

The representations of mental illness as abnormality in F. Scott Fitzgerald's

Tender Is the Night* and Jeffrey Eugenides' *The Marriage Plot

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<p>Pro gradu-tutkielmassani analysoin kahden eri mielenterveyden häiriön representaatiota poikkeavuutena yhdysvaltalaisissa romaaneissa <i>Tender Is the Night</i> (F. Scott Fitzgerald) ja <i>The Marriage Plot</i> (Jeffrey Eugenides). Tarkastelen sitä, kuinka skitsofrenia ja kaksisuuntainen mielialahäiriö kuvataan Nicole Diverin ja Leonard Bankheadin henkilöhaahmojen kautta, ja analysoin ovatko nämä tulkinnat realistisia vai rakentuvatko ne stereotyyppien varaan. Analyysi ja terminologia pohjautuvat vammaistutkimuksen, sukupuolentutkimuksen sekä jälkistrukturalismin teorioihin, joita käytän tekstikeskeisen tulkinnan rinnalla.</p> <p>Tutkielmani osoittaa, että kummankin kirjailijan lähtökohtana mielenterveyden häiriöstä kärsivän hahmon esittämisessä on lääketieteellinen malli. Tässä mallissa psykiatrisen hoidon tavoitteena on potilaan parantuminen fyysisestä sairaudesta. Kumpatkin teokset myös kuvaavat sitä, kuinka mielenterveyden häiriön määritelmä on aikaan sidottu sosiaalinen konstruktio, johon vaikuttavat syrjintä ja sosiaaliset normit. Väitän tutkielmassani, että Fitzgeraldin luonnehdinta skitsofreniasta on osin epärealistinen ja kärsii skitsofreenikon oman näkökulman puutteesta. Tämä on osittain seurausta hahmon alistetusta asemasta naisena patriarkalisessa yhteiskunnassa. Eugenideksen luonnehdinta kaksisuuntaisesta mielialahäiriöstä on moniulotteisempi, mutta kärsii myös ylikorostetuista stereotyyppioista. Kumpaakin teosta yhdistää niiden kriittinen ääni psykiatrian kaupallisuutta ja valtaa, sekä diagnostisoivaa lääketieteellistä katsetta (<i>the medical gaze</i>) vastaan, vaikkakin Fitzgerald kuvaa aikaa, jolloin farmakologia ei ollut vielä mullistanut psykiatrista hoitoa.</p> <p>Fitzgerald kuvaa skitsofreniasta parantumisen symbolisesti emansipaationa naisen alistetusta asemasta, kun taas Eugenides rakentaa mieshahmolleen samanaikaisesti traagisen ja sankarillisen kohtalon. Analyysini loppupäätelmä on, että näiden todellisten mielenterveyden häiriöiden representaatiot kyseisessä kirjallisuudessa voivat osaltaan vaikuttaa lukijan mielipiteisiin ja uskomuksiin skitsofreniasta ja kaksisuuntaisesta mielialahäiriöstä. Tästä syystä ei ole yhdentekevää millaisen kuvan kirjailijat luovat näistä sairauksista, joita he käyttävät jännitteen luomiseen normaalin ja poikkeavan välillä. Poikkeaminen mielenterveyden normista kuvataan osittain myös vahvuutena tai rikkautena, mikä tasapainottaa pääosin traagista kuvaa henkilöhaahmoista ja mielenterveyden häiriöistä.</p>		
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1 Introduction

1.1 Aims and methods

The aim of this thesis is to examine the literary representations of mental illness in two works of contemporary American fiction in relation to social and medical frameworks. What drew me to this topic is an interest in disability studies as well as in representations of abnormality in literature. F. Scott Fitzgerald's semi-autobiographical novel *Tender Is the Night* centres on the main protagonist Dick Diver and his wife Nicole Warren, a schizophrenic who is treated by her husband during intermittent breakdowns. The novel is thought to depict Fitzgerald's wife Zelda's struggle with schizophrenia as well as her frequent institutionalisation and is the most autobiographical of his novels (Stavola 145). Similarly, Dick Diver supposedly represents Fitzgerald himself and Dick's characterisation as a psychiatrist is also examined to shed light on beliefs about psychiatry and mental illness in the early 20th century.

In *The Marriage Plot* Jeffrey Eugenides depicts an experience of living with manic depression (now known as bipolar disorder) in 1980s America through the character of Leonard Bankhead, a biologist struggling with his diagnosis and relationship to his partner Madeleine. The novel is narrated by an omniscient narrator from the perspective of both Madeleine and Leonard as well as another central character Mitchell Grammaticus, who is in love with Madeleine. As William Deresiewicz points out, *The Marriage Plot* contains autobiographical elements as these three characters leave Brown University in 1982, "the year before Eugenides did".

In analysing and comparing these two characters suffering from a mental disorder, Nicole and Leonard, I determine to what extent the authors rely on the medical model, as opposed to the social model, in their characterisation of mental illness. There is thus a focus on the recurrent idea of mental illness needing to be cured and the types of possible cures being presented in the novels. I also examine to what extent mental illness is used as a *narrative prosthesis* – a crutch that the narratives rely on for impact and symbolism (Mitchell 15). Both Fitzgerald and Eugenides depict their own interpretation of a mind suffering from mental illness and shoulder the responsibility to represent such a stigmatising construct in a reasonably balanced and realistic manner.

I also examine how Nicole and Leonard at times forfeit control of their own lives, whilst wielding power through their illness and gender in other situations. Throughout the analysis, particular attention is paid to the use of language as a symbol for the subconscious

and the unstable mind. I have intentionally chosen two works of fiction by two well-known authors due to the fact that these authors' portrayals of mental illness are widely read and interpreted, and thus may influence the reader's understanding of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder in an indirect way. The two novels, set in the early 20th century and late 20th century, respectively, reflect vastly different time periods in psychiatry and it is important to examine how they reflect attitudes and practices towards mental illness in these periods.

Close reading of the novels is the central method used for my analysis, which also relies heavily on a variety of academic texts on mental illness and literary criticism. The range of secondary sources employed highlights the complexity of researching and discussing mental illness, which can be approached from both a purely biological point of view and from a socio-cultural point of view. The latter takes into account factors such as social stigma and social norms. Throughout my analysis, I concentrate on the implications on plot and character development in how schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are portrayed, and whether such depiction in some way perpetuates stereotypes of the mentally ill. I also analyse what literary effects focalisation and shifts in narrative perspective have on these two depictions of mental illness. In particular, I examine various ways in which Nicole and Leonard are depicted as abnormal in relation to other characters. My final analytical chapter focuses on the role that gender plays in Nicole and Leonard's experiences of mental illness and in their treatment.

1.2 On the novels and autobiographical elements

F. Scott Fitzgerald is one of the most well-known 20th century writers and, according to Thomas J. Stavola, "wrote almost exclusively about his own divided nature" and the crisis in the American cultural identity of the early 20th century (11). *Tender Is the Night* was first published in 1934 and did not initially receive the popular and critical success that Fitzgerald had hoped it would, with many doubting the "credibility of Fitzgerald's group of self-indulgent expatriates ... and the author's frequent and confusing shifts in point of view" (Stavola 145). For example, Fitzgerald's close friend Ernest Hemingway "had major reservations with the subject matter and artistry", according to Stavola (145). The revised 1953 edition used for my analysis has been edited into chronological order based on Fitzgerald's instructions to the editor. Despite negative reviews, Fitzgerald considered it his greatest novel and, according to his editor Malcolm Cowley, spent many years modifying it "to make it the best American novel of his time" (*Tender* ix).

In 1960 twenty years after Fitzgerald's death, Jeffrey Eugenides was born in Detroit (Gibbons) and is today best known for his Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Middlesex* (2002). Much like Fitzgerald, Eugenides also depicts the evolution of the American identity in his novels, which explore "the new, weird America of the eighties and nineties" (Hughes). *The Marriage Plot*, published in 2011, is his third novel and "looks back at his college years at Brown in the eighties" (Gibbons).

It is worth noting that there have been many misconceptions and rumours surrounding the subject matter of both *The Marriage Plot* and *Tender Is the Night*, which perhaps highlight the sensitivity of the social realities that any representation of mental illness attempts to address. In *Tender Is the Night* the parallels with Fitzgerald's own life are undeniable and in the introduction to the revised edition, the editor Malcolm Cowley confirms that "nine years of [Fitzgerald's] life had gone into the writing and into the story itself", including "his wife's illness and everything he learned from the Swiss and American doctors who diagnosed her case" (4). It is important to note that Zelda Fitzgerald also wrote about her experience with schizophrenia in her semi-autobiographical novel *Save Me The Waltz* (1932), two years before the first edition of *Tender Is The Night* was released, thus infuriating her husband by competing with his forthcoming novel. According to Stavola, the official diagnosis given to Zelda was "a schizophrenic whose chance for full recovery was one in four" (62). Due to the severity of this form of schizophrenia Zelda "spent the last eighteen years of her life in and out of various institutions" (Stavola 63). As Stavola points out, the "emotional breakdown" that Scott Fitzgerald suffered between 1934 and 1935, diagnosed as "psychoneurotic depression", is perhaps less discussed in biographies (66) but is important to consider when analysing *Tender Is the Night*.

The Marriage Plot was also met with speculation as regards the inspiration for the character of Leonard, as some critics saw strong parallels between him and the late author David Foster Wallace, a friend of Eugenides': "bandanna, chewing tobacco, expertise in philosophy, struggle with mental illness" (Hughes). This connection has been denied by Eugenides who, according to Hughes, "insists the resemblance to Wallace is unintentional". Nonetheless, autobiographical elements can also be found in *The Marriage Plot* and many critics believe that the character of Mitchell Grammaticus represents Eugenides himself. The critical response to *The Marriage Plot* was mixed and William Deresiewicz, for example, describes the novel as "daylight realism, like 'Middlesex', but far more intimate in tone and scale". Another critic, Ron Charles, found the structure of the novel "erratic" but nonetheless felt that Eugenides is "frighteningly perceptive about the challenges of mental illness".

1.3 Theoretical background

In order to gain a clear understanding of the medical definitions and symptoms of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder as well as how they are currently diagnosed in the United States, I have consulted *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5* (2013). I have also consulted autobiographical texts written by sufferers of these mental illnesses so as to get a more rounded insight into representations of mental illness. Kay Redfield Jamison's autobiographical text *An Unquiet Mind* (1995) is useful due to her having experienced bipolar disorder both through contact with patients as a clinical psychologist and Professor of Psychiatry and as a patient herself. Zelda Fitzgerald's semi-autobiographical novel *Save Me The Waltz* (1932) is used for comparison with *Tender Is the Night*, but my primary focus is nonetheless on her husband's depiction of schizophrenia. *Men, Women and Madness – Understanding Gender and Mental Disorder* (1996) by Joan Busfield is used to support my analysis of how gendered constructs are interconnected with the experience of mental illness and its treatment. Busfield analyses feminist theory on mental illness and explores the connection between madness, gender and power: "The linkages between men, masculinity, agency and rationality and women, femininity, passivity and irrationality are themselves interconnected with the issues of power" (235).

Power/Knowledge (1980) and *Abnormal – Lectures at the Collège de France 1974–1975* (2003) both review well-known theories by Michel Foucault and are central to my research, alongside other works by Foucault. Foucault's views on the relationship between mental illness and clinical power provide an apt parallel to the social dimensions of Nicole and Leonard's experiences. Foucault argues that the concept of the norm is "an element on the basis of which a certain exercise of power is founded and legitimized" (*Abnormal* 50) and is also applicable to psychiatric practices. *Black Sun – Depression and Melancholia* (1989) by Julia Kristeva provides useful psychoanalytical theory for analysing language and symbolism in the novels. Poststructuralist theory is thus integral in my analysis of the novels.

"Defining Mental Disability" (2013) by Margaret Price examines the place of mental illness in the disability studies field, which provides useful terminology for analysing literary representations of mental illness. David T. Mitchell's article "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor" (2005) also defines terminology from the disability studies field that I use when analysing the novels. In particular, the concept of *narrative prosthesis* developed by Mitchell and Susan Snyder describes how a disabled character may be used as an "opportunistic metaphoric device" in literature (*Narrative* 15). *Madness in Literature*

(1980) by Lillian Feder offers an analysis of literary representations of madness throughout the history of literature. Feder's insightful analysis is used to illuminate the literary construction of madness in the novels that I analyse. *Madness* (2002) by Roy Porter provides a concise history of psychiatric practices and evolving attitudes to madness, and is used to contextualise the novels.

For a deeper insight into the autobiographical elements in *Tender Is the Night*, I have consulted *Scott Fitzgerald: Crisis in an American Identity* (1979) by Thomas J. Stavola. *F. Scott Fitzgerald – A Collection of Critical Essays* (1963), edited by Arthur Mizener, contains many valuable critical essays on *Tender Is the Night*. For a contemporary author like Eugenides, secondary material is largely available online in written and spoken interviews. For instance, the interview transcript from a radio interview with *NPR Radio* (2011) sheds light on Eugenides' creative process and thoughts on mental illness.

1.3.1 Defining the medical model of mental illness

In his online article *The Medical Model* Saul McLeod argues that a medical or biological model of mental illness holds that there is a physical cause to a mental disorder and its symptoms, and has been adopted by psychiatrists rather than psychologists. As regards schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, McLeod classifies these physical causes as genetic, biochemical and neuroanatomical, with the addition of hormonal factors in bipolar disorder. Eli Clare criticises this medical model in relation to disability: "To frame disability in terms of a cure is to accept the medical model of disability, to think of disabled people as sick, diseased, ill people" (qtd. in Davis 162). This model of disability can also be extended to mental illness, which is often represented in literature and society as a disease that needs to be cured. While physical factors must of course be taken into account, a narrow focus on biological causes may ignore social causes for mental illness, which cannot be traced to a biological or genetic origin. Social norms and discrimination can also be seen as harmful for a person with a mental illness. In representations of mental illness in literature, I believe that authors can be seen as taking a stance in the way that they frame and label mental illness, whether a character is clearly diagnosed and thus categorised or whether it is suggested that medical or psychiatric treatment is a cure for a particular mental illness.

Roy Porter claims that the medicalisation of mental illness is very much tied to the history of psychiatry and the introduction of mood-influencing drugs to manage manic

depression in 1949 (205). Porter believes that psychotropic drugs have reduced the institutionalisation of mental patients by allowing treatment on an outpatient basis (207). However, he argues that their use also raises many concerns, including side effects and dependency, while "organic psychiatry is arguably in danger of becoming drug-driven" (207). Porter claims that "major ethical and political questions hang over recourse to pharmaceutical products to reshape personalities, especially when the development, manufacture, and marketing of such drugs lie in the hands of monopolistic multinationals" (207). The anti-psychiatry movement of the 1960s and 1970s was even more radical in its criticism of the medical model of perceiving mental illness: "mental illness was not an objective behavioural or biochemical reality but either a negative label or a strategy for coping in a mad world" (Porter 209). Medication has undoubtedly improved the lives of many people living with mental disorders, who are able to function in society and outside institutions with their help. However, it is worth remembering that there has been serious mistreatment of the mentally ill throughout history, while the number of new psychiatric disorders has continued to increase. Taking these issues into consideration, the aim of this thesis is to examine the type of stances that Eugenides and Fitzgerald take towards psychiatry and treating mental illness.

1.3.2 Medical definitions of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder

For the following medical definitions of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, I have utilised the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5* (2013), "a standard reference for clinical practice in the mental health field" (xli). It is worth noting that the American Psychiatric Association recognises that "mental disorders do not always fit completely within the boundaries of a single disorder" (xli) and that "the boundaries between normality and pathology vary across cultures for specific types of behaviors" (14). Both schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are chronic mental disorders that can be managed with a combination of medication and psychotherapy.

Schizophrenia is classified as belonging to the schizophrenia spectrum, which also includes *other psychotic disorders* and *schizotypal (personality) disorder* (87). These disorders are "defined by abnormalities in one or more of the following five domains: delusions, hallucinations, disorganized thinking (speech), grossly disorganized or abnormal motor behavior (including catatonia), and negative symptoms" (87). *Schizophrenia* "lasts for at least 6 months and includes at least 1 month of active-phase symptoms" (89).

Bipolar and related disorders include the following diagnoses: "*bipolar I disorder, bipolar II disorder, cyclothymic disorder, substance/medication-induced bipolar and related disorder, bipolar and related disorder due to another medical condition, other specified bipolar and related disorder, and unspecified bipolar and related disorder*" (123). Most relevant to this thesis is the *bipolar I disorder* criteria, which represents the "modern understanding of the classic manic-depressive disorder ... described in the nineteenth century, differing from that classic description only to the extent that neither psychosis nor the lifetime experience of a major depressive episode is a requirement" (123). The diagnosis of *bipolar I disorder* requires "at least one lifetime manic episode" and hypomanic episodes are common but not required for its diagnosis (124–125). Major depressive episodes are also common in bipolar I disorder but not required for its diagnosis (125). In *The Marriage Plot* bipolar disorder is known by its earlier name, manic depression, but I will henceforth use the term *bipolar disorder* when referring to Leonard's illness.

