5-2022

F. Scott Fitzgerald's homme épuisé: usurping the "madwoman" in Tender is the Night (1934) [2022]

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F. Scott Fitzgerald's *homme épuisé*: Usurping the "Madwoman" in *Tender is the Night* (1934)

by

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A Thesis

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Master of Arts in English

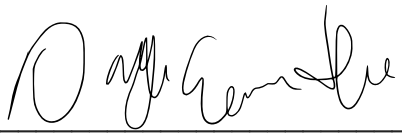
Department of English, School of Arts and Sciences

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

COLLEGE AT CORTLAND

May 2022

SUNY Cortland

Student Signature: 

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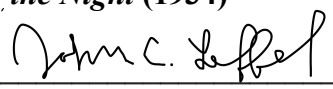
Thesis Advisor's Signature: 

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F. Scott Fitzgerald's *homme épuisé*: Usurping the "Madwoman" in *Tender is the Night* (1934)

Nineteenth-century women writers commonly use themes of entrapment and madness in what are now classified as gothic novels. In texts such as *Jane Eyre*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Yellow Wallpaper*, confinement and madness are synchronous in developing the figure of "the madwoman." These texts were written during a time when it was uncommon for female writers to seek publication, and many used pseudonyms to get their works published or to be taken seriously by critics. The "madwoman" emerged as a powerful trope to articulate what writing under a patriarchal system feels like. That is to say, confinement scenarios resulting from female characters' reputed "madness" parallel the authors' own sense of entrapment writing under a patriarchal system. While this was a common move associated with texts now classified as "Female Gothic," in this thesis I argue that we can identify and theorize author's incorporation of the "madwoman" in *non*-gothic texts as well. Ultimately, close analysis of the figure of the "madwoman" and the host of issues and ideas this character introduces provides an opportunity to highlight issues of intersectionality regarding sexuality, gender roles, and mental illness.

The madwoman trope provides a means for female writers to express feelings of confinement in a profession run by men. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar officially coined the "madwoman" trope in the 1970s in their influential study, *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Although the "madwoman" is primarily encountered in 19th-century gothic texts, it can be traced in literary works prior to the 19th century through to the present day. But while this figure is typically encountered in proto-feministic texts penned by women, I argue that male writers strategically

employ it as well in order to foster *anti*-feminist sentiment. My research is based on F. Scott Fitzgerald and his famous novel *Tender is the Night;* more specifically, the ways in which Fitzgerald deploys the madwoman trope to garner sympathy for his unfaithful male lead.

Numerous male writers utilize the literary "madwoman" to paint women as monsters that leave male protagonists unfulfilled and disoriented so that the reader is coaxed to sympathize with them over the "madwoman." An early example comes in poems by the Romantic-era poet John Keats. Much as his revealingly-titled "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" depicts the disastrous aftermath of a sexualized encounter with an alluring "femme-fatale" figure, Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" presents the titular bird in terms that characterize it as an enticing elfin or fairy-like woman that leaves the male hero disoriented and depleted after his encounter with her. The male narrator begins the poem full of sorrow until he hears the nightingale singing. He proceeds to describe the bird as a "light-winged Dryad of the trees," or as a flying wood-nymph. While the narrator longs for alcohol or another means of escape from the pressures and anxieties of life, he ultimately rejects such options and dreams instead of flying away with the bird into the forest and thereby "forget[ting] / What thou [(the bird)] among the leaves hast never known,/ The weariness, the fever, and the fret" of human experience. He desires the bird and describes her song as "opening on the foam / Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn." The word 'forlorn' brings him back to remembering his mortal self, and after the bird-cum-nymph flies past him, she becomes a "deceiving elf." Ultimately, sympathy attaches to the male because he is left unfulfilled, confused, and longing: "Was it a vision, or a waking dream?/ Fled is that music:--Do I wake or sleep?" (Longman 775).

Keats's poem is especially instructive here because F. Scott Fitzgerald adopted a memorable line from Keats' poem for the title of his novel, *Tender is the Night* (1934). This was

intentional and exemplifies a Fitzgerald canon where women are wreckers of men. I will be using criticism from Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic* to argue that Fitzgerald uses the madwoman trope to garner sympathy not for the persecuted female, but for the male protagonist.

Tender is the Night is a semi-autobiographical novel set in the French Riviera after World War I. It is the story of an American psychiatrist (Dick Diver) who marries one of his patients, Nicole Warren. When Nicole's mental illness spirals downward, Dick is driven into a state of exhaustion; yet as her illness improves, it continues to deplete his vitality until he is, in Fitzgerald's words, "un homme épuisé" ("a used-up man"). The novel reflects Fitzgerald's life with his wife, Zelda. It is commonly understood that Fitzgerald even incorporated bits of Zelda's personal letters into the novel. As Nicole's madness worsens, Diver begins to fancy Rosemary Hoyt, a young actress on vacation in the Riviera with her mother. Their love affair persists until Rosemary's independence triumphs her desire for Diver, thus leaving him alone and used up once again. Like Keats, the narrator coaxes the reader to sympathize with Diver rather than the two female love interests by painting them as madwomen.

