

Importance of point of view in the great gatsby

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In novels containing interweaving plot and varying scenes, the author's selection of point of view becomes a primary factor in its impact and effectiveness. *The Great Gatsby* is such a novel which demonstrates this point most evidently. While Fitzgerald's decision to view the plot through the eyes of Nick Carraway presents certain limitations, it provides the means to relate the tone and message of the novel as whole. F. Scott Fitzgerald would be the first to admit that his masterpiece was not without flaws.

In a letter written to Edmund Wilson, he criticized what he understood to be the novel's "BIG FAULT." "I gave no account of (and had no feeling about or knowledge of) the emotional relationship between Gatsby and Daisy from the time of their reunion to the catastrophe. Undoubtedly, this constraint on detailed development was imposed almost solely by point of view. Because Fitzgerald lays out the plot through the prospective of one essential character, intimacy between any other group of characters is lost or can only be hinted at.

Somewhat of a haze surrounds these important relationships, as Nick and in turn the reader are blind to the details of their occurrence. In the case of Gatsby and Daisy, some of the power that backs Gatsby's dream is never presented. Such a situation is somewhat relieved, however, by integration of dialog. Not only does this aspect of Fitzgerald's point of view thoroughly describe the other character of the novel, but also it keeps the credibility of the narrator in check. Who is to say that Nick Carraway is to be the readers' only insight to the affluent world of Long Island during the 1920's?

He himself admitted to being far from perfect; even "vulnerable." By providing the reader with a chance to judge the importance, purpose, and mission of each character, less time is spent analyzing the credibility of the narrator and more is devoted to understanding Fitzgerald's statement as a whole. In *The Great Gatsby*, this is a message that would be lost if it were not for the selected point of view. Fitzgerald, through what Nick perceives and the changes he undergoes, comments specifically on the society of the time.

Had he instead relied upon another character's recollection of the same events, the meaning would be lost. The "carelessness" that the Buchanans represent could not be interpreted as such had someone who could not, in the end, see through the masks of riches been the reader's source of insight. The final impression sought by Fitzgerald would be skewed. Therefore, as limiting as they are, Nick Carraway's eyes (mixed with the conversation around him) provide not only a skillful, but also a necessary framework for the entire novel.