I also use the term *transference* when analysing the therapeutic relationships that Nicole and Leonard have with their psychiatrists and psychologists. In Leonard's case, the term is also used to examine his relationship to Madeleine. *The Encyclopedia of Mental Health* defines the typical transference relationship as one in which "the patient directs towards the analyst an unusual degree of attachment and affection that is not a realistic response to the relationship between them but can only be traced to wishful fantasies and idealizations that have remained unconscious" (305). This can be further divided into *positive transference* and *negative transference*. *Positive transference* is expressed by feelings "of love and its many variations" towards the analyst (305), whereas *negative transference* "refers to equally intense bad feelings towards the analyst – including hate, anger, hostility, mistrust" (306).

2 Mental illness as represented in the novels

2.1 Placing the novels in a medical context

The depictions of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder in *Tender Is the Night* and *The Marriage Plot* are largely set in a medical context, which highlights the role of psychiatry in both diagnosing and treating mental disorders at the time when they were written. Fitzgerald and Eugenides have both chosen to clearly identify the illnesses that Nicole and Leonard suffer from: schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. The reader is thus already exposed to their own preconceived notions of these illnesses and may make assumptions about the characters based on common beliefs about schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. This is of course the case with any character traits in literature, but in relation to mental disorders a medical diagnosis is in itself a subjective category and represents a cultural distinction between sanity and insanity. Margaret Price argues that some members of the mentally ill community feel that

when psychiatry assigns a diagnosis of 'mental illness' to a person, that person is marked as permanently damaged, and as one whose rights may be taken away – unless, of course, she complies with psychiatry's requirements for 'care', which may include medication, incarceration, or electroshock. (301)

This type of marking of mental illness is in fact evident from early on in both novels, as the characters are given a diagnostic label. In Nicole's case, her diagnosis is first established in French on her patient card: "Schizophrénie" (18). Her diagnosis is then translated to: "Divided Personality. Acute and down-hill phase of the illness ... The prognosis must be reserved" (18). Dick later describes Nicole's diagnosis in less scientific terms to her sister Baby Warren: "She's a schizoid – a permanent eccentric. You can't change that" (44).

In *The Marriage Plot* Leonard's diagnosis is revealed to the reader after his behaviour becomes erratic and his girlfriend Madeleine finds out about his hospitalisation: "She was desperately in love with a boy who'd been hospitalized, twice, for manic depression" (166). Leonard initially chooses not to reveal his diagnosis to Madeleine, suggesting that he is aware of the stigma attached to it. He also later hides his diagnosis from his colleagues as he is fearful of discrimination: "He knew from experience that when people found out he'd been hospitalized and, especially, that he was taking a drug twice a day to stabilize his mood, they treated him differently" (181). The reader is informed of Nicole and Leonard's medical diagnoses from early on in the narratives and they act as crucial factors in their subsequent characterisation. In Nicole's case, the word "permanent" (44) highlights the fact that she has

been marked for life by her illness. Eugenides also repeatedly stresses the fact that bipolar disorder is a chronic illness: "he suffered from something that would never go away, something that could only be 'managed'" (247). These diagnoses are also crucial in understanding later plot developments, such as psychotic episodes, as well as in comprehending the authors' views of the idea of a cure.

It is also important to examine the physical settings of the novels, which add a distinct medical framework to the narratives and allow the authors to comment on psychiatric treatment. In *Tender Is the Night*, set in the period between 1917 and 1930, Nicole receives treatment for schizophrenia from doctors and psychiatrists while staying at a sanatorium in Zurich and later at her husband's clinic in the Riviera. Perhaps the most striking indicator of the narrative being set in a medical context is the title for the first chapter of the novel: "Book 1 – Case History 1917–1919". This "case history" refers to Nicole's admittance to the sanatorium at the age of sixteen and establishes the doctor-patient relationship between Dick and Nicole from the very beginning of the novel. She is intermittently treated for relapses by Dick, who is also undertaking various case studies of mental illnesses to use for his research and publications: "Volume II was to be a great amplification of his first little book, *A Psychology for Psychiatrists*" (177). A large part of the novel is set in psychiatric clinics and sanatoriums, or is otherwise set in a medical context due to Dick's ongoing role of acting as Nicole's doctor and caretaker. As Stavola points out, many critics have questioned the characterisation and believability of Dick Diver as a psychiatrist (146) and it is indeed questionable if in reality a psychiatrist would marry his schizophrenic patient so readily. Although Dick initially tries to resist Nicole's beauty and youth, it is highly unethical of him even to consider a romantic attachment to a sixteen-year-old patient, who clearly looks up to him as an authority figure. Nicole's inappropriate feelings towards Dick become apparent in her first letters to him from the sanatorium: "Mon Capitaine: I thought when I saw you in your uniform you were so handsome" (10). Although *Tender Is the Night* is semi-autobiographical, these kinds of fictional construct highlight the fact that Fitzgerald was not entirely realistic in his characterisation of a psychiatrist.

The Marriage Plot, on the other hand, depicts the modern-day equivalent of the asylum: "they sent him to Providence Hospital, where he was now in the psychiatric ward, receiving treatment" (110). A parallel can be seen between the two novels in the fact that both Leonard and Nicole are intermittently placed in some type of institutional facility. Although both characters are American, they both spend time in European hospitals or clinics: Leonard in Monte Carlo after a manic episode during his honeymoon, Nicole in Zurich and the

Riviera. Unlike Leonard, Nicole does not undergo treatment in the United States but follows Dick around Europe due to his professional commitments. In her letters to Dick, Nicole suggests that conditions at the clinic in Zurich are close to an insane asylum: "Here I am in what appears to be a semi-insane-asylum, all because nobody saw fit to tell me the truth about anything" (12). Ironically, Nicole's surroundings are very comfortable compared to a crowded asylum and she is able to receive individualised treatment for her symptoms.

Eugenides, on the other hand, introduces comic elements into Leonard's stays in hospital, creating a contrast between his deteriorating condition and his outward appearance. While in the psychiatric ward, he is depicted as the centre of attention in his unit: "By this time he was well versed in the clinical histories of most of his fellow patients. They treated him like an intern, discussing their cases with him, asking for information about the drugs they were taking" (168). Eugenides highlights the fact that despite his condition, Leonard is popular and respected among fellow patients due to his intelligence and wit.

References to cases are frequent in both novels, incorporating a psychiatric framework to the overall narratives. Even Dick's and Nicole's marriage is referred to as a case that, in the end, cannot be fixed: "The case was finished" (320). Michel Foucault refers to this notion of an individual becoming a case in clinical practice, which he describes as the psyche or personality's "gradation from normal to abnormal, where everyone could become a dossier, a case, an object of 'clinical' science, affixed to his or her own individuality" (*Abnormal* xix–xx). Nicole and Leonard are somewhat dehumanised when they become the object of psychiatry, as their individual personalities become overshadowed by the permanency of their diagnoses. The hospital and clinical settings that they are placed in also highlight their abnormality and the idea that they are not fit to live in society due to their illness.

2.2 The treatment of mental disorders

Next I compare the depictions of the treatment that Nicole and Leonard receive in order to determine the type of views that Fitzgerald and Eugenides have towards psychiatry and the medicalisation of mental illness. Both Nicole and Leonard come into contact with a variety of medical professionals during the course of the narratives (doctors, nurses, psychiatrists and psychologists) who administer medication and psychiatric support to them. *Tender Is the Night* and *The Marriage Plot* appear to largely mirror the reality of treatment in the respective author's own era and, in Fitzgerald's case, is based on his wife's treatment at

various psychiatric institutions. According to Porter, the United States in fact became the "world headquarters of psychoanalysis" after the Second World War, and "by the mid-twentieth century American psychiatry at large ... was heavily psychoanalytically oriented" (197). In *Tender Is the Night* this growing interest and excitement about psychoanalysis is reflected in Dick's career and travels around European clinics. Dick acknowledges that clinical work is needed to support his research and the omniscient narrator frequently refers to his future projects: "Meanwhile he had projected a new work: *An Attempt at a Uniform and Pragmatic Classification of the Neuroses and Psychoses*" (39). Dick also describes the establishment where Nicole is being treated, highlighting the fact that psychiatry was a relatively new medical field in Fitzgerald's time: "At its founding, ten years before, it had been the first modern clinic for mental illness" (9).

Despite some similarities in the psychoanalytic treatment that Nicole and Leonard receive, the two novels reflect different stages in the continually evolving treatment of mental disorders. *Tender Is the Night* can be seen as tracing the optimistic beginning of psychiatric treatment in Europe and America, where its commercial possibilities were beginning to be envisaged. *The Marriage Plot*, on the other hand, reflects American society after having witnessed the anti-psychiatry movement, at a time when the problematic effects of medicalising mental illness are better understood. A key difference between the two authors' approaches is the way in which they incorporate their own critique of the treatment of mental illness in dialogue and the narratives.

In *Tender Is the Night* the character of Dick Diver can be seen as representing the world of psychiatry in the 1920s and is a vehicle for critiquing psychiatric practices of the time. Throughout the novel, Fitzgerald implies that Dick has become disillusioned with his profession and even belittles his own training: "Not without desperation he had long felt the ethics of his profession dissolving into a lifeless mass" (274). Dick appears to recognise that his own psychological problems have led him to his profession: "The weakness of this profession is its attraction for the man a little crippled and broken" (29). Ironically, Dick becomes increasingly "crippled and broken" himself as he suffers from alcoholism and depression while treating patients with similar issues. Fitzgerald also mocks the psychiatric profession by referring to Dick's training as "hospital patter" when he is comforting his mistress Rosemary: "He gave her two lines of hospital patter to go to sleep on" (127). Fitzgerald also uses the voice of Dick and his colleagues to critique the commercial interests in the field of psychiatry. This is particularly evident when Dick considers an offer of opening a joint clinic with a colleague: "This young Privat-dozent thinks that he and I ought

to launch into big business and try to attract nervous breakdowns from America" (191). This idea of "big business" being compatible with the treatment of the mentally ill reflects the commercial interests already existing in psychiatry in the 1920s, when Fitzgerald wrote *Tender Is the Night*.

Fitzgerald also comments on the influence of wealth on a patient's treatment, suggesting that Nicole could even afford to buy a doctor of her own: "A burst of hilarity surged up in Dick, the Warrens were going to buy Nicole a doctor" (45). Ironically, Dick ends up being this doctor who gains access to Nicole's wealth, although there is no suggestion that he marries her solely for money. Nicole's fortunes allow her to travel around the world and to seek treatment whenever it is needed in expensive facilities, creating a somewhat narrow view of treating schizophrenia that is tied to her social class. The omniscient narrator also suggests that some of Nicole's fellow patients may not be suffering from a mental illness. Upon arriving at the clinic on the Zurichsee where Nicole is being treated, Dick questions whether all of the patients are truly mentally ill, to which the "resident pathologist" (7) Franz Gregorovius replies: "we have some shell-shocks who merely heard of an air raid from a distance. We have a few who merely read newspapers ... we're a rich person's clinic" (8). Fitzgerald thus trivialises the conditions of some of the wealthy patients that receive treatment, simplifying the causes for mental illness: "an American girl of fifteen who had been brought up on the basis that childhood was intended to be all fun" (202). The narrator thus implies that numerous patients have been admitted into the clinic for trivial reasons.

Freudian psychoanalysis is also criticised by Fitzgerald in a more subtle manner, thus reflecting the psychoanalytical framework that he is depicting. After being admitted into a private clinic, Nicole suggests in one of her letters to Dick that it may be more harmful than beneficial for her doctors to delve into her past in therapy: "what good can it be for me to stay here with the doctors harping constantly on the things I was here to get over" (11). Nicole evidently questions whether talk therapy may be more damaging than beneficial to her. Fitzgerald also acknowledges leading figures in the psychoanalytical field through the voice of Dick's colleague Franz: "When one writes on psychiatry, one should have actual clinical contacts. Jung writes, Bleuler writes, Freud writes ... also they are in constant contact with mental disorder" (192). Ironically, Dick is also in constant contact with mental illness through his marriage to Nicole, which much like the autobiographical elements in *Tender Is the Night*, provides material that can be used for his writing. These examples of critique of the psychiatric field as well as the deteriorating American identity suggest that Fitzgerald had some negative views of psychoanalysis and understood the problematic aspects of its

commercialisation. Fitzgerald also comments on the idea that psychiatry may be used to treat people who are not suffering from a mental disorder as such by depicting the problematic use of private clinics by wealthy American patients.

There are very few direct references to the form of therapy that Nicole receives, since Fitzgerald makes more veiled references to the doctor-patient relationship between Nicole and Dick. This is the case after Nicole has a breakdown during a trip to Paris: "in the early morning he broke in upon her confusion before it could form, with words of tenderness and protection, and she slept again with his face against the warm scent of her hair" (178). The omniscient narrator refers to Nicole's symptoms as "confusion", which can possibly be seen as a reference to hallucinations or delusions. Throughout the novel, there is a sense that Dick is analysing his wife from a professional perspective in order to predict developments in her condition:

Twice within a fortnight she had broken up: there had been the night of the dinner at Tarmes, when he had found her in her bedroom dissolved in crazy laughter ... The collapse in Paris was another matter, adding significance to the first one. It prophesied possibly a new cycle, a new pousse of the malady. (180)

Dick's observations highlight the fact that Nicole is in constant psychiatric care due to her marriage to a psychiatrist. Although she is at times treated by other psychiatrists, Nicole becomes dependent on Dick's advice and care. Dick also understands that their relationship is built on mutual dependency: "Nicole and I have got to go on together. In a way that's more important than just wanting to go on" (136). This implies that Dick also relies on Nicole despite the challenges in their doctor-patient relationship.

In contrast, the setting of *The Marriage Plot* in 1980s Michigan is a vastly different context since pharmaceuticals were by then central in the treatment of many mental disorders. Eugenides depicts the treatment that Leonard receives for bipolar disorder, which has begun to affect his ability to function properly and to work at a laboratory. Eugenides is very detailed in his description of the medical treatment that Leonard receives once being diagnosed, frequently naming the range of drugs that he is taking: "Saying their names seemed to calm him, as though he were uttering incantations: lorazepam, diazepam, chlorpromazine, chlordiazepoxide, haloperidol" (168). This comparison of a list of medications to an incantation is somewhat comic but also highlights the large range of medications that Leonard must take in a ritual-like manner.

Fitzgerald, on the other hand, makes only one veiled reference to medication that

Nicole receives for her illness: "still she was half asleep from the hangover of the drug" (179). In contrast, Eugenides makes a reference to how schizophrenia is treated in the 1980s when describing how Leonard's fellow patients are medicated: "She automatically placed schizophrenic patients on Thorazine, a drug people likened to a 'chemical lobotomy'" (253). This is a poignant reminder of how depictions of mental disorders reflect a certain historical context and highlights the fact that pharmaceuticals have transformed the treatment of schizophrenia since Fitzgerald's era. Eugenides incorporates further critique of the medicalisation of mental illness into Leonard's thoughts on his treatment: "this is a state hospital ... Meaning it's mostly just throwing medicine at people" (124). This sarcastic comment implies that Leonard is not expecting to gain much more than excessive medication from his stay at a public hospital. Similarly, Margaret Price criticises the connection between the mainstream psychiatric community and the pharmaceutical industry as well as their emphasis on a "biological and positivist definition of mental illness" (302). It appears that Eugenides is also highly critical of this relationship between psychiatry and pharmaceuticals, which can have harmful effects on some patients. For example, Eugenides uses Leonard's character to address the side effects of lithium, a drug commonly used to manage bipolar disorder: "The lithium made him thirsty all the time, and sporadically nauseated. He developed a mild tremor in his right hand ... Worst of all, the lithium made his mind feel sluggish" (169). Eugenides thus highlights the negative effects of lithium, which are important to consider alongside its benefits.

Leonard also feels that the lithium is affecting his libido and he begins to question whether his emotions are being altered by his medication. This is the case when he begins to cry uncontrollably after a failed attempt at making love to Madeleine: "Who knew if this was a real emotion? Maybe it was just the drug doing something to him" (273). Eugenides thus implies that some medications can be more detrimental than beneficial from the patient's perspective, however necessary the medical profession deems them. Eugenides has spoken publicly about this aspect of *The Marriage Plot*, suggesting that even today there are problems in administering lithium to patients suffering from bipolar disorder: "They've gotten a little bit better at the dosing. In the eighties they had slightly higher dosages and correspondingly more severe side effects. But in the main it wouldn't be so different from what I understand from talking to psychiatrists" (McGillis).