The "madwoman" trope was first coined in the 1970s by feminist critics Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their book, *The Madwoman in the Attic*. They address the female anxiety of the literary world by looking at the Female Gothic. The term "madwoman" refers to a recurring female character in Romantic and Gothic literature who is painted as a monster. In these texts, the madwoman is unfit for society and is usually locked away, confined, or treated as a social outcast. She is monstrous, sexual, demonic, supernatural, or erotic in beauty. Her aggression and manipulation often leave a male counterpart feeling a loss of control or trapped in a dream-like state. The madwoman also disrupts the male's life and conscience.

The literary madwoman is a representation of female value under a system of patriarchy (Gilbert and Gubar 83). Indeed, Gilbert and Gubar's strongest assertion is that the pen is a "metaphorical penis." The pen as a phallic symbol was first addressed in Victorian culture when Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote a letter in 1886 to a friend about his theory of poetry. In the letter, he said that the artist's "most essential quality . . . is masterly execution, which is a kind of male gift, and especially marks off men from women," and that "the male quality is the creative gift" (Gilbert and Gubar 3). This statement suggests that literary creativity is dominated by men precisely because they have a penis and, therefore, are the only one's worthy to use the "pen."

If the pen is a metaphorical penis, then it has the power to create art the same way the penis creates life. Gilbert and Gubar argue that the paternal ownership that comes with male dominance in the literary world plays a role in the creation of the madwoman and the attempted erasure of female power. Hopkins' bold statement about the pen as a penis reinforces the standard of Victorian culture: men held literary power in relation to their actual authority. Aspects of male power include domination, punishment, revenge, and the usurpation of female values, while women's highest value is their ability to produce children within a patriarchal society (Pouba and Tianen 97). Women who acted out of accord with the ideological demands placed upon them by expressing their sexuality were viewed as a threat to male power and were often labeled as "mad" (Garland-Thomson para 9). Meanwhile, men were the socially accepted artists, merchants, and adventurers; the male sphere was public, while the female sphere was domestic, suggesting that women were unable to function outside of their private realm (Gilbert and Gubar 232-233). Male anxiety of the female sex is what sparked the "social disease of ladyhood" (Gilbert and Gubar, 269). Therefore, it was uncommon for women to attempt writing in a society

where men held creative power. Women needed to break free from the creative restrictions placed upon them before they could attempt to write:

> Since both patriarchy and its texts subordinate and imprison women, before women can even attempt that pen which is so rigorously kept from them they must escape just those male texts which, defining them as "Cyphers" deny them the autonomy to formulate alternatives to the authority that has imprisoned them and kept them from attempting the pen (Gilbert and Gubar 13).

In other words, women need to be taken seriously and critically in society before they even attempt to write. In *The Second Sex,* Simone de Beauvoir likewise suggests that female writers were rebelling against patriarchal standards and were freeing themselves from the constraints of a society where men were accorded a higher value. On the contrary, Gilbert and Gubar assume that the trend of female writers publishing under male names signal rejection from silence, but simultaneously places themselves into a position of self-denial (69)(78). Imagery and over-dramatizations of confinement, imprisonment, and enclosure are found in female works of Gothic literature to resemble the restrictions women faced in a system of patriarchy (85).

Charlotte Bronte is one of the many women to attempt to embrace the pen. Gilbert and Gubar argue that she was denying her femininity to prove her intellectual capacity to men by pretending to be a man and publishing under a male pseudonym: Currer Bell. These "metaphorical trousers" create an identity problem and exacerbate the anxiety of authorship for the women who elect to wear them (66). Gilbert and Gubar use the female Gothic to support their madwoman argument because imagery of enclosure often leads to some form of *outbreak* (86). Locking away the madwoman in these texts is both literal and metaphorical. She can be confined into a sort of attic, a dream, a memory, or erased completely, as we see in Mary

Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), where Victor Frankenstein attempts to usurp reproductive female power. Confinement of the madwoman is a trend we will continue to see in Fitzgerald's work in the second half of this essay.

Bertha Mason is the titular "madwoman in the attic" of Gilbert and Gubar's title, locked away by Mr. Rochester in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Elaine Showalter also supports Gilbert and Gubar's interpretation when she suggests that Bertha is a representation not only of Jane's dark side, but of the anxiety of creative repression. Bertha acts as Jane's dark alter-ego by paralleling Jane's childhood outbursts against enclosure as well as her sexual desires (Showalter 68). The description of Bertha is monstrous: "what it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight tell: it grovelled . . . on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal . . . dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face" (Bronte 340). After Mr. Rochester points to Bertha and says, "That is my wife," he looks to Jane and provides his version of the ideal woman:

> This is what I wished to have . . . this young girl who stands so grave and quiet at the mouth of hell, looking collectively at the gambols of a demon. I wanted her just as a change after that fierce ragout . . . Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder--this face with that mask--this form with that bulk . . . (Bronte 371)

Demonic and *beastly* are words that Rochester uses when describing the sexual and erotic Bertha, while Jane is scripted as sensitive, passive, and submissive. Rochester's confinement of Bertha suggests his fear of his own uncontrollable sexual desires. We can see Bertha's madness representing female sexuality by her outbursts of rage coming when the moon is "blood red" or "broad and red," thus indicating she's going through her menstrual cycle (Showalter 67).

