

Psychological Trauma in Late Nineteenth-Century American Short Fiction

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Sossie Kechichian
School of English
University of Leicester

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Abstract

This thesis explores how late-nineteenth century American short fiction can be seen to have contributed to the changing notion of trauma as a psychological concept. Although in the later stages of the nineteenth-century trauma was still understood by the medical field in association with physical shock or injury, many late-nineteenth century fiction writers demonstrated in their works an awareness that trauma could in fact be purely psychological. Also, during this era, women's mental illnesses—which usually resulted from traumatic experiences or situations—were often classified under the fluid and ambiguous diagnosis of hysteria. Charlotte Gilman challenged this classification and rather understood these maladies in congruence with what has become identified as post-traumatic stress disorder.

I argue that these authors establish the psychological nature of trauma in their short fiction to correct limitations in the dominant nineteenth-century conception and to promote a more nuanced and accurate understanding of trauma. The authors selected for this thesis are Ambrose Bierce, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Henry James, Stephen Crane and Mark Twain. These writers advocated a re-evaluation of trauma along with the re-evaluation of contextual or cultural conditions and belief systems, which, as their fictional work reveals, were greatly responsible for generating trauma in victimized individuals. The thesis centers on the dialogue that existed between science and literature in the late-nineteenth century, a dialogue that allowed for the development of psychological trauma. This interchange is introduced in this thesis through the fictional expressions of the aforementioned authors of the era.

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Introduction

This thesis explores the ways in which a group of important late nineteenth-century writers—Ambrose Bierce, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Henry James, Stephen Crane and Mark Twain— contributed to an emerging understanding of psychological modalities. Their growing awareness of a more accurate and scientific understanding of psychology and psychological disorders allowed these writers, through their literary works, to facilitate this advance in certain concepts in psychology, particularly trauma. I argue that what binds the authors selected for this project is their fascination with the notion of trauma and how it affects and alters an individual's mental state, potentially resulting in the development of particular medically classifiable pathologies. These authors were all interested in different kinds of pathologies and different forms of psychological trauma at a time when psychology was just emerging as a professional discipline. What unites them is the shadow of the Civil War that lingered beyond the 1860s and other late-nineteenth century socio-cultural phenomena, including rapid modernization, urbanization and nation-wide industrialization, the pervasiveness of the popular press, the sudden transformation of many value systems and mass immigration.

The Evolution of Trauma

Trauma, as a psychological notion, and how the selected authors perceived it and represented it, is the focus of my research. Although the nineteenth-century notion of trauma was still in its early development and different from the twentieth-century understanding, I use the term trauma in this thesis in its twentieth-century meaning. I do this because the authors and the works chosen for this thesis demonstrate an advanced understanding of trauma and, as I will argue, preempted understandings forged in the twentieth-century conception of it. Roger Luckhurst provides a brief history of the evolution of psychological trauma.¹ He notes that before 1895, every written account related to trauma defined it as a physical wound. There is only one cited instance, from *Popular Science Monthly* (an American magazine which focused on scientific content) in 1895 that referred to trauma as 'psychical trauma, a morbid nervous condition' (Waugh 498). This change in the meaning of trauma began to appear in the latter period

¹ Roger Luckhurst. "Mixing Memory and Desire: Psychoanalysis, Psychology and Trauma Theory." *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, edited by Patricia Waugh, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 498-501.

of the nineteenth century as a product of emerging mental sciences and the impact of Victorian modernity. Although, up until this period, the shocks which resulted from railway accidents, for example, were interpreted as direct physical injuries to the nervous system (often called ‘railway spine’), medics began to recognize the presence of traumatic symptoms and mental distress even in complete absence of physical injury. In the 1870s and 1880s, notes Waugh, ‘mysterious conditions seemingly independent of physical injuries,’ including ‘hysteria, double or multiple personality, trance states and amnesia’, started to undergo serious investigation (Waugh 498) and began to pave the way for the recognition of psychological trauma.

Mental illness in the nineteenth century was commonly seen to result from physical weakness, often stemming from hereditary weakness. Madness was seen as an indication of degeneration, ‘a sliding down the evolutionary scale to a more primitive or even animalistic state’ (Waugh 498). Max Nordau, a German physician and social critic, for example, explained the link between madness and degeneracy in his book *Degeneration* (1892). He wrote:

When under any kind of noxious influences an organism becomes debilitated, its successors will not resemble the healthy, normal type of the species, with capacities for development, but will form a new sub-species, which like all others, possesses the capacity of transmitting to its offspring, in a continuously increasing degree, its peculiarities, these being morbid deviations from the normal form—gaps in development, malformations and infirmities. (25)

Nordau in this passage indicates psychological disorders in referring to ‘noxious influences’. He believed that psychopathologies were inherited rather than developed through traumatic circumstances. Nordau promoted two misleading ideas through his arguments: first, that psychological ailments were hereditary, and second, that all ‘degenerates’, as he refers to them, were immoral: ‘For them there exists no law, no decency, no modesty. In order to satisfy any momentary impulse, or inclination, or caprice, they commit crimes and trespass with the greatest calmness and self-complacency’ (26). This view contrasts substantially with the way in which the authors in this thesis viewed psychological disorders—as environmentally and circumstantially bred. Also, to them, immorality would be too limited and exclusive an understanding about the victims which they represent. All of them demonstrate the conviction that

when traumatic conditions affect the brain and its mental processes, morality does not come into play.