It is evident that Eugenides is openly critical of the modern medical establishment in the United States and, in particular, of the side effects of psychotropic drugs on a patient's personality and behaviour. However, later plot developments reveal that when Leonard stops

taking his medication, his manic episodes become more severe and his erratic behaviour becomes much more dangerous than any side effects of his medication. The omniscient narrator states that not taking medication for bipolar disorder can also be detrimental to Leonard: "Stupidly, he stopped taking his lithium, hoping to feel better. But all he felt was anxious. Anxious and depressed" (249). It is thus evident that the negative consequences of not taking lithium only worsen Leonard's depression.

Much like Fitzgerald in respect to Nicole, Eugenides also discusses the negative aspects of psychotherapy by commenting on the effects of talk therapy on Leonard. The disability rights movement has in fact criticised Freudian psychoanalysis and its aim of normalising patients. For instance, Lennard J. Davis argues that psychoanalysis could not exist without the concept of normalcy and that in talk therapy, Freud produced "a eugenics of the mind – creating the concepts of normal sexuality, normal function, and then contrasting them with the perverse, abnormal, pathological, and even criminal" (8). Nicole and Leonard are also labelled as "abnormal" due to their diagnoses and the aim of therapy is essentially to normalise them. Eugenides comments on the harmful effects of therapy through Leonard's experience: "Twice a week, he went to see his shrink ... and returned from these appointments emotionally abraded and exhausted" (170). The omniscient narrator thus suggests that it can be damaging for a therapist to delve into Leonard's past and subconscious. Through dialogue between Madeleine and Leonard's friend Henry, Eugenides implies sarcastically that there is an important distinction to be made between a medical doctor and a psychiatrist. Madeleine suggests to Henry that he is "not a doctor" and should not attempt to analyse Leonard, to which he replies: "But I *am* a psych major. Which means I've read a lot of Freud" (123). Through irony, Eugenides highlights the idea that one cannot claim to fully understand mental illness simply by reading Freud and studying psychology.

Overall, Eugenides is more explicitly critical of the medical establishment of the late 20th century, whereas Fitzgerald's critique is more subtle and sarcastic based on his views on psychiatric treatment for schizophrenia. Fitzgerald appears to be somewhat more accepting of psychiatry than Eugenides, which is perhaps due to Fitzgerald's personal experience and the fact that less medication was used to treat mental disorders at the time when he wrote *Tender Is the Night*. Fitzgerald uses more positive and poetic metaphors to describe a psychiatrist's profession: "Doctor Diver's profession of sorting the broken shells of another sort of egg had given him a dread of breakage" (193). This metaphor comparing a mentally ill person to a broken eggshell highlights the sensitivity needed when treating mental disorders. However, it also perpetuates the stereotype of a mentally ill person as somehow "broken" or incomplete.

Eugenides, on the other hand, uses more negative imagery to emphasise the aggressive form that treatment can take: "Leonard understood why psychiatrists did what they did. Their imperative, when confronted with a manic-depressive patient, was to nuke the symptoms out of existence" (284). This metaphor of psychiatric treatment being like nuclear warfare is somewhat exaggerated but is a powerful statement on the destruction that inappropriate treatment can cause. Both Fitzgerald and Eugenides depict mental illness in a distinctly medical context and incorporate social critique of the harmful aspects of psychiatric treatment in their characterisations of Nicole and Leonard. Mental illness comes to stand for more than a physical illness in both novels as the authors use imagery that depicts a mentally ill person as abnormal and as the object of control. Davis argues that the aim of psychoanalysis is to "bring patients back to their normal selves" (8) and it is this process of normalisation that Nicole and Leonard find hard to accept.

2.3 Fitzgerald and Eugenides on the concept of a cure

The concept of mental illness needing to be cured is one that is raised repeatedly in both *Tender Is the Night* and *The Marriage Plot* despite the fact that schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are chronic illnesses. The very idea of a cure reflects a biological model of thinking, which views mental illness as a physical illness that doctors can cure. When discussing mental illness as a form of disability, Margaret Price argues that "*mental illness* introduces a discourse of wellness/unwellness into the notion of madness; its complement is *mental health*, the term of choice for the medical community as well as insurance companies and social support services" (300). Price also claims that this kind of discourse implies a need for a so called cure for the mentally ill person (300).

Fitzgerald and Eugenides approach the idea of a cure in very different ways, which can be traced to the causes of the characters' symptoms. In Nicole's case, it is suggested that her schizophrenia may be the result of sexual abuse by her father Devereux Warren, who places Nicole in a sanatorium and reveals what has taken place: "We were just like lovers – and then all at once we were lovers – and ten minutes after it happened I could have shot myself" (18). It appears that these highly traumatic events have led to Nicole's symptoms and Devereux Warren clarifies that Nicole has no genetic predisposition to schizophrenia: "there isn't any insanity in the family that I know of ... Nicole's mother died when she was twelve and I've sort of been father and mother both to her" (15). Nicole's sister Baby also confirms

that there is no genetic link to Nicole's schizophrenia and believes that trauma is to blame: "We've never had anything like this in the family before – we know Nicole had some shock and my opinion is it was about a boy" (44). Baby is unaware of the fact that this "shock" has been caused by her own father but senses that a man is involved. The initial prognosis for Nicole at the age of sixteen is less than optimistic as stated by Franz Gregorovius: "The prognosis was bad – as you know, the percentage of cures, even so-called social cures, is very low at that age" (20). Fitzgerald further emphasises the fact that Nicole's treatment will be more challenging because of her young age: "If she had been thirty years old we would have let her make her own adjustment, but she was so young we were afraid she might harden with it all twisted inside her" (21). From early on, there is thus a suggestion that curing Nicole will be challenging due to her age and the root causes of her illness.

By contrast, in Leonard's case the genetic link to his bipolar disorder is made explicit: "my parents are alcoholics. One of them is probably manic-depressive herself, only undiagnosed. I inherited my condition from her ... I'm messed up biologically because of my genetics and psychologically because of my parents" (256). This first-person perspective leaves little doubt as regards the root causes of Leonard's illness, since he has thoroughly analysed his own background. Leonard's childhood and the early onset of bipolar disorder are also discussed, making it possible for the reader to trace the history of Leonard's illness: "He'd turned eighteen in August and the Disease, as though waiting for him to reach legal drinking age, began to flood him with intoxicants" (245). This personification of "the Disease" is used to exaggerate the idea that Leonard's bipolar disorder has been waiting for the right moment to break out in his body. The omniscient narrator also suggests that social circumstances have had a profound effect on his mental health:

All of this, as Leonard later learned from his therapists, amounted to emotional abuse. ... to be the go-between in his parents' affairs, to be constantly asked his opinion before he was mature enough to give one, to be made to feel that he was somehow responsible for his parents' happiness and, later, their unhappiness. (235)

Leonard's emotionally abusive upbringing has evidently been one of the causes of his mental health issues, since his unstable childhood has intensified his genetic psychological problems. It is thus suggested that Nicole's schizophrenia has been triggered by trauma and environmental factors, whereas Leonard traces his illness to both genetic and environmental factors. From these premises, Fitzgerald and Eugenides explore whether or not Nicole and Leonard can be cured.

The idea of permanently curing a mental disorder is of course problematic particularly when discussing schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, which are chronic illnesses that sufferers can at best learn to manage. Fitzgerald's omniscient narrator refers frequently to a cure that Dick envisages for Nicole: "for the purpose of her cure, he had for many years pretended to a rigid domesticity" (183). This implies that Dick is hopeful of curing his wife and that he alters his behaviour for this purpose. After Nicole has another serious breakdown and intentionally crashes the car that her family is in, Dick even suggests that Nicole should cure herself: "He felt it necessary that this time Nicole cure herself; he wanted to wait until she remembered the other times and revolted from them" (208). Keeping in mind that Fitzgerald may be writing about his own experiences with his wife Zelda's struggle with schizophrenia, this may reflect a frustration that he personally felt regarding his wife's condition. Fitzgerald, however, also criticises the idea of curing schizophrenia through Nicole's voice in her letters to Dick: "I have had enough and it is simply ruining my health and wasting my time pretending that what is the matter with my head is curable" (12). Ironically, Nicole does in fact become cured by the end of the novel and it is Dick who breaks down emotionally as a result of his alcoholism.

Considering the fact that Zelda Fitzgerald was diagnosed with severe schizophrenia and died in an institution, it is somewhat surprising that a character based on her becomes cured by the end of the novel. This plot development suggests that Nicole's character may be used symbolically in juxtaposition with Dick's deterioration, offering a powerful contrast to his suffering. Fitzgerald may have also decided to cure Nicole's character in order to show support to his wife, who was still alive at the time of the novel's publication, and that she too could be cured. The omniscient narrator expresses Nicole's feeling of being cured as being tied to her ego, which is able to flourish once she leaves Dick: "she 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" (307). Fitzgerald uses alliteration and poetic metaphors to symbolise her flowering and to highlight the intensity of her sense of being cured, thus romanticising this experience. As Dick and Nicole's marriage disintegrates, Nicole becomes romantically involved with Tommy Barban, who criticises Dick for continuing to treat Nicole like a patient: "You don't understand Nicole. You treat her always like a patient because she was once sick" (327). This confirms that Nicole is no longer ill and has indeed been cured.

Such plot developments are somewhat inconsistent and unrealistic in their depiction of a person becoming cured from schizophrenia, especially considering their real life basis

and Nicole's earlier prognosis. However, a letter from Fitzgerald to Zelda's psychiatrist sheds light on the fact that Zelda was perhaps in the end mentally stronger than her husband despite her ongoing institutionalisation: "In the last analysis she is a stronger person than I am. I have creative fire, but I am a weak individual ... All our lives, since the days of our engagement, we have spent hunting for some man Zelda considers strong enough to lean upon. I am not" (Milford qtd. in Stavola 65). Fitzgerald's main narrative focus in *Tender Is the Night* is in fact Dick's downfall and emotional collapse, while Nicole represents the emotional fulfilment that he is unable to attain. The fact that Nicole's schizophrenia is said to be solely the result of trauma from sexual abuse implies that Fitzgerald did not see a genetic link as necessary for the diagnosis of schizophrenia. In this sense, it would appear that Nicole becomes cured of emotional trauma rather than a biological disorder.

Eugenides, on the other hand, introduces the concept of a cure through Madeleine and her family, who learn about bipolar disorder and different forms of treatment for Leonard. Madeleine is initially optimistic about finding a cure for Leonard's illness: "I found this article on manic depression and possible cures they're working on ... Cures and new treatments" (277). Leonard's response to Madeleine highlights the problematic construct of curing mental illness: "There's no way, without knowing the cause of an illness, that you can come up with a cure" (277). Although Leonard has previously listed possible causes for his illness, his rejection of the very idea of a cure mirrors Nicole's frustration with the topic in *Tender Is the Night*. Madeleine's mother is also worried about her daughter marrying a person with a chronic mental illness and is afraid of the consequences for the entire family: "manic depression is a *chronic* condition. People have it their *entire* lives. There's no cure. People go in and out of the hospital, they have breakdowns, they can't hold a job. And their families go along for the ride" (241). These stereotypical and negative notions related to a person with a mental illness are somewhat exaggerated but are used by Eugenides to highlight the possible consequences of a chronic mental disorder. The fact that "there's no cure" is evidently also used by Madeleine's mother as a means of strengthening her argument against her daughter's relationship with a mentally ill person.

Overall, it is apparent that Eugenides approaches the idea of a cure less optimistically than Fitzgerald, as Leonard continues to struggle with bipolar disorder and grows increasingly pessimistic towards the end of the novel as regards his condition. Running out of money, Leonard and Madeleine are forced to move in with her parents after he suffers a severe manic episode and sinks into depression: "If I wanted to kill myself, I could do it at night, when you're sleeping" (338). Leonard and Madeleine also end up getting a divorce due

to the strain of Leonard's mental illness on their relationship, although it is largely Leonard's decision that they must separate. Leonard believes that he will most likely struggle to manage his illness in the future and sees no hope of a cure: "I'm not going to get better" (382). This internal focalisation highlights the idea that it is ultimately the mentally ill persons themselves who determine the success or failure of a possible cure. Madeleine is hopeful of Leonard being cured, but it is in the end Leonard's own perspective that reveals the reality of his condition.

The very different fates that Nicole and Leonard face in some sense mirror the reality of mental illness, where some learn to manage to live with mental illness and others find it difficult to gain control over their illness. Eugenides has chosen to examine the concept of a cure more pessimistically, since it becomes apparent that a cure is not a realistic goal for a person suffering from bipolar disorder in the 1980s. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, approaches the idea of curing schizophrenia in a more symbolic and unrealistic manner, suggesting that a broken identity can be even harder to cure than a mental disorder. Fitzgerald's characterisation of Dick and Nicole also highlights the fact that it can be difficult to draw the line between sanity and insanity, as people can experience symptoms of mental illness without being diagnosed with a mental disorder.

2.4 Foucault's medical gaze theory

Michel Foucault connects the dark history of madness and psychiatric practices to questions of "freedom and control, knowledge and power" (Porter 3). These facets of psychiatric power are also examined by Fitzgerald and Eugenides as they depict Nicole and Leonard's experience with mental illness as being tied to social forms of control and normalisation. This control is particularly evident in the fact that Nicole and Leonard are constantly being supervised by people around them. Such surveillance mirrors Foucault's concept of the medical gaze – the idea that when observing a patient's body a doctor is exercising power over them. Foucault traces this medical gaze to the beginning of modern medicine and the beginning of the 19th century: "It meant that the relation between the visible and invisible – which is necessary to all concrete knowledge – changed its structure, revealing through gaze and language what had previously been below and beyond their domain" (*Birth* xii). Mental illness was thus also redefined by psychiatry, which gave a label to mental disorders that may not be physically visible.

In *The Marriage Plot* Leonard's experience of the medical gaze and surveillance is even more extreme than Nicole's since he is treated in the psychiatric unit of a modern state hospital, not a private clinic for wealthy patients. Eugenides depicts social forms of control in the description of Leonard's surroundings: "Leonard wasn't allowed to close the door. There was no lock on the door, or any doors in the unit, including the bathroom stalls. Surveillance was a central feature of the psych ward: he was constantly aware of being watched" (252). Leonard is thus both physically restrained by his surroundings and mentally restrained by constant surveillance.

The medical gaze is also very much apparent in the relationship between Dick and Nicole, which despite having a romantic basis is tied to the fact that Dick considers it his duty to monitor Nicole. Nicole appears to accept that she is under Dick's observing gaze and even sends Dick pictures of herself when they begin exchanging letters during her stay at the clinic: "She was such a pretty thing – she enclosed a lot of snapshots of herself" (20). Dick initially observes Nicole both as a sexual object, "a pretty thing", and as a patient. She appears to respond to his gaze quite passively: "Gravely she returned his gaze" (34). Fitzgerald also suggests that a schizophrenic patient like Nicole might become accustomed to this type of observation, which mirrors Leonard's experience of surveillance: "She was accustomed to being watched" (46). In fact, after Nicole is admitted to the clinic, she is constantly monitored by nurses and psychiatrists. She suggests in a letter to Dick that she has handed over power to her caretakers: "The blind must be led" (11). Fitzgerald's comparison of Nicole to a blind person symbolises the idea that she has had to relinquish control of her own sight in order to let others treat her. Interestingly, once Nicole understands that her relationship with Dick is coming to an end, she envisages regaining her sight: "she suspected that that would be the lifting of a burden, an unblinding of eyes" (298). The gender roles that Dick and Nicole initially employ also affect the way that they observe each other, with Nicole taking on a subservient role both as wife and patient: "the other part, the trained part, the consideration in the polite eyes, she expropriated without question, as most women did" (34). It appears that Dick exercises control over Nicole and his other female patients through both his status as a doctor and as a dominating male.

Leonard, on the other hand, is more antagonistic towards the medical gaze directed at him and attempts to manipulate the doctors treating him. Leonard understands that to be released from hospital, he must meet certain criteria:

He knew, however, that Dr. Shieu was on the lookout for any attempt to disguise suicidal ideation ... Leonard didn't want to seem *too* upbeat ... As he answered the doctor's questions, Leonard felt as though he were being interrogated for a crime ... when the truth didn't serve his cause he embellished it, or outright lied. He noted every change in Dr. Shieu's facial expression, interpreting it as either favorable or unfavorable, and shifting his next response accordingly. (254–255)

Eugenides here compares a clinical assessment to a criminal interrogation, where the patient is questioned and analysed in order to find out if they are fit to re-enter society. Leonard is simultaneously observing his doctor observing him, in order to predict his doctor's thoughts and to manipulate the description of his symptoms. Madeleine also takes on this type of medical gaze and begins monitoring Leonard's condition in order to catch warning signs of mania: "Of the twenty-one signs on the list Wilkins had given her, Madeleine had marked a check next to ten of them: change in sleeping patterns; unwillingness to communicate; neglect of work; neglect of appearance..." (371). In a sense, Madeleine behaves in the way that a doctor normally would, comparing Leonard's behaviour to a list of symptoms. Leonard even turns this medical gaze on himself and internalises the observation that he is accustomed to. He begins monitoring his own symptoms and adjusting medication accordingly: "I'm self-monitoring, Madeleine. That's all I can do. I've gotten better at self-monitoring lately" (338). Foucault describes this type of self-surveillance as an "inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself" (*Power* 155). In Leonard's case, the medical gaze is thus ever-present in his life despite his occasional resistance to it.