Gilbert and Gubar, as well as Showalter, suggest that Bronte's novel is a representation of the patriarchal oppression its author faced: "Bronte describes the pain of women who are restricted to just [a] private realm" (Gilbert and Gubar 402). The portrayal of a monstrous female in conjunction with adherence to the Romantic concept of male ownership over creativity sets the stage for the "madwoman" trope. Male writers also use imagery of confinement to describe their feelings of oppression in society, but their imprisonment differs from the female. According to Gilbert and Gubar, "The distinction between male and female images of imprisonment is--and always has been--a distinction between, on the one hand, that is both metaphysical and metaphorical, and on the other hand, that which is social and actual" (86). In other words, male writers have more freedom to express themselves in the literary world regardless of any imprisonment, whereas female writers have social and literary confinement.

David Brown writes in his biography *Paradise Lost: A Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald* of the complex and mixed attitudes Fitzgerald held towards women. When looking into the letters between Fitzgerald and his lovers, we can see a "Fitzgerald canon" developing where "women are wreckers of men, taking their dignity, extracting their vitality, and dulling their work habits" (Brown 63). Indeed, Fitzgerald carried this theme into his novels. We can recognize this "Fitzgerald canon" in *Tender is the Night*, in which Dick's vitality is depleted from caring for his mentally ill wife. In a letter to an acquaintance of Fitzgerald, Mrs. Edwin Jarret, who was creating a stage adaptation of the novel, he scripted Dick as a *"homme épuisé"*: "[…]he is after all a sort of superman; an approximation of the hero seen in overcivilized terms," and "It is one of the points on which he must never show weakness" (DiBattista, 34). This "Fitzgerald canon," where women are wreckers of men, can be seen cross-textually in *The Great Gatsby* (between

Daisy and Gatsby), in *The Beautiful and Damned* (between Anthony and Gloria), as well as in several other works, but is most prominently depicted in *Tender is the Night.*

The novel features an omniscient third-person narrator who switches perspectives throughout the novel. Readers are transported through a series of flashbacks revealing how Dick met Nicole when she was a patient in a psychiatric facility. These flashbacks also demonstrate how Nicole's mental illness has intensified over time. When Nicole is released from the clinic and the letters stop, so does her dependency on Dick. Dick gains strength by trying to enable her, when she becomes empowered by her autonomy, she becomes a monster in his mind. His mistress, Rosemary, also gains independence by Nicole's influence; thus, at the end of the novel, both of his female lovers have become individualistic, while he is left unfulfilled, alone, and struggling for employment. Dick's dreams and internal thoughts influence the erasure of his female lovers' true identities and replace them as monsters; thus, Dick's unfaithful actions appear to be less egregious.

Fitzgerald's "superman" character, Dick Diver, is the golden hero of the story: "to be included in Dick Diver's world for a while was a remarkable experience" (28). However, from a feminist's perspective, Dick holds the same Byronic qualities as Bronte's Mr. Rochester: he's brutish, powerful, and arrogant, yet also intriguing and romantic. Byronic heroes are typically understood to be attractive precisely due to the dangerous thrill associated with loving them. Rosemary's initial opinion of Dick is that he is kind, charming, and nurturing, but she is unaware of his past: "He seemed kind and charming--his voice promised that he would take care of her, and that a little later he would open up whole new worlds for her, unroll an endless succession of magnificent possibilities" (Fitzgerald 18). Like Mr. Rochester, Dick's is depicted as mysterious

and dangerous to love. His outgoing personality makes him attractive to everyone around him and brings about excitement and intense emotions from friends.

Each character is scripted with a personality that emphasizes how the reader should feel about them. Diver's identity is characterized by a playful and intense richness of mystery. He is a good man, but sexually alluring, which can be intimidating. Both Nicole and Rosemary's identities are characterized by passivity, illness, and monstrosity. Fitzgerald paints Rosemary as passive and submissive: "she had the sense that Dick was taking care of her, and she delighted in responding to the eventual movement as if it had been an order" (21). Rosemary is only visiting the French Riviera for her role in *Daddy's Girl,* a film with a name that illustrates her place in Dick's life as a child. He can nurture her to conceal her innocence. It is clear that Rosemary's childishness is what Dick Diver desires precisely because he can control her: "Like most women she [Rosemary] liked to be told how she should feel, and she liked Dick's telling her which things were ludicrous and which things were sad" (Fitzgerald 58). This is strikingly similar to Rochester's feelings towards Jane, as when he tells her, "you [Jane] please me, and you master me--you seem to submit, and I like the sense of pliancy you impart" (Bronte 302). Rosemary's childlike innocence is also influenced by her immense love for her mother. The narrator emphasizes Rosemary's strong connection to her mother at the beginning of the story, which changes throughout her journey to maturation (13). Rosemary is like Jane Eyre in her passivity, "she knew few words and believed in none, and in the world she was rather silent, contributing just her share of urbane humor with a precision that approached meagerness" (Fitzgerald 26). David Brown comments on Rosemary's role by claiming that she is "doomed to repeat the thin list of sex-kitten roles that underlie her relevancy as a Hollywood pinup girl" rather than discover her independence throughout the story (258). When Rosemary first meets Dick and Nicole

Diver, “Her immature mind made no speculations upon the nature of their relation to each other, she was only concerned with their attitude toward herself…” (19), which suggests her youthfulness. Rosemary also often reminds Dick that she fell in love with him at first sight, also suggesting her passivity. In short, Rosemary seems at first to be patriarchy’s ideal woman—until Nicole influences her to be individualistic.

