completed text, the initial impression of normality and completeness remains. Yet this appearance of normality would disappear once readers reached the end of the text, as they would likely realize something is missing from the work. Allowing the unfinished piece to "pass" as complete poignantly illustrates "there is almost never such a thing as a single, stable text" (Young 633). Being "fooled" into believing an unfinished and disabled text is normal challenges our notions of what a whole piece truly is because we realize that sometimes unfinished is complete and complete is unfinished.

Reading *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* as Disabled

The application of this publishing and reading technique to *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* would produce an edition unlike its two primary predecessors, one that would allow unprecedented access to Fitzgerald's writing and foster a multitude of discussions in addition to disrupting the normal/disabled binary. This version would lack as much editorialization as possible and would, in essence, be a transcription of what Bruccoli calls the "episodes" Fitzgerald wrote prior to his death, but without the headings Bruccoli or Wilson imposes on

them. Line breaks between these episodes would exist, but no chapters would be marked, no changes would be made to Fitzgerald's original text, even for clarity's sake, and no extratextual material, such as an introduction, synopsis, facsimiles, or notes would appear. Additionally, the title of this volume would not be *The Last Tycoon* or *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western*, as both these titles emerged as a result of the intentional fallacy. The title I propose instead is the unglamorous *STAHR: A Romance* because "[t]he only title page that survives with the draft material names the work 'STAHR / A Romance'" (Bruccoli, "Introduction" xiv). Making these choices is in itself an editorialization, but one that cannot be helped, as the act of simply publishing a book is an editorial judgment. Overall though, *STAHR: A Romance* would be a text relatively free of editorial interference in an attempt to avoid the intentional fallacy and simply present what appears in Fitzgerald's own handwriting in a straightforward manner.

This method is a far cry from Bruccoli's attempts to portray his edition of *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* as the most authentic version by criticizing *The Last Tycoon* because, while *STAHR: A Romance* would have a similar presentation style in its episodic, albeit unlabeled, nature, this version would foster a different discussion. The presentation of Fitzgerald's final incomplete novel in a seemingly finished form would reveal not only the author's raw writing, but induce conversations about the compositional and editorial processes. *STAHR: A Romance* would have a "For Further Information" section at the end that would name *The Last Tycoon* and *The Love of the Last Tycoon* as works curious readers should consult to learn more about the text, but these two sources would be the only ones the text would recommend. In presenting Fitzgerald's writing in and of itself, readers would be forced to question definitions of "normal" and "disabled" in a technically unfinished book presented as a whole. Pointing readers to other

editorialized versions of the text would also allow readers to see first-hand the effects the publishing industry and individual editors can have on a work, particularly when falling into the trap of the intentional fallacy. Unless an individual is specifically examining other editions of a text, the work of editors and publishing houses often goes unrealized by the average, and even the scholarly, reader. Bringing this element into the discussion surrounding *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon* would not only undermine the normal/disabled binary by showing that even books that appear finished are incomplete and have other editions, but also foreground extratextual influences in literary criticism of the text. The presence of these metatextual prostheses is a previously unexplored avenue of scholarship for *The (Love of the) Last Tycoon*, and one that could help free it from the lamentations about what the text could have been if only it had been normal, as well as promote a move away from the clinical examination of unfinished works.

Bruccoli and Wilson, like most editors, tend toward wanting to "repair" the texts with which they are working, yet simply because a piece of literature is unfinished does not mean it needs a "cure." By reading unfinished texts in a more socially responsible manner, we learn not only about the work itself, but also its production process. Unfinished texts are in themselves not the problem; the way we read them is. Moving away from the clinical, medical editing methods of individuals such as Bruccoli and Wilson and moving toward a more accepting reading model reveals a new side of unfinished texts, one that, until now, has suffered from scholarly neglect simply because it does not fit the norm.

Works Cited

Braune, Sean. "How to Analyze Texts that Were Burned, Lost, Fragmented, or Never Written."

    symplokē 21.1-2 (2013): 239-55. Web. 15 Nov. 2015.

Bruccoli, Matthew J. Introduction. *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western*. By F. Scott

    Fitzgerald. Ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993. xiii-xcvi. Print.

---. *"The Last of the Novelists": F. Scott Fitzgerald and* The Last Tycoon. Carbondale: Southern

    Illinois UP, 1977. Print.

Bryer, Jackson R. "The critical reputation of F. Scott Fitzgerald." *The Cambridge Companion to*

    F. Scott Fitzgerald. Ed. Ruth Prigozy. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 189-208. Print.

Callahan, John F. "F. Scott Fitzgerald's Evolving American Dream: The 'Pursuit of Happiness'

    in *Gatsby*, *Tender Is the Night*, and *The Last Tycoon*." *Twentieth Century Literature*

    (1996): 374-95. Web. 15 Sept. 2015.

Cowley, Malcolm. Letter to Frances Scott "Scottie" Fitzgerald Lanahan. 21 May 1951. T.S.

    Malcolm Cowley Papers. Newberry Lib., Chicago.

---. Letter to Harold Ober. 13 July 1951. T.S. Malcolm Cowley Papers. Newberry Lib., Chicago.

Davis, Lennard J. "Who Put the 'The' in 'the Novel'?: Identity Politics and Disability in Novel

    Studies." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 31.3 (1998): 317-34. Web. 29 Oct. 2015.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Last Tycoon: An Unfinished Novel*. Ed. Edmund Wilson. New York:

    Scribner's, 1941. Print.

---. *The Love of the Last Tycoon: A Western*. Ed. Matthew J. Bruccoli. Cambridge: Cambridge

    UP, 1993. Print.

---. Notes. *The Last Tycoon: An Unfinished Novel*. Ed. Edmund Wilson. New York, Scribner's,

1941. 134-63. Print.

Mitchell, David, and Sharon Snyder. "Narrative Prosthesis." *The Disability Studies Reader*. 4th

ed. Ed. Lennard J. Davis. New York: Routledge, 2013. 222-35. Print.

Moyer, Kermit W. "Fitzgerald's Two Unfinished Novels: The Count and the Tycoon in

Spenglerian Perspective." *Contemporary Literature* 15.2 (1974): 238-56. Web. 15 Sept.

2015.

Myers, Wallace. Letter to Malcolm Cowley. 11 Jan. 1951. T.S. Malcolm Cowley Papers.

Newberry Lib., Chicago.

Parker, Hershel. *Flawed Texts and Verbal Icons: Literary Authority in American Fiction*.

Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1984. Print.

Schulberg, Budd. "Fitzgerald in Hollywood." *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work*. Ed.

Alfred Kazin. New York: World Publishing Company, 1951. 109-112. Print.

Wallen, James Ramsey. "What Is an Unfinished Work?" *New Literary History* 46.1 (2015):

125-42. Web. 15 Sept. 2015.

Wilson, Edmund. Foreword. *The Last Tycoon: An Unfinished Novel*. By F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Ed. Edmund Wilson. New York: Scribner's, 1941. ix-x. Print.

Young, John K. "Teaching Texts Materially: The Ends of Nella Larsen's *Passing*." *College*

English 66.6 (2004): 632-51. Web. 28 Aug. 2015.