Foucault also links the medical gaze to punishment, which in respect to mental illness, can be seen as reflecting involuntary or harmful treatment: "Everything was organized so that the madman would recognize himself in a world of judgment that enveloped him on all sides; he must know that he is watched, judged, and condemned; from transgression to punishment" (*Civilization* 267). Although both novels reflect the fact that methods of psychiatric treatment have improved significantly over the past centuries, both Nicole and Leonard are aware of the social constructs of mental disorder and understand that there are consequences to not following required treatment. In Leonard's case, a failure to take his medication leads to hospitalisation in a psychiatric ward, where his freedom is curtailed by safety procedures. The force needed to get him into treatment is represented by security officers, who represent

the social control that is often exercised towards the mentally ill: "Ken Auerbach had shown up, with two guys from security, and taken him to Health Services" (249).

In *Tender Is the Night* Nicole experiences similar forms of control and she reveals to Dick that she was taken into care involuntarily: "they followed me in an automobile, but I wouldn't get in. Finally they pulled me in and there were nurses" (11). These examples highlight the fact that a mentally ill person can be taken into psychiatric care with force, even if they themselves are not seeking treatment. Although force is primarily used in order to protect a patient who would benefit from psychiatric treatment, it can be seen as an exercise of power over a person that does not fit social norms. Both Nicole and Leonard grow accustomed to being watched and relinquish some of their freedom to those that treat them. Fitzgerald addresses this loss of control through Nicole's thoughts: "Either you think – or else others have to think for you and take power from you, pervert and discipline your natural tastes, civilize and sterilize you" (308). In Nicole's case, this loss of power and sterilisation is also connected to her subjugation as a woman, which much like schizophrenia, makes her vulnerable to social control. The medical gaze is one of the methods of control that Nicole and Leonard's treatment requires and symbolises wider surveillance of the mentally ill in society. However, as Joan Busfield argues when discussing feminist theory on mental illness: "Care and control in mental health services ... are not, however, mutually exclusive alternatives as too many writers have often seemed to assume, for control is integral to caring" (233).

3 Mental illness as disability and abnormality

3.1 Narrative symbolism

Let me now examine the characterisations of Nicole and Leonard using the concept of narrative prosthesis developed by David Mitchell, which illuminates how literary characters are used symbolically to comment on society more broadly. According to Mitchell, disability "lends a distinctive idiosyncrasy to any characters that differentiate themselves from the anonymous background of the norm" (16). This kind of differentiation is also evident in *Tender Is the Night* and *The Marriage Plot* as Nicole and Leonard are depicted as symbols of abnormality and stand out from other characters due to their diagnoses. Although Nicole and Leonard are far more than prosthetic characters, I believe that their characters are at times used as what Mitchell has described as a crutch that the narratives lean on "for their representational power, disruptive potential, and social critique" (17). Some of this social critique that they give voice to is directed towards psychiatry overall, as discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, Nicole and Leonard represent values that are shaped by their backgrounds and positions in society. Lillian Feder argues that madness as a theme in literature deals with "personal responses to environmental influences, which include political, social, and cultural pressures" (xi). In this sense, Nicole and Leonard can also be seen as representing a particular response to social pressures and expectations related to mental health.

In *Tender Is the Night* Nicole also represents the capitalist values of America due to her inherited wealth: "Nicole was the granddaughter of a self-made American capitalist" (111). There are also frequent references to the power that Nicole holds due to her family wealth: "Nicole was the product of much ingenuity and toil. For her sake trains began their run at Chicago and traversed the round belly of the continent to California" (113). Despite her unstable mental health, Nicole is thus depicted as having immense power in society due to her wealth, which is exaggerated in these kinds of description. The reference to Nicole being "a product of ingenuity" also suggests that she is no more than a commodity in the capitalist system, which Fitzgerald mocks through this description. Nicole also represents the American Dream of financial success even though she has simply inherited her wealth and there is no reference to her working in the course of the novel.

D. S. Savage argues that *Tender Is the Night* portrays the "shining world of the rich" and that in the novel one can find "a critical exposure of the corrupting influence of money upon human values" (149). The corruption that wealth can lead to is largely depicted in

wealthy peripheral characters who are superficial and vulgar but also in how Nicole is characterised. The fact that Nicole is extremely wealthy and suffers from schizophrenia implies that her family background may have also affected her mental health. She struggles to comprehend the extent of her wealth and how to use it appropriately. For instance, she buys excessive amounts of products that she has no need for: "Nicole bought from a great list that ran two pages, and bought the things in the windows besides" (113). In a discussion with her sister, she also acknowledges that her mental disorder may cause others to see her as incompetent in financial matters: "can the estate really afford to give me all that? ... Why do you have more – is it because I'm supposed to be incompetent?" (54). Mirroring Leonard's excessive use of money during manic episodes, Nicole's uncontrollable spending can also be seen as connected to symptoms of schizophrenia. Nicole's impulsiveness accentuates her extreme wealth, since she is unable to manage her finances responsibly.

On the other hand, the extent of Nicole's wealth is problematic to Dick, who feels that he has compromised his own integrity when marrying Nicole and her wealth: "he had been swallowed up like a gigolo and had somehow permitted his arsenal to be locked up in the Warren safety-deposit vaults" (219). Dick clearly feels used "like a gigolo" by Nicole and her family, and he believes that Nicole has an emotionally destructive influence on him. Edwin Fussell describes Nicole as "the typifying object of her class and society, especially in the terms she proposes for the destruction of her victim's moral and intellectual integrity" (53). Dick's integrity is somewhat questionable even before he marries Nicole considering his affair with a young patient, but it is evident that access to Nicole's wealth and social status leads Dick into a moral crisis. Nicole thus represents an upper social class that is depicted as manipulative and corrupt.

Fussell believes that Fitzgerald's criticism in the novel is directed towards "the fatal beauty of American capitalism, its destructive charm and recklessness" (53). In some sense Nicole also represents the qualities of "fatal beauty" and "destructive charm", since Dick finds himself drawn into a corrupt world by Nicole's beauty. Dick is in fact highly critical of the rich overall: "I've wasted nine years teaching the rich the A B C's of human decency" (219). This suggestion that the rich are somehow indecent is also supported by the fact that Nicole has been sexually abused by her father, thus implying that wealth has a corrupting influence. Dick's mental condition also deteriorates during his relationship to Nicole as he grows increasingly hostile towards Nicole and her family wealth. In particular, Nicole's sister's offer of buying Dick his own clinic causes him to become weary of their influence. Dick believes that there is an ulterior motive for the offer: "We own you, and you'll admit it

sooner or later. It is absurd to keep up the pretense of independence" (193). Dick clearly feels that the Warren family has too strong of a hold on him and he sees something unhealthy in their controlling behaviour. Nicole's schizophrenia can thus in part be seen as mirroring this emotional corruption that wealth can create, since the combination of her wealth and schizophrenia has a detrimental effect on her mental state and relationships.

Leonard, on the other hand, represents the world of science and intelligence in *The Marriage Plot*. His background as a biologist plays an important role in the depiction of his mental state, as Eugenides contrasts the deterioration of his mind with his intelligence and academic success. Leonard is depicted as someone that others turn to for advice and information: "Leonard operated in the hospital the same way he did at school. He was a font of information: the answer man" (168). Leonard in fact views his diagnosis scientifically and wants to know the biochemistry involved in the medication that he is taking: "Humoring him as a 'fellow scientist', they'd talked about neurotransmitters and receptors, decreases in norepinephrine releases" (231). Eugenides also implies that Leonard's early mania symptoms allow him to advance in his studies at an incredible pace and gives him an advantage over other students: "He discovered in himself a capacity for unbroken concentration, studying for ten hours at a time ... He started finishing papers *early*" (242).

However, these benefits are contrasted with depictions of his mind working too fast and starting to break down because of these effects of mania: "But at some point things began to turn. His mind felt as if it was fizzing over. Words became other words inside his head, like patterns in a kaleidoscope" (246). Ironically, Leonard's hyper-intelligence becomes a burden as his mind is no longer able to process all the information that it is receiving. The vivid comparison of Leonard's mind to a kaleidoscope highlights the confusion that is taking over his mind. In order to control these symptoms he is forced to take heavy medication to allow his mind to slow down. Leonard sees this as a barrier to intelligence and career advancement and he decides to lower his dosage of medication in order to clear his mind: "I was sick of how it made me feel ... Dumb. Slow. Half-alive" (275). Leonard also believes that his treatment affects his overall intelligence: "there was an 'upper register' that he couldn't reach anymore, intellectually" (169). Leonard thus equates the effects of his medication with lower intelligence, which greatly affects his social identity. Although Leonard eventually accepts medical treatment, his resistance to the medication that would normalise his behaviour reflects his desire to hold on to his natural state despite the harmful effects.

Mitchell argues that the "vulnerability and variability of bodies serves literary narratives as a metonym for that which refuses to conform to the disciplinary desire for order

and rationality" (17). In the same way, Leonard initially refuses to conform to social norms of rationality despite being in a manic state, since he enjoys the benefits of mania in his academic career. Paradoxically, Leonard is depicted as both highly intelligent and rational in some circumstances and yet irrational and impulsive at other times. Joan Busfield advocates "a conceptualisation of mental disorder in terms of irrationality and unreason" (7). As for Leonard, it appears that his mania symptoms are largely depicted as irrationality taking over his mind. The effects of bipolar disorder on his intelligence are most apparent in the laboratory where Leonard struggles to complete his normal tasks: "That was the hardest task of all: keeping the samples straight ... despite his flickering attention and mental brownouts" (269). Eugenides thus highlights the idea that bipolar disorder can transform a highly intelligent mind into an irrational mind that struggles to function properly. Leonard's bipolar disorder is linked to an extreme form of intelligence, which tragically destroys any earlier intellectual achievements. Madeleine also compares Leonard's mania to the chaotic world of the casino, which "seemed like a projection of Leonard's mania, a howling zone full of the nightmare rich, opening their mouths to place bets or cry for alcohol" (363). This description of the rich as vulgar animals mirrors Leonard's greed for academic success. Much like Nicole, he represents the notion that a particular feature – excessive intelligence or wealth – can have destructive qualities on the mind.

As regards Leonard and Nicole, it seems as if their mental illness is in part a reflection of the social pressures that are connected to either intelligence or wealth. Madness can be seen as their response to both psychological trauma and their social circumstances. The mental collapse of Nicole and Leonard is also used metaphorically to comment on the collapse of society and some character traits appear to have been exaggerated for this purpose. Without the backdrop of Leonard's extreme intelligence or Nicole's extreme wealth, their emotional breakdowns would perhaps not be as dramatic. Ironically, they have reached extreme levels of the socially desirable qualities of wealth and intelligence, yet break down emotionally under their weight. The exaggeration of these character traits perhaps makes it more difficult to relate to these characters as a reader but allows the authors to comment on social norms. In their depictions of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, Fitzgerald and Eugenides incorporate social critique of the destruction that wealth and intelligence can create in society when taken to an extreme.

3.2 Constructing mental illness as deviance from the norm

Nicole and Leonard can be seen as symbols of abnormality and also act as a powerful contrast to other characters, who stand for sanity and reason. Both Fitzgerald and Eugenides depict dramatic reactions that mental illness can trigger in people, who are afraid of or unfamiliar with madness. This type of reaction is most dramatic when it arises from secondary characters, who encounter mental illness unexpectedly. Negative attitudes towards Nicole and Leonard as well as other mentally ill characters are another means by which they are marked as different, as Fitzgerald and Eugenides comment on more general social attitudes towards mental illness through their characters. The American Psychiatric Association's *DSM-5* in fact states that "cultural meanings, habits, and traditions can also contribute to either stigma or support in the social and familial response to mental illness" (14). In *Tender Is the Night* and *The Marriage Plot* these kinds of cultural meaning can be found in both the pity and victimisation that Nicole and Leonard experience.

In *The Marriage Plot* the stigma attached to mental illness is examined in the reactions that others have to Leonard's behaviour and diagnosis. Eugenides also comments on the evolution of attitudes surrounding mental illness, highlighting the fact that the stigma attached to mental illness was even greater in the past: "But this was 1959 and the subject of mental illness was pretty much taboo" (343). This reference to an old article implies that mental illness is less taboo in the novel's setting of the 1980s, but it is evident that Leonard's diagnosis is still connected to stigma and shame. When Madeleine's friends become concerned about her dating a person who behaves in an unusual manner, they express concern about his nature: "He doesn't like people. Look, I'm sorry, but now that you're broken up, I have to say it. Leonard's not exactly normal. He's weird" (83). This notion that Leonard is "weird" and not "normal" reflects the idea that a person with a mental illness is somehow defective or abnormal. Once Madeleine's friend finds out about Leonard's diagnosis and hospitalisation, this kind of labelling becomes even more extreme: "Leonard's crazy ... Do you realize that?" (111). The word "crazy" can be seen as a demeaning term, since it labels Leonard in a negative way. Leonard himself repeatedly expresses that for him his diagnosis acts as a dividing line between the time when he was supposedly normal and that of being ill: "when Leonard had been officially diagnosed with manic depression ... he hadn't thought much about what the lithium was doing to him. He'd just wanted to get back to being normal" (232). Leonard's thoughts imply that he has previously considered himself normal and is aware of his categorisation as abnormal.

The idea that a mentally ill person does not fit the idea of normal is also evident in *Tender Is the Night*. Nicole's father states that Nicole had once been normal before her illness: "She was a perfectly normal, bright, happy child" (16). He evidently sees the purpose of her treatment as being her normalisation and a return to her prior happy state. Fitzgerald also examines mental illness from the perspective of a child in describing how Nicole's son Lanier views the patients at his father's psychiatric clinic: "the patients appeared to him either in their odd aspects, or else as de-vitalized, over-correct creatures without personality" (197). Demeaning words like "odd" and "de-vitalized" are used to suggest abnormality and emotional numbness. Patients being "without personality" also implies that they have been dehumanised by treatment and by being labelled as mentally ill. Nicole is also aware of the fact that her behaviour is at times hard to accept by others: "I don't want to do anything anti-social – I've caused everybody enough trouble" (46). The recurring concept of normalcy is clearly used as a contrast to Nicole and Leonard, who are depicted as "anti-social" and abnormal. Nicole herself begins to see other patients as abnormal once she is outside the sanatorium. In this way she expresses how differently she at that point views the other patients: "When I was ill I didn't mind sitting inside with the others in the evening ... Naturally now I see them as ill and it's – it's –" (33). There is powerful irony in this statement, since she is still one of the "others" with a mental illness at this point in the novel. Fitzgerald implies that among the mentally ill, there are varying degrees of mental illness, which affect the way that patients are viewed by others.

In *The Marriage Plot* Leonard is frequently characterised as a victim of mental illness who needs to be protected due to his fragile mental health. Madeleine's mother believes that her daughter has taken on this role of saving Leonard: "Madeleine thinks she can save Leonard" (399). Madeleine in fact expresses a wish to hide Leonard from others when he is in a weaker state: "It wasn't so much that Madeleine was ashamed of Leonard, but that she was disappointed at having Phyllida see him in his present state. Leonard wasn't himself" (184). This implies that there is something shameful about a person breaking down mentally, as if this type of behaviour was not a reflection of Leonard's true self. The notion that Leonard "wasn't himself" also implies that Leonard's identity as a mentally ill person is a separate identity from his true personality. Furthermore, Madeleine admits feeling pity for her partner: "she felt sorry for Leonard and guilty for being so selfish" (199). Madeleine traces this pity to the fact that Leonard is flawed: "He was defective, and she wasn't, and there was nothing she could do about it" (199). Leonard's mental disorder is thus depicted as a reason to feel pity for him, as he has been labelled as "defective" and in need of saving.