Fitzgerald characterizes Nicole as a “wrecker of men” and thereby reinforces the madwoman trope. She is independent, sexual, and alluring: “I am a woman and my business is to hold things together” (82) and “when Nicole takes things into her hands, there is nothing more to be done” (Fitzgerald 84). As such, she is a threat to Dick’s egotism because she has the power to see through him: “... Nicole saw that one of [Dick’s] most characteristic moods was upon him, that excitement that swept everyone up into it and was inevitably followed by his own form of melancholy” (27). Nicole initially was submissive to Dick when she was under psychiatric care; it is during her release that her independence began to change. Nicole’s transition to individualism threatens Dick’s desire for the control he felt when she was a patient. According to Brown, when Nicole and Dick get together, “Diver [Dick] nurses his most precious patient to health in exchange of strength for weakness; Nicole’s cure acutes from her ‘dry suckling at his lean chest’” (63). When Nicole begins distancing herself from her husband, he turns to Rosemary in search of submissiveness that he may nurture.

Rosemary’s portrait as a madwoman starts to emerge after she begins experiencing insomnia caused by dreams of sexual relations with Dick Diver. When she thinks of her mother and what her mother would say of her dreams, Rosemary’s childlike innocence is resurrected (38). The narrator mentions that this was the worst case of insomnia Rosemary has *ever* had, indicating that this kind of sexual anxiety has happened before. Within this dream, Rosemary is

"cloaked by the erotic darkness she exhausted the future quickly, with all the eventualities that might lead up to a kiss, but with the kiss itself as blurred as a kiss in pictures" (39). This is the initial suggestion that Rosemary is turning into the madwoman. Nicole's influence on Rosemary is the cause of this transformation. When Rosemary gives Dick a sexual proposition in chapter fifteen of Book I, "[s]he was astonished at herself--she had never imagined she could talk like that. She was calling on things she had read, seen, dreamed […] Suddenly she knew too that it was one of her greatest r[o]les and she flung herself into it more passionately" (64). Dick ensures her that due to her youth, there is so much to teach her—a response which exhibits his efforts to conceal her childlike stature. During the filming of *Daddy's Girl*, Dick sees Rosemary and thinks to himself: "There she was--the school girl of a year ago, hair down her back and rippling out stiffly like the solid hair of a tanaga figure; there she was--*so* young and innocent--the product of her mother's loving care" (69). It appears that once Dick's female love interest's begin to mature and display their sexuality, he begins to rework his image of them and interpret them as a metamorphosis into a madwoman. This is reinforced when he is no longer Nicole's doctor and cannot care for her in as a patient. Both Nicole and Rosemary's characters shadow each other in a way that threatens Dick Diver. Specifically, Nicole parallels Rosemary's submissive innocence with independence and exoticness.

Fitzgerald's *two* madwomen are strategically used to shadow each other. Gilbert and Gubar, and Elaine Showalter, argue that Bertha is Jane's dark parallel. Bertha's appearances in the novel come after Jane feels repressed. Gilbert and Gubar show how Jane's feelings of "hunger, rebellion, and rage" were accompanied by Bertha's "low, slow ha ha!" and "eccentric murmurs." When Jane showed more confident responses to Rochester's sexual propositions, Bertha responded by attempting to incinerate Rochester in his bed (Gilbert and Gubar 360). If

Bertha is Jane's *dark side*, Nicole can act as Rosemary's dark parallel. Nicole has a strong influence on Rosemary and when she is with her, she feels a sense of confinement. In the house in the Rue Monsieur, Rosemary feels that "The outer shell, the masonry, seemed rather to enclose the future so that it was an electric-like shock…" (Fitzgerald 71). This entrapped description reflects Gilbert and Gubar's definition of a madwoman. Feeling confined in her childlike manner, Rosemary becomes infatuated with Nicole so much that she wants to become Nicole. Rosemary desires Nicole's brazenness after watching her heated conversation with Dick about returning to the hotel room: "'I [Nicole] want you terribly--let's go to the hotel now.' Nicole gave a little gasping sigh. For a moment the words conveyed nothing at all to Rosemary--but the tone did. The vast secretiveness of it vibrated to herself" (54). In response, Rosemary "looked at Nicole in a new way, estimating her attractions. Certainly, she was the most attractive woman Rosemary had ever met--with her hardness, her devotions and loyalties, and a certain elusiveness…" (54) as if under a spell. She desires to be like Nicole and win over Dick's affection. When Dick asked Nicole if she loved him, Nicole's answer was "Oh, *do* I!" and leads to him wanting to fulfill his sexual desire with her. Rosemary plays the "*Oh do* I!" on repeat in her head, causing anxiety. This response triggered past love scenes she has seen in Hollywood and made her desire them (54). Nicole both intimidates and frightens Rosemary by her dark charismatic effect she has on Dick; she captures both Dick and Rosemary into her attractiveness as almost a spell (60). Nicole's supernatural beauty is like, "all the potentialities for romantic love in that lovely body and in the delicate mouth, sometimes tight, sometimes expectantly half open to the world" (67). Rosemary reaches a climactic transformation to where she is desperate to be more like Nicole when "her love had reached a point where now at last she was beginning to be unhappy, to be desperate" for Diver (56). Bronte uses this same sort of romantic