The developing dynamic psychology, however, recognized the psychological framework as much more independent. In 1893, Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer published the essay ‘On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena’ which initiated a challenge to the prior understanding of hysteria as a result of physical degeneration. Thus, in the 1890s trauma began to accrue a new psychological meaning. Freud and Breuer introduced a new understanding of ‘traumatic neurosis’ in their 1893 essay ‘The Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena’:

The operative cause of the illness is not the trifling physical injury but the effect of fright—the psychical trauma. In analogous manner, our investigations reveal, for many, if not for most, hysterical symptoms, precipitating causes which can only be described as psychical traumas. Any experience which calls up distressing affects—such as those of fright, anxiety, shame or physical pain—may operate as a trauma of this kind. (Breuer and Freud 5-6)

The introduction of these notions of trauma was fundamental in the more informed diagnoses and treatments for traumatized individuals. Freud and Breuer serve an imperative function in my exploration of the late-nineteenth century writers’ nuanced understanding of trauma; the recognition of trauma as a psychic reaction to overwhelming tension is also at the heart of each short story examined in this thesis.

Freud and Breuer were influenced by the French neurologist Jean Martin Charcot and the French dissociation psychotherapist Pierre Janet, two influential psychologists in the progressive understanding of trauma. Bessel Van der Kolk notes that based on the investigations that he conducted on his traumatized patients, Janet noticed that they were incapable of integrating traumatic memories with other life experiences and, as a result, at times entered dissociative states as a way to cope with troubling memories. Janet’s work profoundly influenced Breuer and Freud whose psychological theories were circulating rapidly in the U.S. around the beginning of the twentieth century. Freud’s first English translated work, *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905), was published in 1909 by the renowned American psychiatrist Abraham Brill

(Burgess 356).² In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud and Breuer argue that hysterics suffer predominantly from traumatic memories and that a traumatic experience is powerful enough to keep a patient fixated on this trauma (7).³ Freud's views on the impact of actual traumatic events, however, remained limited to his focus on the importance of repressed infantile sexuality. As a result, he overlooked the importance of investigating real traumatic events experienced by his patients, directing most of his attention to the Oedipal crisis which, to him, appeared in early childhood (Van der Kolk et al. 55). Contrary to Freud's focus on the Oedipal crisis, the authors chosen for this thesis were acutely aware of the power of traumatic events in the psyche and strove to reinforce the connection in their works of fiction. They all demonstrate in their works, a strong correlation between traumatic situations (not necessarily limited to early childhood sexual trauma) and post-traumatic mental ailments and disorders, even in individuals who initially seemed healthy.

Ruth Leys who is specialized in the history of the modern notion of psychological trauma, explains in *Trauma: A Genealogy* that the term trauma attained a more psychological sense when it was used by J. M. Charcot, Pierre Janet, Joseph Breuer and other late-nineteenth century figures who described it as an injury to the mind, generated by an unforeseen emotional shock. These psychologists, she reveals, began to focus on 'the hysterical shattering of the personality' which resulted from severe fear or shock (3). In 1875, John Eric Erichsen, a surgeon of railway accident traumas, came to change his original understanding of trauma as exclusively physical in nature. His encounter with the recurrent lack of indication of spinal or other physical injuries caused him to favor the idea of 'fright-related unconscious mental or moral causation' (Nijenhuis 21). PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) did not become a recognized psychological term until 1980 when it appeared in the third edition of the DSM-III in the wake of trauma associated with exposure to combat during the Vietnam War. Despite this long historical gap, I argue that the recognition of psychological trauma as a result of intense environmental stress loudly resonates in all the short stories analyzed in my thesis. This underlies my choice of authors for the exploration of how

² Brill was Born in Austria and emigrated to the U.S. at the age of 14. He was the first to translate most of Freud's works into English. His first translation of Freud was *Some Papers on Hysteria*, which appeared in 1909. Brill contributed substantially to the cultivation of psychoanalysis in America.

³ Freud moved away from organic/neurological understanding of psychic phenomena in the 1890s to develop psychoanalysis in the 1900s and 1910s. He stopped working with Breuer after their work on hypnosis.

the modern and contemporary notion of trauma was already recognized and demonstrated in much of the literature of the time before it became scientifically accepted.