In *Tender Is the Night* Nicole is also initially depicted as a victim of her mental illness, who cannot cope without the protection of her husband. When Rosemary witnesses Nicole's breakdown in her hotel room, she views Nicole as a victim that Dick saves: "She adored him for saving her ... she had listened in wild worship to his strong, sure, polite voice making it all right" (174). Dick in fact takes on the heroic role of being Nicole's saviour and he is initially admired by other characters who feel sympathy towards Nicole. Nicole recognises this pity that others may feel for her but rejects the idea of asking for it herself: "My family have shamefully neglected me, there's no use asking them for help or pity" (12). There is, however, an element of pity in Dick's feelings for Nicole: "when I see a beautiful shell like that I can't help feeling a regret about what's inside it" (9). The comparison of Nicole to a "beautiful shell" is in fact demeaning, as if Nicole were simply a beautiful object that has been hollowed out by her illness. "Regret" about her illness can be seen as a form of pity that Dick feels for Nicole. Other characters also recognise that Nicole will not have an easy life ahead of her. For instance, Rosemary envisages a tragic fate for Nicole: "She illustrated very simple principles, containing in herself her own doom" (114). This implies that the problems that Nicole will face will be the result of her own nature. Even Nicole's sister Baby foresees a difficult future for Nicole: "persistently she clung to the idea of Nicole's tragic destiny" (188). These examples highlight the fact that various characters are concerned about Nicole's future and predict a much more tragic fate than later eventuates. It is thus evident that other characters do not hold much hope that Nicole's mental health could improve significantly, perhaps reflecting more general social attitudes towards schizophrenia.

In *The Marriage Plot* Eugenides comments on how the mentally ill are treated in society and allows the reader to consider how they themselves would react to a person with bipolar disorder. For example, Leonard acknowledges that people will treat him differently because of his diagnosis and hospitalisation: "He knew from experience that when people found out he'd been hospitalized ... they treated him differently" (181). When Madeleine contemplates leaving Leonard after a manic breakdown, she comments on the fact that people would understand if someone were to walk away from a person with a mental illness: "No one would blame her" (363). Madeleine is even advised by Leonard's friend Henry to leave him at a time when he has been hospitalised: "If you *are* Leonard's girlfriend, or if you're thinking of *becoming* Leonard's girlfriend, or if you're thinking of getting back together with him, my advice would be not to do that" (123). Furthermore, Madeleine's mother implies that a mental illness could be an obstacle to marriage: "I want you to think about what it would mean to marry a person with a ... with a mental illness" (341). By referring to discriminatory

social attitudes towards bipolar disorder, Eugenides implies that it might be socially acceptable to leave someone because of their mental illness. However, Madeleine does stand by Leonard even as his condition deteriorates and she ignores social pressure to distance herself from him.

Eugenides also examines the nature of mental disorders in relation to purely physical diseases as well as the idea that disease could ultimately be viewed as a cultural construct. For example, when Madeleine's mother is concerned about her daughter's relationship with Leonard, Madeleine questions her: "Say Leonard had another disease, Mummy. Say he had diabetes or something. Would you be acting the same way about that?" (341). This appears to be social critique by Eugenides on the stigma attached to bipolar disorder, which affects the way that people relate to mental illness and its sufferers. The distinction between physical disease and mental illness is highlighted in Madeleine's question, which implies that the stigma attached to mental illness can be far greater in some circumstances than that attached to physical disease or disability.

Fitzgerald also implies that there is often a fine line between madness and simply being different, as for instance in the rhetorical question posed by Nicole's sister: "how can any one tell what's eccentric and what's crazy?" (44). This implies that some aspects of Nicole's eccentric behaviour are simply a part of her personality, which cannot always be easily separated from symptoms of schizophrenia. Madeleine also makes a similar statement regarding her relationship to Leonard, suggesting that the divide between them is not that great after all: "Madeleine recognized that she and a mentally ill person were not necessarily mutually exclusive categories" (122). This reference to categories mirrors the way that people are categorised in society as either sane or insane, and normal or abnormal. Fitzgerald and Eugenides appear to be commenting on how subjective madness is and allow the reader to sympathise with Nicole and Leonard.

Furthermore, Eugenides explores the idea that mental illness can be a sign of fragility in a society where weakness is often seen as a sign of failure. Leonard's illness is depicted as a mirror for his friends and family to reflect on their own lives and weaknesses, thus allowing them to feel grateful for their sanity:

Leonard's dark moods had always been part of his appeal. It was a relief to hear him enumerate his frailties, his misgivings about the American formula for success. ... They were intimidated, scared, and so talking to Leonard, who was all these things times ten, made people feel less bad about themselves, and less alone. (108)

This reiterates the idea that abnormality is in fact needed to maintain social norms and social views of sanity. It also reveals that other characters can empathise with Leonard due to his willingness to talk about his flaws. Leonard can even be seen as a symbol of the failure to reach the "American formula for success", or the American Dream. He is in many ways incapable of living up to social expectations of success and happiness and thus comes to represent those that do not fit into the ideal American identity.

By commenting on social attitudes to Nicole and Leonard, and consequently to mental illness, Fitzgerald and Eugenides allow the reader to examine their own attitudes towards schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Both authors examine the concept of pity and the victimisation of the mentally ill, which can be demeaning and inappropriate. Although mental disorders are also physical illnesses, it is evident that mental illness brings with it a different kind of stigma that Nicole and Leonard both carry.

As for the structure of the novels, it is important to note that Nicole and Leonard act as a powerful contrast to their partners Dick and Madeleine. Fitzgerald and Eugenides exaggerate character differences as well as the effects of mental illness by depicting Nicole and Leonard as having child-like or animal-like characteristics. In Leonard's case, these animal-like features are linked to severe depression and situations where he relinquishes control of himself to Madeleine:

There was something pleasing about having her big Saint Bernard all to herself. ... Now he was interested only in his doggy bed, his doggy bowl, and his mistress. He laid his head on her lap, wanted to be petted. He wagged his tail whenever she came in. Always so demonstrably *there*, her big fuzz buddy, her big old slobbery fuzzeroo. (170)

This metaphor of Leonard as a passive dog is demeaning and creates a problematic connection between a mentally ill person and a domesticated animal. The lexical choices "big", "slobbery" and "fuzzeroo" also imply that he is lacking in intelligence or is lazy. The description of Leonard wanting to be petted and wagging his tail suggests that he has relinquished control to "his mistress" Madeleine. Although Leonard's depiction can also be considered endearing from Madeleine's perspective, it clearly depicts Leonard as weak and submissive. Furthermore, the omniscient narrator reveals that Leonard also views himself as developing animal features as a result of his medication: "His face and body looked puffy and there was a roll of fat, like a buffalo's hump, on the back of his neck" (169). It seems as if this connection between bipolar disorder and animal features is used to highlight Leonard's

diminishing control over his own body, creating rather demeaning and stereotypical imagery.

Interestingly, Nicole is also depicted by Fitzgerald as having animal-like features, as is the case when Dick treats her badly: "hating him a little in an animal way, yet wanting to rub against his shoulder" (182). Nicole is likened to an animal that acts passively towards her master even when upset with Dick. Franz Gregorovius also compares Nicole to a domestic animal when describing how well Nicole has behaved in the clinic: "we've made rather a pet of her around here" (21). Although the term "pet" can be seen as affectionate, it can also be seen as demeaning in the sense that Nicole has become submissive to her doctors.

Furthermore, Fitzgerald frequently uses imagery that compares Nicole to a child, which, despite her young age, exaggerates the power imbalance between her and Dick: "She looked at him with straight gray eyes, with a child's searching wonder" (182). Even Nicole's surroundings are used to infantilise her: "She leaned over her children's breakfast table" (294). Fitzgerald thus accentuates Nicole's youth by placing her in a setting normally used for children. This kind of demeaning imagery is even used later in the novel when Nicole has decided to begin an affair with another man: "And like a happy child, wanting the completion as soon as possible ... she lay on her bed ... and wrote Tommy Barban in Nice a short provocative letter" (307). This description of Nicole as simultaneously a "happy child" and the author of a provocative letter implies that she has both child-like and adult qualities. Fussell believes that it is Nicole's "semblance of perpetual youth that allows Fitzgerald to exploit her as a central element in the narrative correlative he is constructing for his vision of American life" (51). In other words, Nicole represents the worship of youth in American society that Dick upholds in his views of women. Nicole's exaggerated youth can also be seen as another powerful contrast to Dick's own deterioration, but it also has the effect of making her appear weaker than she is.

Disease terminology is another means by which Fitzgerald and Eugenides establish a connection between mental illness and deviance. Fitzgerald incorporates disease metaphors into the narrative in a subtle manner, using symbolic references to associate Nicole with disease. For example, Nicole's concern over her garden ironically mirrors her own battle with schizophrenia. Dick describes this concern as follows: "She won't let it alone – she nags it all the time, worries about its diseases" (85). Her garden personifies her own struggle with disease and perhaps provides her with something to control in the same way that she is controlled by others. Furthermore, the concept of contamination is used to imply that a mental disorder could be infectious and that there is something to be feared in mental illness. In *The Marriage Plot* Madeleine comments on what it is about "crazy people that made you

want to shun them? ... something like a fear of contagion" (363). Nicole, on the other hand, expresses a similar notion of mental illness being contagious when Dick states that "I'm trying to save myself". She replies: "From my contamination?" (319). Ironically, this disease metaphor is later transferred to Dick, as he disintegrates due to alcoholism and depression. When a mutual friend observes Dick, he is depicted as the diseased one, "as if he were somewhat contagious" (304). Despite the fact that both authors imply that this type of fear of contamination is unwarranted, these examples still perpetuate harmful ideas about mental disorders being a danger to society. Disease imagery also highlights the social effects of mental illness, which stem from the fear that a diagnosis can create in its environment.

Both Fitzgerald and Eugenides evidently use stereotypical imagery comparing a mentally ill person to an animal or child, which symbolises their abnormality. By emphasising the idea that Nicole and Leonard are submissive to their partners, the authors are able to create a distinction between them and supposedly sane characters. The authors' depictions of mental illness in some ways reinforce the divide between normal and abnormal, which society relies on for categorising people. Furthermore, the reactions and attitudes of other characters towards Nicole and Leonard highlight the stigma and prejudice surrounding mental illness. Both novels create a distinct dichotomy between Nicole and Leonard on one side, and supposedly normal characters or social behaviour on the other. In fact, Foucault refers to psychoanalysis as a "system for separating the normal and the abnormal" (*Power* 61). In this light, it appears that one motive for exaggerating the passive or deviant character traits of Nicole and Leonard is to strengthen the concept of normalcy, which cannot exist without abnormality.

3.3 Narrative perspective as a reflection of the unbalanced mind

Both Fitzgerald and Eugenides have chosen to depict the mind of a character with mental illness primarily by using an omniscient narrator, with the exception of some first-person narration from Nicole's point of view in *Tender Is the Night*. The use of third-person narration gives the reader insight into the thoughts of Nicole and Leonard but also into the minds of the omniscient narrator and characters who are observing their illnesses from the outside. As well as their behaviour, the characters' use of language also reveals the destabilising effects of mental illness. Feder describes the literary representation of mental illness as exposing "the drive of unconscious impulses against denials and controls" and as

"the mind observing and struggling with its own nature and its apprehension of external reality" (27). This battle between the subconscious and social reality is also depicted in Nicole's and Leonard's struggle between their mental illness and what they project to the outside world.

In *Tender Is the Night* Nicole's character is primarily depicted by the use of third-person narration by an omniscient narrator. This narrative perspective is at times interrupted by first-person narration, which gives deeper insight into the functioning of Nicole's mind. However, as Taylor Donnelly argues, perhaps the biggest weakness in Fitzgerald's characterisation of Nicole is the lack of insight into her character: "There are few opportunities to sympathize with Nicole, to be immersed in and see from her perspective, and far more to diagnose her" (235). This is largely due to the fact that Nicole's own thoughts are seldom depicted and most of her experience is filtered through the narrator. For example, after Nicole has a serious breakdown, third-person narration is used to describe her emotions: "though still she was half asleep from the hangover of the drug, she was relieved and almost happy that he was hers again" (179). While the reader is able to understand how Nicole is feeling, the voice of the omniscient narrator is clearly present. This kind of perspective also mirrors the fact that she is monitored by society due to her illness. Donnelly argues that the reader has "a diagnostic relationship to Nicole, studying her madness rather than accessing its experiential quality" (237). Nicole's experience of schizophrenia is rarely given a voice and the narrator in fact describes how weak Nicole's voice is in her social environment: "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 meagreness" (83). This image of Nicole as "rather silent" is consistent with how little her voice is heard in the novel. Nonetheless, her silence is problematic as her own experience of schizophrenia is given very little room after the first chapter, which reveals the causes and symptoms of her illness.

John Aldridge describes the style of *Tender Is the Night* "like something out of a mental patient's diary and, by turns, like the clinical report of a patient who is doubling as his own psychoanalyst" (38). This diary-like narration can largely be found at the beginning of the novel when first-person narration is used in Nicole's correspondence with Dick from the sanatorium: "The mental trouble is all over and besides that I am completely broken and humiliated" (12). Fitzgerald invites the reader to look at the world through Nicole's eyes through these letters, which are at times highly personal and intimate. The first-person pronoun "I" also gives Nicole more agency as she is able to describe her emotions in her own words. The letters also reveal that Nicole is conscious of her symptoms of schizophrenia and

wishes to inform Dick of her progress: "I know introspection is not good for a highly nervous state like mine, but I would like you to know where I stand" (11). Nicole comes across as highly sensitive and analytical in her letters, which reveal much more of her personality than later dialogue or third-person narration from her perspective.

Furthermore, the use of first-person narration reveals the reality of Nicole's confused mental state and allows the reader insight into her jumbled thoughts: "I look seaward and let my hair blow and shine. I am motionless against the sky and the boat is made to carry my form onward into the blue obscurity of the future" (55). The narration becomes much more symbolic and poetic in Nicole's thoughts, which reflect her confusion. Nicole uses vague expressions such as "my form" and "blue obscurity", which can be interpreted as signs of delusions. Nicole also describes the confusion and depression that she feels after the birth of her second child: "But I was gone again at that time – trains and beaches they were all one ... but after my second child, my little girl Topsy, was born everything got dark again" (56). Fitzgerald appears to use the word "dark" to refer to depression and it seems as if phenomena such as "trains and beaches" merge into one in Nicole's thoughts. Poignantly, Aldridge describes the narrative style of *Tender Is the Night* as "the mind unconsciously concealing the true object of its horror through a projection upon other objects" (38). Perhaps due to the nature of Nicole's trauma, she projects her feelings onto her surroundings. Nicole compares her symptoms to a feeling of falling, which symbolises the instability that she feels: "I'm afraid of falling, I'm so heavy and clumsy – like a broken roly-poly that can't stand up straight" (54). This simile comparing Nicole to a "broken roly-poly" (a toy) highlights the fact that her body is no longer able to correct itself under the weight of her illness. Fitzgerald also describes mental illness as a heavy burden from Nicole's perspective: "The delight in Nicole's face – to be a feather again instead of a plummet, to float and not to drag" (41). This vivid image comparing Nicole to a heavy weight that is being pulled down reflects the burden she carries in the form of her illness.

Fitzgerald does not explicitly refer to any hallucinations or delusions that Nicole's schizophrenia might entail but uses symbolic imagery to depict the unstable connection between her mind and body. The relationship between Nicole's subconscious and verbal expression is most apparent at times when this connection is unstable: "When I talk I say to myself that I am probably Dick. Already I have even been my son" (57). Nicole taking on the consciousness of both Dick and her son can be seen as a symptom of schizophrenia and possibly as a delusion. This first-person perspective allows the reader a chance to sympathise with and understand Nicole's mental condition better, but unfortunately there is very little of

such first-person perspective in the novel.

Leonard, on the other hand, is given a stronger voice in *The Marriage Plot*, albeit by third-person narration. In Leonard's case, the only first-person perspective given is in dialogue, which can only reveal what he projects to the outside world: "What I'm saying is I feel like I'm being slowly poisoned" (276). The omniscient narrator then gives more depth to this kind of dialogue: "he felt exhausted from arguing and pleading" (276). In comparison with Nicole, Leonard's thoughts are narrated much more consistently and the reader is able to follow the developments in his mental condition from his perspective. Revelations of his deepest feelings and even his own analyses of his condition offer the reader the chance to empathise with him and to comprehend the way his mind works: "That was when Leonard realized something crucial about depression. The smarter you were, the *worse* it was" (254). The omniscient narrator often describes these kinds of thought that Leonard has regarding his illness, which allow more personal reflections on bipolar disorder.

Although third-person narration to some extent disconnects Leonard's internal world from its depiction, the descriptions of Leonard's innermost feelings appear to be highly personal: "He felt as if he were being violently emptied out, as if a big magnet were pulling his blood and fluids down into the earth" (239). Mirroring Nicole's feeling of heaviness, Leonard's depression is also compared to a heavy burden that is pulling him down. However, as is the case with Nicole, it is difficult to determine how much of this narrative perspective is influenced by the voice of the omniscient narrator.