desperation when describing Jane's feelings towards Rochester, "I longed to be his; I panted to return… I could go back and be his comforter, his pride, his redeemer from misery, perhaps from ruin" (Bronte 373). Rosemary's transition into Nicole causes her to be monstrous to Dick. This rebellion draws upon erotic freedoms, as she becomes more expressive of her sexuality and Dick's disapproval arises with his inability to maintain her innocence. Like the way Rochester treats Jane, Dick avoids Rosemary's initial passes at him for sexual gratification, but when he kisses her, he holds her and says, "such a lovely child," and Rosemary's "youth vanishing as she passed inside the focus of his eyes and he had kissed her breathlessly as if she were any age at all" (63). Like Rochester to Jane, Dick rejects Rosemary in this scene for the sex she desires by only giving her a kiss in effort to maintain her innocence by placing her into an attic of his dreams.

The narrator uses words that are indicative of the gothic madwomen when describing Rosemary's erotic thoughts towards Dick: "she wanted for a moment to hold him and devour him, wanted his mouth, his ears, his coat collar, wanted to surround him and engulf him" (66). *Devour* and *engulf* suggest a supernatural desire for affection. But Dick's portrait of Rosemary becoming a monster begins when her affair on the train with another man causes him to feel a loss of control. When a friend tells Dick about Rosemary's affair, he mentions that the conductor came to check for their tickets and found a locked door with the blinds pulled down. Dick has a vision that the dialogue during the affair was:

> "--Do you mind if I pull down the curtain?"
>
> "--Please do. It's too light in here" (88).

This fragment of dialogue repeats in Dick's mind, suggesting that Rosemary haunts his dreams. He is trying to maintain her innocence by providing an alternative excuse for the drawn curtains.

This affair begins to haunt him with this alternative excuse running through his head. This anxiety begins Rosemary's transition into a madwoman. Dick cannot comprehend that she is having an affair with another man and losing her innocence. The repetition of "*do you mind if I pull down the curtain?"* demonstrates his instability caused by Rosemary's actions. He cannot comprehend that Rosemary is maturing; this erasure of her maturation is disregarding her developing character and by *locking* Rosemary into the *attic* of his dreams, like the way Rochester did to Bertha. Rosemary is the madwoman by causing Dick to enter a dream-like state where he attempts to vindicate her childlike stature. By imagining an alternative rationale for the suspected affair, he is confining her to a fragment of his imagination similar to the way Keats's character did with the bird in "Ode to a Nightingale." Dick also perceives Rosemary as someone who he is unable to define or comprehend his own actions towards like Keats's character after waking from a dream-like state. He feels he cannot control her anymore--Rosemary's affair causes Dick to "[feel] a change taking place within him. Only the image of a third person, even a vanished one, entering into his relation with Rosemary was needed to throw him off his balance and send through him waves of pain, misery, desire, desperation" (88). Hearing of Rosemary's affair disrupted Dick's ability to control his infatuation with her. His concern for his ego had thus far been able to disregard the influence she had on him.

The narrator uses Dick's ego and reputation to garner sympathy towards him over the madwomen. Dick's concern for his social image is described as: "Often a man can play the helpless child in front of a woman, but he can almost never bring it off when he feels most like a helpless child" (81). Dick is of aristocratic power in his work and social spectrums. Gossip of an affair would cause him conflict in his public realm; His reputation could be jeopardized at the

cost of a suspected affair. Rosemary's affair on the train caused Dick to disregard his ego and his desire to take control of her again.

Rosemary is a madwoman because Dick has lost his sense of control over her and fears her female sexuality. The narrator mentions how her affair gave Dick "the joyful conviction that Rosemary was 'human'" (89). The repetition of "*do you mind if I pull down the curtain*?" signifies Dick's anxiety towards Rosemary's sexual maturity. Rosemary's actions portray her as the problem that Brown mentioned in the Fitzgerald canon where "women are wreckers of men" (63). We can see this anxiety occur again when Nicole gets suspicions about his infatuation with Rosemary. Nicole tells Dick that Rosemary is very attractive, almost as if she hoped he would confess his feelings about her. Yet, instead, Dick rebuffs all attempts, insisting that Rosemary's childlike immaturity is her natural state. It is not until Nicole suggests that Rosemary must be very attractive to other men that Dick's mind triggers the "*do you mind if I pull down the curtain?*" vision again (167). This leads him to a desire to take control over her once more into an "eventual surrender" to Rosemary's "childish infatuation" (211-213). But the narrator coaxes readers to pardon Dick's affair with Rosemary because of the flashback revealing Nicole's intensifying illness.