Feder argues that "a mad literary character must be approached on his own terms, through the verbal, dramatic, and narrative symbols that convey the unconscious processes he portrays and reveals" (9). The clues to how Nicole and Leonard's minds work can also be found in narrative symbols and the verbal, which express the instability caused by mental illness. The most dramatic representations of mental illness are achieved in both novels when Fitzgerald and Eugenides depict a state of psychosis or mania. These sections also create a narrative climax as the characters' intermittent symptoms culminate in a breakdown. Both Nicole and Leonard experience episodes where they suffer from delusions or paranoia which are primarily viewed from the perspective of other characters. Feder argues that "the very contents of the delusions and hallucinations of both literary figures and actual persons express symbolically an inner transformation of the world experienced through the deprivation, anger, pain, and guilt that have become the only emotional means of engagement with it" (26). Delusions and hallucinations could thus be seen as a means of engaging with the real world, which is at times distant to Nicole and Leonard.

In Leonard's case, his manic episodes become stronger and more dangerous at times when he has purposefully decreased his medication, which suggests that he wishes to engage with this part of himself voluntarily. Elsewhere, Eugenides describes writing these manic episodes as follows: "I just tried to imagine what it would be like if your mind was seemingly working perfectly, almost like a superman's, and then perhaps becoming unstable and... not really recognizing how unstable you're getting" (McGillis). In *The Marriage Plot* the narrator describes this instability through Leonard's thoughts in the midst of a manic episode:

thoughts stacked up in his head like air traffic over Logan Airport to the northwest. There were one or two jumbo jets full of Big Ideas, a fleet of 707s laden with the cargo of sensual impressions (the color of the sky, the smell of the sea), as well as Learjets carrying rich solitary impulses that wished to travel incognito. (287)

This somewhat comic metaphor of Leonard's brain as "the control tower in his head" (288) is used to exaggerate the amount of thoughts stacked up in his mind, which cannot process all this information. The idea that his impulses "wished to travel incognito" implies that he does not want to reveal these sensations to the outside world. Manic episodes in fact allow Eugenides to construct very dramatic plot developments where the reader can sense that Leonard cannot sustain this type of manic behaviour without tragic consequences.

Leonard's experimentations with his medication and increasingly manic behaviour culminate in a dramatic episode during his honeymoon with Madeleine, when he runs away to a casino dressed in a cape: "Seeing him like this, wild-eyed, antiquely dressed, as slick-haired as a vampire, Madeleine realized that she'd never accepted – had never taken fully on board – the reality of Leonard's illness" (363). By observing Leonard from the outside, from Madeleine's perspective, he is compared to a supernatural and "wild" being. Furthermore, his mania is depicted as something to be feared: "This – this mania – was different. Leonard seemed like an actual crazy person, and it scared her senseless" (363). Madeleine's reaction implies that prior to this incident Leonard has not yet been "an actual crazy person" and that he has now reached the height of madness. This narrative perspective permits an outsider's view of Leonard's condition, which emphasises the severity of his mental illness and implies that he is a danger to society. Leonard himself takes pleasure in the side effects of mania, since it allows him to indulge in such impulsive behaviour: "his expression mad with delight, playful, confident" (364). Madeleine, on the other hand, assesses his behaviour in a more balanced manner and understands that Leonard's impulsiveness is a risk to himself and others. In fact, following the episode at the casino, he goes missing and ends up injured in

hospital. Narrative perspective is thus used to manipulate Leonard's appearance, which appears even more unnatural and wild when viewed from the outside.

Fitzgerald uses a similar narrative technique for describing Nicole's breakdowns and the psychosis that she enters. Following dramatic scenes where a dead man is found in Rosemary's hotel room, the omniscient narrator describes Rosemary hearing Nicole through the bathroom door: "And now Rosemary, too, could hear, louder and louder, a verbal inhumanity that penetrated the keyholes and cracks in the door, swept into the suite and in the shape of horror took form again" (174). This exaggerated description of Nicole's speech as "verbal inhumanity" and "horror" suggests that she is somehow deviant and linguistically disconnected from the real world. An outsider's perspective is used to emphasise how shocking the scene is. Nicole's speech further strengthens the sense of her entering a world of hallucinations and as being disconnected from reality:

Nicole knelt beside the tub swaying sidewise and sidewise. "It's you! she cried, "– it's you come to intrude on the only privacy I have in the world – with your spread with blood on it. I'll wear it for you – I'm not ashamed, though it was such a pity. On All Fools Day we had a party on the Zurichsee, and all the fools were there, and I wanted to come dressed in a spread but they wouldn't let me. (174)

Mirroring Leonard's cape at the casino, Nicole's spread represents her deviance and desire to be physically marked as different. There is also irony in her reference to "the fools", as she is herself labelled as mad due to her behaviour. Much like Madeleine in relation to Leonard, Rosemary represents the outside world looking in on mental illness and judging Nicole's behaviour. Rosemary's letter to her mother emphasises how severe Nicole's breakdown appears from the outside: "Nicole seemed Out of her Mind" (175). Both Eugenides and Fitzgerald thus use focalisation through other characters to imply that there is something to be scared of in a mentally ill person due to their irrational behaviour and appearance. Focalisation is crucial in making such scenes more dramatic as the use of first-person perspective from Nicole or Leonard's point of view would perhaps give a more balanced view of these events. In particular, the fact that Rosemary is witnessing symptoms of Nicole's schizophrenia for the first time affects the way that she reacts to her breakdown.

Repetition is also used by Fitzgerald and Eugenides as a means of depicting the effects of mental illness on the mind, which corresponds with Julia Kristeva's notion of "the speech of the depressed" as "repetitive and monotonous" (33). Nicole's symptoms cause her thoughts to accelerate and to become confused: "But I was very busy being mad then, so I

didn't care what he said, but when I am very busy being mad I don't usually care what they say" (12). Such repetition suggests that she is unable to organise her thoughts in a logical way. She repeats certain words with the effect of making her sound confused: "They tried it again in the candy store again and I almost hit the man with the weight" (13). Nicole's confused speech also corresponds with the symptom of "disorganized thinking" (87) that the *DSM-5* lists as a symptom of schizophrenia.

Leonard's mind is also depicted as speeding up during manic episodes and he is unable to recognise this manic energy in himself. He comes across as overly excited in dialogue when interacting with people: "Heidi ... Hi, Heidi. ... Hi, Heidi ... Hi-de-ho. The Hi De Ho Man. Have you ever heard of the Hi De Ho Man, Heidi?" (291). Although there is also a comic element to this type of repetition, it reflects the irrationality taking over Leonard's mind. The narrator also describes Leonard's language skills becoming unnaturally fast:

The problem with being Superman was that everybody else was so slow. Even at a place like Pilgrim Lake, where everyone had high IQs, the pauses in people's speech were long enough for Leonard to drop off his laundry and return before they finished their sentences. ... If you paid attention, it was amazingly easy to predict the predicate of a sentence from its subject. (287)

Eugenides appears to be exaggerating the speed at which Leonard's manic mind and language skills operate. By contrasting Leonard with people with high IQs, he suggests that Leonard views himself as superhuman when suffering from mania. However, since this description is focalised through Leonard, it is difficult to determine whether others view Leonard in the same way. By the use of dialogue and language, the authors imply that Nicole and Leonard are unable to follow normal conventions of language use during certain stages of their symptoms. The characters themselves are largely unaware of how their speech or behaviour might be viewed by others, who find their behaviour distressing.

3.4 Concluding remarks

The reader must be very mindful in assessing what perspective is being taken at different times in the novels, as it alternates between the experience of a mentally ill person and that of the external world. As regards Leonard's condition, it can be focalised through very different perspectives based on whether he is describing his own feelings or whether he

is being analysed by an outsider. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, focuses less on Nicole's internal experience of mental illness as compared to Dick and his experience of being married to a woman suffering from schizophrenia. Both Nicole and Leonard suffer as characters from the lack of first-person perspective given into their minds, as this limits the reader's understanding of how a mentally ill person might experience their illness. On the other hand, Fitzgerald and Eugenides can avoid misrepresenting the experience of having schizophrenia and bipolar disorder by focusing more on how these illnesses appear from an outside perspective. However, a somewhat limited narrative perspective makes it more difficult to relate to Nicole and Leonard, as the emphasis is on the traits that set them apart from others rather than the ones that make them human.

It is important to note that Nicole is more of a secondary character in relation to Dick, since the novel is largely focalised through his perspective as well as that of Rosemary. Leonard, on the other hand, is one of three central protagonists in *The Marriage Plot*, although narration from Madeleine's point of view is perhaps the most dominant perspective in the novel. In contrast to Nicole, Leonard has a more active role in analysing his symptoms and the effects of his treatment, and the reader thus gains a better understanding of how a sufferer of bipolar disorder might feel during various stages of the illness. The lack of consistent insight into Nicole's character is problematic considering the fact that *Tender Is the Night* centres around the theme of mental illness and psychiatry. Nicole's schizophrenia is largely viewed from the external perspective of her doctors and other characters, which in this sense makes Fitzgerald's depiction of schizophrenia unbalanced. However, the primary focus in both novels appears to be on how society views the mentally ill. Therefore, the use of an omniscient narrator allows Fitzgerald and Eugenides to comment on how society might judge a person in the midst of emotional and verbal collapse.

4 Gender and power in the literary representation of mental illness

4.1 Gender roles and mental illness

Let me now analyse Nicole and Leonard's characterisations with particular attention to the role that gender plays in the authors' depictions of mental illness. According to Joan Busfield, feminist theory on mental illness highlights the way in which "gender permeates professional thinking about patients and this, in turn, influences the types of treatment offered and the nature of the professional-patient relationship" (3). Gendered constructs are in fact closely tied to Nicole and Leonard's experiences of mental illness and subsequently to the exercise of power in the characters' relationships. There is also a marked difference in the depiction of female characters in the two novels, taking into consideration the fact that *Tender Is the Night* is set in the 1920s and *The Marriage Plot* in the 1980s. *Tender Is the Night* exemplifies a more traditional gender division between male and female roles in society, which Dick and Nicole largely represent. *The Marriage Plot*, on the other hand, reflects a period in which women's position in American society had improved significantly, even if gender roles also play an important part in Leonard's and Madeleine's relationship.

In his characterisation of Nicole in *Tender Is the Night* Fitzgerald depicts two overlapping experiences of being different – being mentally ill and being female in a patriarchal society. The novel mirrors the patriarchal structures of American society in Fitzgerald's era, which he himself upholds in his depiction of weak and less rounded female characters. The omniscient narrator suggests that Nicole and Rosemary accept their place in patriarchal society: "Their point of resemblance to each other, and their difference from so many American women, lay in the fact that they were all happy to exist in a man's world – they preserved their individuality through men and not by opposition to them" (112). The idea that these female characters have preserved their individuality while accepting their subjugated position in a patriarchal world is somewhat contradictory. In fact, it suggests that at this point in the novel Nicole and Rosemary have decided not to fight against patriarchal structures.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Dick falls in love with Nicole well knowing that she is mentally ill, whereas in *The Marriage Plot* Madeleine only finds out that Leonard has bipolar disorder after dating him for some time. It appears that Fitzgerald intentionally introduces Dick to Nicole in circumstances where she is in a weaker state due to symptoms of schizophrenia. She initially views Dick as her saviour both romantically and in relation to her illness: "He tried honestly to divorce her from any obsessions that he had stitched her

together ... the difficulty was that, eventually, Nicole brought everything to his feet, gifts of sacrificial ambrosia, of worshipping myrtle" (28). Dick is thus depicted as a god-like person, who has a strong hold on Nicole because of the circumstances of their first meeting in a psychiatric clinic. As well as being submissive to Dick in the role of a patient Nicole is also portrayed as naive and emotionally dependent on her husband. Dick repeatedly comments on Nicole being weak: "She's not very strong – she looks strong but she isn't" (137). The narrator also describes Nicole and Rosemary as looking up to Dick for guidance: "both of them deeply wanted Dick to make a moral comment on the matter and not leave it to them" (147). Fitzgerald thus implies that Dick is morally superior to these female characters at least from his own point of view. The omniscient narrator also suggests that Nicole is unable to think for herself in her relationship with Dick: "She had somehow given over the thinking to him, and in his absences her every action seemed automatically governed by what he would like" (307). This implies that Nicole has relinquished control of her own body to Dick, who governs her opinions as well as actions.

Nicole's gender also plays a crucial role in her characterisation in the sense that Fitzgerald largely depicts a male perspective of female experience of mental illness. As Christian Messenger argues, it is problematic that Nicole's sexual abuse by her father is only viewed from a male perspective: "This refusal on Fitzgerald's part to allow for Nicole's rendering of her trauma can be scored as a (patriarchal) weakness of the novel's gendered narration" (86). The reader is told of the root causes of Nicole's symptoms through a conversation between Nicole's father and Doctor Dohmler, while Nicole's perspective of the sexual abuse that she has suffered is left unexamined. Instead the narrator describes how traumatic the retelling of the events is for Nicole's father: "Warren had broken down, his fine shoulders shaking with awful sobs" (18). Taylor Donnelly argues that this lack of insight leaves many questions unanswered regarding her condition: "Not even indirectly do we hear her version of this event, allegedly so fundamental to her fractured psyche" (240). The male perspective that is depicted in fact makes it more difficult to comprehend Nicole's symptoms as well as the effects of abuse on her. As discussed in the previous chapter, this lack of insight into Nicole's mind is largely due to the fact that the narrative focus is on Dick's experience, not on Nicole's thoughts about her illness. Although some first-person narration from her point of view sheds light on Nicole's experience, her character is often overshadowed by Dick's character.

In contrast to Fitzgerald's depiction of schizophrenia, Mary E. Wood claims that Zelda Fitzgerald's semi-autobiographical novel *Save Me The Waltz* "avoids conventional

representations of the insane woman" and "exposes those representations and the psychiatric discourse surrounding them as dependent upon an appropriation and objectification of female bodies" (247). This kind of objectification of women is in fact evident in *Tender Is the Night*, in particular in relation to the female patients who Dick treats. When examining a female patient Dick appears to treat his patient as an object that he can take control of: "Yet in the awful majesty of her pain he went out to her unreservedly, almost sexually. He wanted to gather her up in his arms, as he so often had Nicole" (201). Although this can also be interpreted as fatherly affection for a patient, it seems unethical to approach a patient "unreservedly, almost sexually". This kind of male dominance over a mentally ill female can also be seen as a reflection of patriarchal structures in the doctor-patient relationship since Dick clearly treats his female patients inappropriately. Although Fitzgerald's characterisation of Dick does not necessarily represent the reality of psychiatry in the 1920s, it is evident that he depicts female patients in a subjugated position in *Tender Is the Night*.

Dick's obsession with healing young women is also highlighted in his affair with Rosemary, who suspects that she is being used by Dick: "Do you want me for a case in psychology?" (229). Fitzgerald implies that Dick may be using Rosemary to further his research and that he has more than a romantic relationship to gain from her. The fact that all of the doctors and psychiatrists in the novel are male also creates a gendered power imbalance between Nicole and her caregivers, with the exception of her nurses, since she is in a weaker position due to both her gender and illness. Nicole's treatment is also shaped by the fact that she has romantic feelings for her psychiatrist and husband Dick, who is able to exercise control over her both as a male and as an authority figure.

In *The Marriage Plot*, on the other hand, Leonard has greater control over his own body and opinions as a male patient. To some extent this can be seen as a reflection of developments in treating mental disorders by the 1980s and greater involvement from the patient in their own treatment. Nonetheless, there is a marked difference between Leonard's self-control over his illness and the lack of control that Nicole has over her treatment. Leonard takes power into his own hands by adjusting his medication and describes this decision as a scientific experiment: "He was following in the daring tradition of scientists like J.B.S. Haldane, who'd put himself into a decompression chamber" (286). Although the seemingly positive effects of decreasing his medication are short-lived, Leonard enjoys having some control of his own treatment and evidently views his decision as courageous. He also discovers that his gender and some aspects of his mental illness give him power over others: "Unconsciously, he began to milk his sensitivity. He was 'really depressed' in study

hall or 'really depressed' at some party, and before long a group would form around him, looking concerned" (236). Eugenides appears to suggest that in a male sufferer of bipolar disorder some symptoms of depression can make them the centre of attention in social situations. Even when Leonard is hospitalised, he enjoys this kind of popularity: "Leonard's emotional collapse, indeed his entire self-presentation as a nonperforming adult, wasn't consistent with a surplus of sickroom visitors. Madeleine was jealous of the unknown company" (119). One can question whether this is a realistic depiction of bipolar disorder and, furthermore, whether such traits and hospitalisation would have the same effect on a female character. In fact, Nicole's depression results in her social isolation rather than such attention in *Tender Is the Night*. It would appear that the stereotypically feminine qualities of fragility in Leonard's personality brought out by his illness are in fact an attraction to others, whereas these same qualities are used to depict Nicole as weak and submissive.

However, Leonard's confidence and control over his body dissipate after he suffers a serious manic episode during his honeymoon and needs to be cared for by Madeleine while he struggles with depression. The couple's gender roles are reversed as Leonard becomes Madeleine's patient: "It turned out that Madeleine had a madwoman in the attic: it was her six-foot-three boyfriend" (340). This comparison of Leonard to the stereotypical image of a "madwoman in the attic" reverses the notion of a hysterical woman by implying that a man can also be in this situation. Eugenides also examines this role reversal earlier in the novel through Leonard's thoughts. Leonard feels that their relationship has changed after his first hospitalisation in a psychiatric ward: "By the time he got out, three weeks later, the power dynamics had completely reversed. Now *he* was the needy one ... Leonard's happiness was compromised by the constant fear of losing her again" (249). Such insecurity is very much tied to his masculinity and a feeling that he is no longer attractive to Madeleine: "His unsightliness threw Madeleine's beauty into relief. Next to her in bed, he felt like a pudgy eunuch. Every hair on his thighs sprouted from an inflamed follicle" (250). This vivid depiction of Leonard as a "pudgy" and unattractive castrated man adds to the emasculating characteristics that Eugenides develops as Leonard's depression worsens. Depression as a symptom of bipolar disorder is thus largely depicted by stereotypically feminine qualities, such as weakness and sensitivity.

Kay Redfield Jamison claims that depression is in fact "more in line with society's notions of what women are all about: passive, sensitive, hopeless, helpless, stricken, dependent" (122). All of these qualities apply to Leonard when he is suffering from depression, which appears to weaken his more assertive nature. His stereotypically masculine

traits are conversely more dominant during manic states when he is feeling confident and assertive towards Madeleine. Redfield Jamison describes manic states of bipolar disorder as "more the provenance of men: restless, fiery, aggressive, volatile, energetic, risk taking, grandiose and visionary" (123). Although this kind of gendered dichotomy is somewhat stereotypical and simplistic considering the fact that women too suffer from bipolar disorder, the supposedly masculine qualities can be found in Leonard's behaviour at times when he is struggling with mania. The omniscient narrator describes how Leonard views his mania:

You took ridiculous physical risks, jumping out of a third-floor dorm room into a snowbank ... It made you spend your year's fellowship money in five days. It was like having a wild party in your head, a party at which you were the drunken host who refused to let anyone leave. (246)

This description of Leonard's impulsive behaviour and irresponsible use of money is a stark contrast to his behaviour when depressed. It is evident that Leonard experiences the two different sides to bipolar disorder – mania and depression – as great highs and lows. Various symptoms also accentuate different sides to his personality, which can be seen as stereotypically masculine and feminine traits.

A similar reversal of power and gender structures also takes place between Nicole and Dick as their affairs take their toll on their relationship and their marriage falls apart. Throughout *Tender Is the Night* Nicole's financial power over Dick is a means of controlling him despite her weak mental health: "Naturally Nicole, wanting to own him, wanting him to stand still forever, encouraged any slackness on his part" (183). The idea that Nicole wants to own Dick also reflects her wish to have some control over Dick. Furthermore, Dick's escalating alcoholism and moodiness weaken his self-confidence, while Nicole's confidence grows as she has an affair with Tommy Barban: "she blamed Dick for the immediate situation and honestly thought that such an experiment might have a therapeutic value" (310). Nicole thus believes that having an affair of her own could benefit her mental health. Tommy even questions whether Nicole ever needed psychological care, implying that treating mental illness is somehow unnatural: "Why didn't they leave you in your natural state?" (311). In fact, Nicole appears to grow even stronger as she relinquishes Dick's control: "Moment by moment all that Dick had taught her fell away and she was ever nearer to what she had been in the beginning" (316). Fitzgerald thus suggests that Nicole finds her cure by returning to her "natural state" prior to Dick's involvement in her treatment. In this way, Nicole becomes the

stronger person in their relationship and no longer feels dependent on Dick.

In a sense, Nicole also imitates Dick's behaviour by being unfaithful and by becoming more egotistic. This kind of behaviour appears to be a means of taking back control in her relationship. The omniscient narrator also describes Dick's realisation that he has lost his dominant position: "men were for that, beam and idea, girder and logarithm; but somehow Dick and Nicole had become one and equal, not opposite and complimentary" (207). This implies that Dick believes in a patriarchal order but realises that Nicole has become his equal in their relationship. The metaphor of men as "beam and idea, girder and logarithm" is used to emphasise Dick's belief that men should be dominant as the solid structural base in a relationship. The notion that Dick and Nicole are no longer "opposite and complimentary" to each other also suggests that traditional gender roles no longer apply to them, since Nicole is no longer in a subjugated position.

It is thus evident that gender plays a central role in Fitzgerald's and Eugenides' depictions of mental illness as the experience of abnormality can be intensified by gendered constructs or male dominance in society. In both novels mental illness has dramatic effects on gender roles in a male-female relationship, since Nicole and Leonard's symptoms are at times connected to a loss of power and sexual attraction. Although Nicole's character at first represents the subjugated woman of Fitzgerald's era, it is interesting to note that she is depicted as becoming her husband's equal, if not even more dominant in relation to Dick. Eugenides, on the other hand, depicts Leonard as having both stereotypically feminine and masculine qualities. Leonard thus represents the contemporary era where gender roles are no longer as strictly defined and where men too can be sensitive and emotional. Nonetheless, both novels to some extent perpetuate the stereotypical notion of fragility and sensitivity being associated with women, and the idea that strength and confidence are achieved by masculine qualities.

4.2 Being married to a mentally ill person

A line from Barthes she remembered: *Every lover is mad, we are told. But can we imagine a madman in love?* (*The Marriage Plot* 122)

A central theme that stands out in both novels is the detrimental effect of mental illness on relationships and marriages. It is in the relationships between Nicole and Dick, and Leonard and Madeleine, respectively, that the transference and impact of mental illness is depicted in

the most emotive manner by Fitzgerald and Eugenides. The two couples are the personification of the opposing forces of the norm and the deviant, and their struggle with their differences is exacerbated by the involvement of a third person in their relationships.

The notion of transference is raised in both novels and can be used to illuminate the effects of mental illness on the characters' relationships, which are highly complex. Madeleine expresses the idea of transference between herself and Leonard after realising that Leonard's "shrink-like manner came from years of seeing shrinks himself" (61). Ironically, Leonard's experience allows him to provide Madeleine with a form of therapy, which results in a transference of emotions. The narrator describes this transference from Madeleine's perspective: "People often fell in love with their shrinks ... That was called transference and was to be avoided" (61). Eugenides thus reverses the usual pattern where a mentally ill patient falls in love with their therapist. Madeleine in fact falls in love with a person needing therapy, who is also able to provide support to her. Leonard's knowledge and personal experience with psychiatry can thus be seen as strengths that he can use to help others in need of support. Ironically, one reason for the collapse of their relationship could be this positive transference of Madeleine's emotions onto Leonard, who is too weak to support Madeleine in the long run.

On the other hand, Leonard's interactions with his psychiatrists and psychologist are rather cold and may be based on negative transference of Leonard's anger and mistrust. Leonard appears to think that his "natty, shiny-headed psychiatrist" (247) Dr. Perlmann is more interested in Leonard's academic connections than his wellbeing: "Perlmann seemed more interested in Leonard's life at Pilgrim Lake than in the fact that his signature now looked like that of a ninety-year-old" (247). He is also critical of his other psychiatrist Dr. Shieu: "She seemed interested mainly in one thing: whether Leonard was suicidal or not" (252); "Her second priority was to get them well enough to leave the hospital before their insurance benefits ran out in thirty days" (253). It is thus evident that Leonard is rather cynical about his doctors and may be projecting his anger regarding his illness towards them.

In *Tender Is the Night*, on the other hand, transference takes a more typical form as Nicole immediately falls in love with her psychiatrist Dick. Nicole's doctor Franz Gregorovius makes a remark to Dick about the luck involved in Nicole's and Dick's meeting: "It was the best thing that could have happened to her, a transference of the most fortuitous kind" (9). Although at this point Franz does not know how far this positive transference will go, it foreshadows a more serious relationship and emotional transference between Nicole and Dick. Stavola argues that Dick "should have realized that a marriage based upon the

transference of Nicole's affections was bound to end with the patient's return to health" (146). Although this is a somewhat implausible interpretation, one could argue that as a psychiatrist Dick takes a risk when marrying a schizophrenic patient, since her recovery coincides with his mental deterioration. Nicole in fact acknowledges that her illness has had a detrimental effect on Dick: "Some of the time I think it's my fault – I've ruined you" (286). Cowley also believes that one cause of Dick's collapse is "the strain of curing a psychotic wife, who gains strength as he loses it by a mysterious transfer of vitality" (*Tender* xviii). Thus, it is evident that in both novels a "transfer of vitality" takes place in the two relationships. When one person in the relationship is suffering from a serious mental illness it appears to be difficult to reach an emotional balance, since one is always having to give more support to the other.

As discussed in earlier chapters, the relationship between Dick and Nicole is in some sense personal for Fitzgerald as it is based on his relationship with his wife Zelda. His own description sheds light on the tumultuous nature of their relationship and transference between them:

Perhaps 50% of our friends and relatives would tell you in all honest conviction that my drinking drove Zelda insane – the other half would assure you that her insanity drove me to drink. Neither judgment would mean anything ... We have never been so desperately in love with each other in our lives. (Milford qtd. in Stavola 63)

Fitzgerald's statement reveals the complexity of their relationship and sheds light on a similar commitment that is depicted between Nicole and Dick. Dick acknowledges that his relationship to Nicole may appear odd to other people but is based on a deep love: "she loves me and I love her ... Active love – it's more complicated than I can tell you" (136–137). Dick thus acknowledges that a relationship with a mentally ill person is very complicated and in their case is based on mutual dependence. A similar sentiment is echoed in *The Marriage Plot* when Madeleine reflects on her relationship with Leonard:

Had she known from the outset about his manic depression, his messed-up family, his shrink habit, Madeleine would never have allowed herself to get so passionately involved. But now that she was passionately involved, she found little to regret. To feel so much was its own justification. (126)

This suggests that Madeleine's view of Leonard would have been entirely different had she known about his diagnosis earlier on and it would have been a reason not to enter a serious relationship with him. Both Dick and Madeleine in fact understand the risks involved in

marrying a person with a chronic mental disorder but decide to be committed to their partners. Once Dick has fallen in love with Nicole, he appears to comprehend the difficult relationship ahead: "he knew her problem was one they had together for good now" (50). This "problem" in fact becomes a shared one as Dick internalises his wife's illness and suffering: "He could not watch her disintegrations without participating in them" (207). Dick expresses how committed he is to Nicole despite the challenges that it brings: "too often he was sick at heart about her, yet she was his girl" (232). Fitzgerald thus implies that a relationship with a mentally ill person can be emotionally draining as Dick takes on Nicole's problems as his own.

Similarly, Madeleine also begins taking part in Leonard's illness and realises that at the time of marrying Leonard she was in some way imitating his behaviour: "Madeleine had married Leonard in the grip of a force much like mania. ... She, too, had been insanely happy. She, too, had been hypersexual. She'd been feeling grandiose, invincible, and unafraid of risk" (339). This comparison of mania to feelings associated with love highlights the fact that the division between sanity and insanity is blurred in their relationship. The omniscient narrator also suggests that from Madeleine's perspective the symptoms of love and heartache are remarkably similar to symptoms of mental illness: "if you became aware of how love was culturally constructed and began to see your symptoms as purely mental, if you recognized that being 'in love' was only an idea, then you could liberate yourself from its tyranny" (79). Madeleine evidently views love as a cultural construct that restricts individuals and, much like mental illness, can create pressure to conform to certain social norms. Leonard's friend Henry also believes that Madeleine has a selfish reason for entering a relationship with a mentally ill person: "how attractive it can be to think you can save somebody else by loving them" (123). Both Madeleine and Dick in fact hope that they can save their partners, which is one of the reasons why they stand by their partners. Focalisation through Dick and Madeleine thus gives insight into the challenges that they face in their relationships with a mentally ill person as well as into the commitment that they feel towards their partners.

Another important parallel between *The Marriage Plot* and *Tender Is the Night* is that both contain a third party – a romantic interest that Madeleine and Dick have outside of their marriages with Leonard and Nicole. This offers Eugenides and Fitzgerald another means of depicting the division between sanity and insanity as Madeleine and Dick both struggle to remain committed to their partners with mental illnesses. Despite initial resistance, both Madeleine and Dick are unfaithful with other characters, Mitchell and Rosemary, who offer them an escape from the difficult relationships that they are struggling to maintain.

Eugenides contrasts the relationship between Madeleine and Leonard with her complicated relationship with Mitchell, who is a constant reminder of what she has given up to be with Leonard. Madeleine at times reflects on how different the two men are: "In comparison with Leonard, Mitchell was so low-maintenance" (183). Madeleine also acknowledges that Mitchell fits the norm of a suitable partner: "Mitchell was the kind of smart, sane, parent-pleasing boy she should fall in love with and marry" (15). Once again, this juxtaposition of a mentally ill person with a "sane" person serves to reinforce the image of Leonard as difficult and deviant. The idea that Madeleine "should" marry someone like Mitchell also implies that there are social pressures to have a "sane" partner. In fact, when Madeleine's sister accidentally discovers Leonard's medication, she implies that Leonard's illness makes him less suitable as a partner: "You come out here to see if Leonard's husband material, and when you find a serious problem – like that he's maybe on *lithium*" (197). Leonard is thus once again labelled because of his diagnosis, which marks him as deviant from the norm of a supposedly suitable partner. Once Madeleine eventually gives in to her attraction to Mitchell, she decides that she will not be able to tell Leonard about kissing him: "Leonard would think that he was losing her because of his illness. He would feel sexually inadequate, and he wouldn't be wrong, exactly" (183). Madeleine's thoughts thus reveal that Leonard's mental illness is one cause of her being unfaithful, as the weakening of his masculine qualities and self-confidence makes him less attractive to her.

In *Tender Is the Night* Dick also finds something in Rosemary that is lacking in his relationship with Nicole. Soon after meeting Rosemary, Dick describes her as attractive in a way that no other woman is: "You're the only girl I've seen for a long time that actually did look like something blooming" (77). Ironically, Nicole is later described as "blooming like a great rich rose" (307) after she leaves Dick, implying that she was unable to bloom in her relationship with him. The narrator also describes Rosemary's success in the movie industry and the "ensuing success and the promise of comparative stability that followed" (98). Rosemary in fact becomes even more successful after her first meeting with Dick and she comes to represent a stability and professional success that Nicole is unable to achieve due to her illness. Dick also understands how damaging it would be to Nicole if she knew about his affair with Rosemary. He does everything he can to protect her: "Nicole mustn't know – she mustn't suspect even faintly. Nicole and I have got to go on together. In a way that's more important than just wanting to go on" (136). Even as Dick falls in love with Rosemary, he evidently feels a need to protect Nicole due to her mental illness. Dick also implies that it does not matter whether he wants to continue his relationship with Nicole, since it is his duty

to do so.

Nicole's and Dick's relationship is further complicated by their two children, who also suffer from Nicole's mental illness and unstable behaviour. Fitzgerald frequently depicts Nicole as a bad mother with very little affection for her children: "She had come out of her first illness alive with new hopes ... bringing up children she could only pretend to love, guided orphans" (196). This idea that Nicole's children are "guided orphans", whom she pretends to love, implies that she has very little interest in and affection for them. Her negative feelings towards her children are intensified when she is angry with Dick and projects these feelings onto her children: "Evil-eyed, Nicole stood apart, denying the children, resenting them as part of a downright world she sought to make amorphous" (207). Nicole is thus depicted as physically distant from her children and as feeling resentment towards them, which may be intensified by possible delusions. It is evident that Nicole's schizophrenia has greatly affected her relationship with her children but, once again, a lack of first-person perspective from Nicole's point of view makes it difficult to comprehend her true feelings for them. The depiction of Nicole's resentment towards her children also appears to be somewhat exaggerated and perhaps reflects to a greater extent Dick's disappointment in Nicole, since it is focalised through Dick. The description of Nicole as "evil-eyed" implies that she may even feel hate towards her children, but considering the nature of her schizophrenia, this may not be a reflection of her true feelings. Fitzgerald evidently implies that Nicole has failed as a woman in her role as a mother and to some extent associates schizophrenia with an inability to feel affection.

Both Dick and Madeleine evidently feel a need to shelter their partners from anything that could aggravate their condition and they fear the consequences of following their true desires. However, Dick grows tired of protecting Nicole and becomes detached from her as a husband: "This made it difficult now to distinguish between his self-protective professional detachment and some new coldness in his heart ... he had learned to become empty of Nicole" (180). This implies that there is a limit to how long Dick can protect his wife as their relationship becomes purely a doctor-patient relationship. In *The Marriage Plot* Madeleine also grows tired of protecting Leonard and starts to resent him for not getting better: "For over a year she'd been taking care of Leonard, hoping for him to get better, and now he was worse than ever. Having just come from a party where everyone else seemed happy and healthy, she found the situation grossly unfair" (381). This notion that Madeleine's situation is "unfair" implies that she has sacrificed more than one normally would in a relationship to be with Leonard. The comparison of her own relationship to others who are "happy and

healthy" also suggests that her relationship to an unhealthy mentally ill person is somehow more taxing.