Fitzgerald structures the narrative so that readers garner sympathy for Dick over both of the purported madwomen, with the narrator frequently intruding to provide a guiding perspective: "we are seldom sorry for those who need and crave our pity--we reserve this for those who, by other means, make us exercise the abstract function of pity" (92). Dick *is* aware of his own monstrosity, "he used to think that he wanted to be good, he wanted to be kind, he wanted to be brave and wise, but it was all pretty difficult. He wanted to be loved, too, if he could fit it in" (131). Still, he desires a passive woman, and they no longer fit his ideological

demands. A flashback detailing when Dick first met Nicole is shown before his final affair with Rosemary, presumably to justify his later actions. In this flashback, Dick meets Nicole when she is a patient of his coworker. Nicole's initial beauty is described as supernatural, like that of Keats's "la belle dame" or his nymph-like nightingale: "her face [lit] up like an angel's" (135); "the face of a saint, a viking Madonna, shone through the faint motes that snowed across the candlelight" (33). They began to exchange letters with one another, yet, only Nicole's letters are included in the narrative.—notably, the flirtatious early letter in which Nicole tempts and teases Dick into falling for her:

> Mon Capitaine:
>
> I thought when I saw you in your uniform you were so handsome. Then I thought Je m'en fiche French too and German. You thought I was pretty too but I've had that before and a long time I've stood it. If you come here again with that attitude base and criminal and not even faintly what I had been taught to associate with the rôle of gentleman then heaven help you. However you seem quieter than the others, all soft like a big cat. I have only gotten to like boys who are rather sissies. Are you a sissy? There were some somewhere…. (121)

Yet the alluring playfulness that characterizes the early letter fades from the later ones, which proceed with "darker rhythms" (123). And as Nicole's illness intensifies, she sends him fewer and fewer letters. After taking a month off from sending him any letters at all, she breaks the pattern with an unexpected missive in which she declares, " […] I am slowly coming back to life. […] I wish someone were in love with me like boys were ages ago before I was sick" (124). This announcement rekindles Dick's attraction towards Nicole, but he believes that he loves her

only because he feels that he can no longer control her, thereby repeating the same reaction he had when Rosemary had her affair.

As becomes clear, whenever Dick feels he cannot maintain a woman, he needs to find a way to take control over them. We see this as he paints both Rosemary and Nicole as madwomen because he cannot maintain their submissiveness. The flashback to his meeting with Nicole reveals the "dissatisfaction" he felt at the defeat of the attempted affair. Dick dreams of Nicole as a patient, "walking on the clinic path swinging her wide straw hat." His dreams of desiring Nicole *only* how he remembers her as a patient show his fear of female independence and sexuality. When he meets Nicole again on a trip, the narrative emphasizes

> The delight in [her] face--to be a feather again instead of a plummet, to float and not to drag. She was a carnival to watch--at times primly coy, posing, grimacing and gesturing--sometimes the shadow fell and the dignity of old suffering flowed down into her finger tips. Dick wished himself away from her, fearing that he was a reminder of a world well left behind. (149)

Dick still desires her and reinforces that Nicole will always be a patient when he tells her sister that Nicole is a "schizoid" and "permanent eccentric" (151). He can reciprocate the affection he was able to give when she was a patient. He holds onto her innocence by always thinking of her as a mental patient. It is when her illness worsens in the present-day portions of the novel and Nicole does not desire Dick's help that he feels a loss of control. Nicole blames her illness getting worse *because* of Dick. When Nicole has dreams of an affair with another man, she "had a sense of being cured in a new way" (289).

Brown's argument about Fitzgerald's women is again reinforced when Nicole's illness spirals downward: "His [Dick's] work became confused with Nicole's problems… life was being

refined down to a point" (170-171). Nicole Is the "wrecker" of Dick's life and causing disruption in his work because he must take care of her and their kin. The children are another means to garner sympathy towards Dick over the madwoman. The narrator describes how Dick's interest for his children grew with age. Nicole's illness had distanced herself from her children and Dick "came to know them much better than Nicole did" (257); and "she had come out of her first illness alive with new hopes… bringing up children she could only pretend gently to love, guided orphans" (180). The narrator is portraying Dick as the better parent not even at the cost of Nicole's illness. This is especially true after her mental breakdown caused her to fling her car off the road with her husband and children inside. The narrator's depictions of Nicole suggests that even while she is in her cured state, she is not a good mother towards her children. Nicole's lack of maternal care encourages readers to privilege Dick over both sick Nicole and well Nicole.

Indeed, Dick is the hero when Nicole has her psychotic episodes. In the scene of the car crash, Nicole was laughing "hilariously, unashamed, unafraid, [and] unconcerned" (192). When the terror was over Nicole mocked Dick's fear and will to live. This is like the madwoman *breakout* as Bertha when she sets fire to Thornfield and burns herself with the mansion. The difference between Rochester and Dick with these madwomen outbursts is that Bertha commits suicide and Nicole has a new love. Sympathy is not evoked onto Rochester because Bertha's suicide was due to his actions of locking her up. But, because Nicole's illness is her own reason for almost killing herself, Dick, and the children, it is encouraged that Dick is the hero of the story. Dick's thoughts of Nicole demonstrate how her illness tired him and remembering how "often he felt lonely with her, and frequently she tired him with the short floods of personal revelations that she reserved exclusively for him…" (187). Nicole is the madwoman because she cannot give him the love he desires. The narrator is coaxing readers to pity Dick by arguing that

he had no other choice but to seek his personal pleasures elsewhere because Nicole is ill. Nicole's erotic sexuality expresses itself when she begins to have dreams of being with her friend, Tommy: "she was somewhat shocked at the idea of her interest in another man--but other women have lovers--why not me?" (277) and "Nicole did not want any vague spiritual romance--she wanted an 'affair'"(291) like the way Dick first encountered Rosemary. The narrator suggests the difference between Nicole's dreams of infidelity and Dick's are how she created the idea at her own will; while her illness drove Dick to seek pleasure elsewhere due to her illness.

The way the other charcters in the novel view Nicole's illness is significant to the way Dick does. One of the wives of the Diver's friends, Kaethe, believes that Nicole is using her illness for attention. Kaethe is a small character throughout the novel of which both Divers are not too fond of. When Kaethe says, "she [Nicole] only cherishes her illness as an instrument of power," (239) we are left questioning the validity of this statement. Nicole is aware of the severity of her illness, so using it to have control over Dick is a possibility, but it is also possible that Kaethe is saying this to promote readers to sympathize with Dick. His morality of trying to help Nicole by paying for her treatment is another justification to forgive his affair. Dick uses his morality as a method to pardon his infidelity as well when he says, "' … if you spend your life sparing people's feelings and feeding their vanity, you get so you can't distinguish what *should* be respected in them'" (178). He says this when having a conversation with Baby Warren about Nicole. He is implying that she should respect him because of all he does for Nicole.

Nicole clearly emerges as the madwoman figure who disrupts both Dick and Rosemary. Her brazen independence and ability to get Dick's attention influence Rosemary. When Rosemary begins her transition into Nicole, Dick tries to hold onto her youth and innocence. But Nicole causes a disruption in both Dick and Rosemary's lives when we see Nicole's first

psychotic episode when she falls in the bathroom and cries in hysterics that Dick only wanted her for something other than love. Dick holds her down and yells "Control yourself, Nicole!" (112) and it frightens Rosemary. This supports Brown's theory of there being a Fitzgerald canon where women are wreckers of men. The narrator illustrates how Dick did love Nicole and tried to *save* her. The narrator mentions before Dick's final affair with Rosemary that, "[c]ertain thoughts about Nicole, that she should die, sink into mental darkness, love another man, made him physically sick" (217); and when Nicole asked what Dick gets out of providing for her, he says, "[k]nowing you're stronger every day. Knowing that your illness follows the law of diminishing returns" (267). Nicole is aware of her illness and believes that she has ruined Dick with it. Dick erases her newfound independence during the present day by placing her into a dreamlike state from the flashbacks of when they first met. He locks her personality in that vision and when she does not conform to that vision any longer is when she becomes a monster. Nicole is the madwoman because of the effect she has on Dick causing him disruption of his daily life. The narrator mentions how Dick had lost himself to Nicole when he remembers loving Nicole for her best self:

> … once when the grass was damp and she came to him on hurried feer, her thin slippers drenched with dew. She stood upon his shoes nestling close and held up her face, showing it as a book open at a page. 'Think of how you love me,' she whispered. 'I don't ask you to always love me always like this, but I ask you to remember. Somewhere inside me there'll always be the person I am to-night.' (201)

This novel is a tragedy because not only did Dick lose himself to Nicole, but he lost Nicole as well. He lost her to her illness and to another man at the end. She is the ultimate madwoman by

leaving him alone and unloved, but she gains her full independence away from Dick and gets her happy ending:

> … she [Nicole] had a sense of being cured and in a new way. Her ego began blooming like a great rich rose as she scrambled back along the labyrinths in which she had wandered for years. She hated the beach, resented the places where she had played planet to Dick's sun… 'Why I'm almost complete,' she thought. 'I'm practically standing alone, without [Dick].' And like a happy child… she got home and wrote Tommy Barban in Nice a short provocative letter. (289)

Considering this, the narrator influences readers to sympathize with Dick because Nicole is aware that she "ruined" him and left him for someone else (267). Nicole's treatment suggests the need to be away from Dick's controlling personality. Dick's love for Nicole and his infatuation with Rosemary present themselves in a paradox that coaxes empathy on him. They are both mad women because they leave him unfulfilled of his expectations (302). The narrator often reminds readers throughout the story of Dick's pain and suffering caused by Nicole and Rosemary through short anecdotes: "Sometimes it is harder to deprive oneself of a pain than of a pleasure and the memory so possessed him that for the moment there was nothing to do but pretend" (168). The narrator also convicts Nicole of causing Dick's pain: "She led a lonely life owning Dick who did not want to be owned" (180) due to her reliance on him for support of her illness. The narrator uses her newfound independence to justify Dick's actions: "Often people display a curious respect for a man drunk, rather like the respect of simple faces for the insane. Respect rather than fear. There is something awe-inspiring in one who has lost all inhibitions, who will do anything" (108). The narrator is indicating that Nicole had respect when she was a patient and needed nurturing to vindicate Dick's lack of respect towards her when she is well.