Both Fitzgerald and Eugenides thus depict a very complex relationship in which mental illness puts a heavy strain on the person taking care of a mentally ill partner. Both Dick and Madeleine agree to take on their partner's struggle with mental illness but cannot resist the attraction of someone who better fits the idea of normal. Rosemary and Mitchell represent the option of normalcy and are depicted as an attractive alternative to Nicole and Leonard when they are at their weakest. As for Madeleine, the temptation to cheat is heightened by Leonard's struggle with his masculinity, which is largely the result of depression and heavy medication. Nicole, on the other hand, becomes less attractive to Dick when another young, beautiful woman shows interest in him in a way that Nicole is unable to do because of her illness. Dick is threatened by Nicole's financial power over him and in a sense tries to take back his masculinity through his affair with Rosemary. As well as a transference of psychological trauma there is thus also a transference of gender roles between the two parties in the relationships.

4.3 Regaining control over mental illness

It is evident that there are many tragic aspects to living with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, which Fitzgerald and Eugenides explore through the experiences of Nicole and Leonard. However, alongside such tragic elements the authors also depict more positive aspects of recovery and self-determination in Nicole and Leonard's battles with mental illness. The possibility of regaining control over mental illness is perhaps more dominant in *Tender Is the Night* as Nicole becomes cured of schizophrenia and finds happiness with a new partner. Although Leonard does not appear to be managing his illness at the end of *The Marriage Plot*, he takes back the control of his life by deciding to divorce Madeleine.

Interestingly, both Nicole and Leonard are at times admired by other characters in the novels for their abnormality, which at other times can be a reason for their discrimination. Nicole and Leonard have qualities of both great strength and weakness, which make them appealing to other characters. The omniscient narrator of *The Marriage Plot* implies that being abnormal can in fact make a person more alluring: "It was the stupidity of the fortunate and beautiful, of everybody who got what they wanted in life and so remained unremarkable" (77). This description of Madeleine from Mitchell's perspective suggests that being abnormal

or unfortunate can make a person remarkable and interesting. Mitchell's statement thus implies that there is nothing exciting about being normal.

Nicole and Leonard are also at times depicted as highly appealing characters due to their unusual nature. For example, Dick finds himself drawn to Nicole despite being fully aware of her fragile state and mental illness: "her very blonde hair, dazzled Dick – whenever he turned toward her she was smiling a little, her face lighting up like an angel's when they came into the range of a roadside arc" (25). Dick is clearly physically attracted to Nicole but also sees something pure in Nicole. The comparison of Nicole to an angel implies that there is something special in her that sets her apart from others. Rosemary also repeatedly expresses an admiration for Nicole: "Rosemary saw her suddenly in a new way and found her one of the most beautiful people she had ever known. Her face, the face of a saint, a viking madonna" (90). Nicole is again depicted as someone to be worshipped and as having almost divine characteristics "of a saint" and a "madonna". The comparison of Nicole to a viking also highlights her strength, which Dick is at times reluctant to acknowledge.

Madeleine, on the other hand, does not initially know about Leonard's diagnosis and is attracted to how different Leonard is to other men: "She'd never met anyone, and certainly not a guy, who was so receptive, who took everything in" (61). Leonard's gender thus makes his personality and behaviour appear unique. Madeleine is also jealous of Leonard's unique way of thinking: "Being fortunate had dulled her powers of observation. Whereas Leonard noticed every little thing" (62). This implies that Leonard's supposed misfortune in having bipolar disorder has in fact given him powers of observation that others admire. Even Leonard acknowledges that his illness can at times give him admirable qualities: "It flattered Leonard that he felt *more* than most people; he was more sensitive, *deeper*" (236). Leonard also becomes overly social during his manic episodes and, at least from his own perspective, believes that he is more popular at these times: "You were completely captivating, completely charming; everybody loved you" (246). This popularity is also highlighted in the depiction of Leonard's telephone conversations with friends: "Leonard's calls were like telephone therapy ... At their best, Leonard's phone conversations were a kind of art and a form of ministry" (108). This idea that Leonard has almost religious powers of guidance highlights the fact that others look to him for leadership. Leonard is thus depicted as highly attractive during the stages of his bipolar symptoms when he is able to socialise and offer others support. Furthermore, the omniscient narrator explores the idea that there could be an advantage in having bipolar disorder from Leonard's perspective:

It was a selected trait ... The advantage was obvious. The advantage was the energy, the creativity, the feeling of genius, almost, that Leonard felt right now. There was no telling how many great historical figures had been manic-depressives, how many scientific and artistic breakthroughs had occurred to people during manic episodes. (293)

Eugenides thus highlights the creative energy that Leonard's mania can produce as well as the idea that sufferers of bipolar disorder can be highly successful in creative life. Redfield Jamison in fact describes milder manic states and bipolar disorder as "an illness that could confer advantage as well as disadvantage, and that for many individuals these intoxicating experiences were highly addictive in nature" (128). Leonard in fact acknowledges the enjoyment that mania can bring: "You wanted to enjoy the fruits of mania without flipping out. It was like keeping an engine operating at maximum efficiency ... without overheating or breaking down" (284). Although these "fruits of mania" are perhaps outweighed by the negative aspects of a chronic mental illness, Leonard's creative energy and enthusiasm somewhat balance the otherwise negative depiction of bipolar disorder. Eugenides has also spoken publicly about this other side of bipolar disorder, suggesting that early stages of mania might actually have a kind of benefit for the person experiencing it:

it occurred to me that manic depression is the only disease that, in certain times, is a benefit and actually good. Schizophrenia's not that way. Depression's not that way. There's nothing good about those. But there is this kind of sweet spot in manic depression that manic-depressives talk about, and that interested me a great deal. (NPR)

Eugenides thus incorporates real-life features of bipolar disorder into Leonard's characterisation in order to depict another side of living with the illness. This also helps to understand why Leonard adjusts his own medication as he at times longs for the "sweet spot" of creativity and energy that he used to have prior to being on heavy medication. However, as previously discussed, Eugenides also makes it clear that Leonard cannot function in society without the medication that has serious effects on his intelligence and creativity.

In the end, Nicole and Leonard are both unwilling to maintain their relationships with Dick and Madeleine. Ironically, the breakdown of their marriages provides them with the feeling of emancipation that they have been searching for. For Nicole and Dick, the end of their marriage also represents the end of a doctor-patient relationship that has controlled their

lives: "The case was finished. Doctor Diver was at liberty" (320). Nicole's freedom from schizophrenia is also tied to her emancipation from Dick and her liberation from her subjugation as a woman. Nicole's transformation is fuelled by anger towards Dick for his affair with Rosemary and she suspects that he might have behaved inappropriately with other women as well: "It's always a delusion when I see what you don't want me to see" (206). Nicole thus begins to comprehend how Dick has manipulated her and controlled how she views the world. She discovers that she no longer needs Dick in her life: "Nicole relaxed and felt new and happy; her thoughts were clear as good bells – she had a sense of being cured and in a new way" (307). Although this depiction of Nicole's thoughts suddenly being "clear as good bells" after severe symptoms of schizophrenia is somewhat unrealistic and exaggerated, this clarity in Nicole's thoughts highlights the fact that there is hope for her future. Fitzgerald implies that she has finally achieved the happiness that her relationship with Dick was unable to provide. Her independence is achieved by taking back control of her own mind: "Either you think – or else others have to think for you and take power from you, pervert and discipline your natural tastes, civilize and sterilize you" (308). Near the end of the novel, Nicole thus expresses a desire to think for herself and to follow her "natural tastes" which Dick has suppressed.

Leonard, on the other hand, has a more tragic and uncertain fate, as he "disappeared into the wilds of Oregon" (399) after ending his marriage with Madeleine. Leonard is at his lowest point at the end of the novel, in a state of severe depression. However, despite walking away from his marriage, Leonard is still characterised as someone to be admired. Mitchell takes the role of comforting Madeleine and sees hope for Leonard:

Mitchell experienced what so many people had before him, the immensely satisfying embrace of Bankhead's [Leonard's] intelligent and complete attention. ... Mitchell couldn't help respecting Bankhead for what he'd done. It was possible that he might recover from his depression; in fact, given time, that was more than likely. (401)

Mitchell's respect for Leonard appears to be both an admiration of his personality but also of his choice to leave his troubled marriage. Mitchell also sees hope for Leonard to recover from his depression, although he believes that Leonard's illness will make his life very challenging: "whatever success he achieved in life wasn't going to come easy. It would always be shadowed by his illness" (401). Eugenides thus implies that Leonard's illness will be a lifelong burden and subsequently depicts a rather pessimistic view of living with mental illness.

Leonard himself acknowledges that in leaving he is trying to protect Madeleine by ending the pain that she has suffered living with his illness: "I don't want to ruin your life ... Madeleine, listen to me. *Listen*. I'm not going to get better" (382). It is thus evident that Leonard himself does not see hope for improvement in his condition but he nonetheless feels relieved after being honest with Madeleine: "Oddly, saying this seemed to satisfy him, as though he was pleased to make the situation clear" (382). Although Leonard does not experience the same kind of cure that Nicole does in *Tender Is the Night*, Eugenides implies that Leonard makes a heroic decision in leaving Madeleine. Nonetheless, the ambiguity regarding Leonard's future reinforces the stereotypical idea that he is incapable of having a successful relationship and career due to his mental illness. The fact that Leonard disappears into the woods also leaves the possibility that he will never return.

4.4 Concluding remarks

Ultimately, both Nicole and Leonard end up regaining power in their relationships, even if this entails the end of their marriages. Although gender can also be considered a continually evolving cultural construct like mental illness, both authors use changing gender roles as a metaphor for the struggle between two different sides of Nicole and Leonard. As regards Nicole, she regains control over schizophrenia by discovering her strength as a woman, which allows her to let go of Dick's control and influence. Leonard, on the other hand, takes back his masculinity by letting go of his dependence on Madeleine. By disappearing into the woods, he leaves behind reason and social constraints in what can be seen as a symbolic return to nature. In a similar way, Nicole is also depicted as returning to her natural state when finding her cure.

Nonetheless, one can question how realistic the endings of these novels are, since they represent two extreme outcomes of living with a mental illness. As previously discussed, the notion that Nicole can be cured after suffering from severe symptoms of schizophrenia is somewhat unrealistic and can be seen as a means of heightening the dramatic ending of *Tender Is the Night*. In the end, the reader's sympathy is largely on Dick's side, as he is depicted as a broken man in contrast to Nicole's triumph over her illness, which comes at the expense of Dick and her children. The dramatic ending of *The Marriage Plot* is also achieved by a somewhat unrealistic narrative turn, as Leonard simply disappears into the woods. This ending depicts bipolar disorder in a tragic light and leaves many unanswered questions

hanging in the air regarding his possible recovery. Leonard's disappearance also represents a kind of escape from reality, since he runs away from his problems and marriage. Ultimately, both novels associate mental illness with a failure of relationships, suggesting that love and madness can be equally destructive forces.

5 Conclusion

My approach to analysing *Tender Is the Night* and *The Marriage Plot* has been rather critical due to its theoretical background in disability and feminist studies, but I feel that the theories utilised have helped to illuminate the social dimensions of mental illness. I have tried to discuss mental illness in a balanced way despite finding that much of the theory on mental illness takes a critical stance as regards psychiatry and the treatment of mental illness. It is interesting to discover that in two novels written in very different historical contexts one can find recurrent themes related to mental illness – the medical gaze, the cure and control. Both Fitzgerald and Eugenides explore different forms of social and medical control over the mentally ill body, using Nicole and Leonard as symbols for that which refuses to conform to social norms. Although they initially resist this control, both characters eventually accept treatment and the fact that they must conform to social expectations, even if only for the sake of their loved ones.

Together *Tender Is the Night* and *The Marriage Plot* offer insight into the evolution of psychiatric treatment during the 20th century in the United States and Europe, and are poignant reminders that there are continuing problems involved in the medicalisation of mental illness. Forms of treatment have in some ways become more humane and inclusive but strict control is still needed in order to care for the mentally ill. What unites the two novels is the manner in which both Fitzgerald and Eugenides base the characters of Nicole and Leonard in the social reality of psychotherapy and medical treatment – the medical model. Both narratives trace a mentally ill person attempting to manage their illness with the help of and for the sake of their loved ones, allowing the authors to depict the dramatic effects of mental illness on character relationships. Both authors also provide insight into how an individual patient might experience treatment and the medical gaze placed on them, although overall there is relatively little insight into Nicole's personal experience. Both authors raise important questions regarding the treatment of mental disorders and, in particular, whether psychiatric treatment can be more harmful than beneficial in some circumstances.

In many ways, Fitzgerald and Eugenides can also be seen as incorporating the social model of mental illness into their depictions of Nicole and Leonard, since it is evident that there are also social and environmental causes to some of the characters' symptoms. In particular, the judgmental attitudes of other characters are used to highlight the stigma and stereotypes surrounding mental illness. Ultimately, Eugenides has a more realistic and direct

approach when critiquing the medical model and the idea that bipolar disorder can be cured, which emphasises the notion that psychiatric treatment does have limitations. Fitzgerald, on the other hand, uses the concept of a cure symbolically so as to contrast Dick's downfall with Nicole's emancipation from her illness and his control.

The authors' depictions of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder also mirror the social attitudes and evolving values of 20th century America. Fitzgerald's focus is more on the effects of mental illness on relationships and society than on the effect of social pressures on the mentally ill. Perhaps due to the prejudices surrounding mental illness in his era, Fitzgerald depicts a less intimate portrait of mental illness, which does not fully address the effects of stigma and discrimination on Nicole. Subsequently, Nicole's own perspective of her illness is less frequently heard than the views of the outside world examining her. Eugenides, on the other hand, is more consistent in examining how cultural and social norms and practices can have harmful effects on a mentally ill person. Fitzgerald raises concerns as regards the commercial model of psychiatry, whereas Eugenides' voice speaks for the contemporary era where the problematic effects of pharmaceuticals and overmedication are better understood. This can possibly be traced to the fact that Eugenides has witnessed the rise of the anti-psychiatry movement and minority studies, which have had a profound influence on society's understanding of mental illness and experiences of being different. Understandably, Fitzgerald did not see such developments in American society and thus *Tender Is the Night* examines the ethical issues stemming from the fact that mental illness is a profitable business in the United States and Europe.

Both Fitzgerald and Eugenides at times use mental illness as a kind of narrative prosthesis or as a symbol for abnormality and deviance, which society and psychiatry attempt to normalise. In Fitzgerald's depiction of Nicole, her experience with schizophrenia is more symbolic than realistic and her characterisation suffers from a limited scope. Leonard, on the other hand, is a more rounded character and represents the lifelong emotional destruction that mental illness can cause. As a result of my analysis of the novels, it is evident that a character with a mental illness offers rich material and dramatic value to both narratives, which rely on both realistic and symbolic depictions of mental illness to capture the reader's imagination.

I believe that any literary representation of an existing mental disorder can expand the reader's understanding of mental illness but also holds the danger of exaggerated or unrealistic depiction. Fitzgerald and Eugenides at times perpetuate stereotypes of a mentally ill person as weak, submissive and incomplete. Eugenides leaves the reader wondering whether Leonard will ever learn to manage his own life and illness, and thus largely equates

bipolar disorder with tragedy. Nicole is miraculously cured but her condition does not necessarily represent the reality of living with schizophrenia.

Nonetheless, both *Tender Is the Night* and *The Marriage Plot* demonstrate that the distinction between sanity and insanity is subjective and at times hard to determine. Dick and Madeleine initially find themselves drawn to the unstable minds of Nicole and Leonard and even begin to lose touch with their own sanity while caring for their partners. The struggle between madness and reason is acted out in symbolic language and transference, which mirror the conflict in the characters' relationships and gender roles. Nicole and Leonard's gender in fact plays a crucial role in their identity as a mentally ill person, since social expectations and gender roles influence the mould that their treatment aims to place them in.

Fitzgerald and Eugenides use irony, humour and indirect critique in their portrayal of the social and cultural constructs underlying modern notions of mental illness. As well as examining the dark side of mental illness, both authors highlight the fact that deviance can in fact be a sign of creativity and a complex mind. Both novels also remind us that the individual and unique experience of a mentally ill person should never be marginalised when discussing or treating mental illness. Ultimately, the voice of madness is depicted as confused and abnormal in these novels, which reveal that abnormality can also be highly captivating.

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