Nicole's illness is capricious and Dick's awareness of that plays a role in encouraging further sympathy towards him. After Nicole's "collapse" in Paris, Dick felt the need to make a distinction between Nicole's sick and well personalities. In doing so, he found it difficult to detach his professional care for her versus a newfound "coldness in his heart." Dick claims that he has learned to become empty of Nicole while he was "serving her with negations and emotional neglect" (168). His implications of *serving* Nicole make her appear as a monstrous tyrant figure that he obligates to care for. Following this statement, the narrator gives an anecdote to describe Dick's pain to garner sympathy towards him…

> "One writes of scars healed, a loose parallel to the pathology of the skin, but there is no such thing in the life of an individual. There are open wounds, shrunk sometimes to the size of a pin-prick but wounds still. The marks of suffering are more comparable to the loss of a finger, or of the sight of an eye. We may not miss them, either, for one minute in a year, but if we should there is nothing to be done about it" (169).

This implies Dick is suffering at the expense of Nicole because she is well. She is distancing herself from Dick and finding individuality while he is stuck in obligation to handle her treatment. His work becomes disrupted by Nicole's problems, forcing him to change his personality to one that is more domestic for her treatment (170). Dick feels that his life is "being refined" down (171). Readers are encouraged to garner solicitude towards Dick because of Nicole's illness.

The end of the novel shows Nicole prospering with independence that brings Dick to his downfall. Before the Divers' separation, the last few years of their relationship was of "sheer being" and had an "enlivening effect on the parts of [Nicole's] nature that early illness had killed" (280). Nicole is thriving and prospering on her own and it had nothing to do with Dick.

The narrator mentions how this was not Dick's fault but it disquiets him. Her independence is a threat to him because he could end up alone. Nicole did not have any anxiety towards a potential separation from Dick. The narrator describes her as "[being] designed for change, for flight, with money as fins and wings… Nicole could feel the fresh breeze already" (280), coaxing readers to sympathize with Dick over Nicole because of how well she is doing. Nicole and Tommy fall in love after Dick has his final affair with Rosemary. They run off together and Dick returns to America to find a new practice somewhere in New York. The narrator's construction of Nicole and Rosemary as madwomen aims to encourage sympathy with Dick. Dick is unsure of where to go next and unfulfilled of his intimate desires.

Tiffany Joseph offers a counterargument which suggests Fitzgerald's novel as a critique to patriarchy in her essay, "Non-Combat Shell-Shock: Trauma and Gender in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*." Nicole's trauma offers ways to gender victimization. Joseph views Nicole's growing independence as rising above patriarchal violence. Nicole's early letters to Dick as a psychiatric patient reveal that her father molested her as a child. She argues that the novel is a representation of power within patriarchal violence and uses Dick's masculinity of his work during the war as a supporting factor. Joseph views Nicole's love affair with Tommy as being the revelation she needed to be free from patriarchal power separating the gender spheres: She writes how, "When [Nicole] becomes Tommy's lover, Fitzgerald [wrote] '[f]or the first time in ten years she was under the sway of a personality other than her husband's' (293)." The men in Nicole's life take advantage of her trust to nurture her. Tommy is finally the man who sees her as more than a mental patient. But while Joseph presents a strong speculation, she neglects to acknowledge how any readerly sympathy attached to Dick comes only at Nicole's expense (Joseph 244).

The narrator coaxes the story so readers feel sympathy for Dick Diver, a monster who is disloyal to his wife, instead of the ill Nicole, who is characterized as a madwoman. When Dick Diver ends the story alone, unfulfilled, struggling in his practice, and settling down somewhere in New York as an alcoholic, Nicole falls in love with another man named Tommy, and they run off together. Rosemary has dropped out of the story entirely, vanishing from Dick's life as quickly as she entered it.

Fitzgerald portrays two literary madwomen to garner sympathy towards the unfaithful male character in this novel. By analyzing this narrative move using the madwoman trope articulated in feminist scholarship, we see how Nicole and Rosemary function as the Bertha Masons of *Tender is the Night*. Nicole is a madwoman because of the monstrosity she aroused within Dick. Like the male figures in Gothic and Romantic-era texts such as Keats' "La belle dame sans merci" or "Ode to a Nightingale," Dick Diver is a man who becomes so entranced by an alluring female fatale-figure that he is left wasted, alone, and unfulfilled when she inevitably leaves. Dick is only the hero of the story at the expense of Nicole's suffering.

The figure of the "madwoman" and the host of issues associated with her highlights issues of intersectionality regarding sexuality, gender roles, and mental illness that translate into our present-day reality. This semi-autobiographical novel is suggested to be a representation of Fitzgerald's life with his institutionalized wife, Zelda. Issues regarding sexuality and gender are complimented by the threat the female sex holds over masculinity. The "madwoman" exemplifies man's fear of having loss of control within himself.

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