Late-Nineteenth Century America: A Breeding Ground for Trauma

Along with the aforementioned nonmaterial concerns that were emerging in the late-nineteenth century, there were also drastic material changes; together, these might be seen to have contributed significantly to an atmosphere of mental distress and psychological problems. The Civil War was the most dramatic event in the United States in the nineteenth century, primarily because of the resulting prevalence of the expressions and investigations of trauma. These, in turn, promoted the medical understanding and recognition of trauma. For example, it was during the Civil War that Silas Weir Mitchell and his associates began their investigations into peripheral nerve injuries in soldiers, thus causing neurology to develop as a specialty. Those who were dedicated to this field argued against the separation of the study of peripheral nerve diseases and the study of the brain in all of its different expressions (Brieger 222). According to Timothy Kneeland and Carol Warren, the Civil War triggered innovations in psychiatry. For example, William Hammond, surgeon general of the Union Army during the Civil War, established distinct quarters in the Turner's Lane Hospital of Philadelphia for ailments and wounds of the nervous system (Kneeland and Warren 25).

Moreover, the late-nineteenth century and early twentieth century saw a parallel emergence of technological modernity and the 'first organized and systematized means for studying its consequences on the human psyche' (Lerner and Micalé 11). Although distressing emotional and physical experiences have always been present throughout human history, it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that trauma came to be recognized as a disease 'with a technical terminology,' which included 'theories of causation, classification, and therapeutic systems as well as medico-legal standing and governmental recognition' (11). The post-Civil War period saw the emergence of trauma as a more clearly defined medical condition.

Mainly because of the Civil War, the late-nineteenth century encountered a general and widespread climate of suffering and psychological stress. It is important to realize that the suffering and mental distress of the war was not limited to the soldiers on the battlefield; it extended to the whole population, causing significant long-term

grief throughout the nation. In his poem, 'Killed at the Ford' (1866), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow 'dissolved the boundary between home and battlefield, between combatants and noncombatants, between war's physical and emotional wounds' (Faust 143).

Longfellow writes:

That fatal bullet went speeding forth
Till it reached a town in the distant North
Till it reached a house in a sunny street
Till it reached a heart that ceased to beat
Without a murmur without a cry;
And a bell was tolled, in that far-off town,
For one who had passed from cross to crown
And the neighbors wondered that she should die. (Longfellow 827, 30-37)

In this poem, Longfellow presents the grief-induced death of a woman who lost her husband in combat, reflecting the fact that some grieving family members of dead soldiers did actually die due to the emotional and psychological distress caused by the death of their loved ones. Many others died of grief for their lost family members (Faust 143). Longfellow's words are indicative of the zeitgeist of grief and trauma particular to post-bellum America. Because of the better understanding of trauma that resulted from the Civil War, neurologists started to passionately battle asylum alienists and their treatment of the 'insane'. Neurologists such as George Beard, William Hammond, Weir Mitchell and Edward Spitzka criticized asylum attendants as 'unscientific and ignorant' and claimed the right to examine and evaluate the practices of asylums (25). Therefore, this emerging climate of the prevalence of traumatic expressions and the recognition of the need to reevaluate the ways in which trauma was, up until then, perceived and treated makes the post-bellum period of the U.S. the most appropriate context for my research interest in this thesis.

Along with the traumatic effects of the Civil War, the rapid modernization and radical changes that were taking place in late-nineteenth century America contributed to a climate of nervousness which subsequently allowed for the study of nervousness and neurasthenia, terms which would later become better understood and classified as trauma under the discipline of psychology. George Beard, one of the most prominent neurologists of the period, saw a significant correlation between the advancement of

civilization and nervous susceptibility. In *American Nervousness* (1881), he explained that individuals with weak nervous systems by heredity were only inclined to nervous impairment if civilization played a role in exacerbating the weakness. According to Beard, it was not merely civilization, but specifically nineteenth-century American civilization that was responsible for the outbreak of nervousness. He argued that ‘American Nervousness was as peculiar a product of the nineteenth century as the telegraph’ (qtd. in McGarry 146). As Beard saw it, factors particular to nineteenth century civilization—mainly urban pressures—such as steam power, the telegraph, the periodical press, science, and women’s increased mental activity which allegedly exhausted their nervous energy, all contributed to the development of neurasthenia by increasing the demands on the nervous systems of American individuals (qtd. in McGarry 146).

Andrew Scull explains that the climate of nervousness and neurasthenia emerged as a result of the continuous struggle for success, the haste of modern life (as typified by the telegraph and steam engine); the frenzy and commotion effected by the periodical press and the emergence of social transformations as capitalism loomed unrestrained (96). As Beard understood it, all of these issues exhausted the nervous energy of American citizens at the turn of the century, propelling and spreading neurasthenia at a dizzying pace. Beard explains that although these features were attributed to nineteenth century civilization in general, it was only felt in full force in the United States due to the nation’s dizzying pace in achieving modernization. Beard explained that those who ‘overtaxed their systems ran down their batteries, overloaded their circuits, overdrew their accounts, bankrupted their nervous systems, and were prone to breakdown’ (qtd. in Scull 96). He also revealed that neurasthenia was a disease of those who were intellectually distinguished, cultured, and wealthy because ‘it was these segments of society who were most exposed to the stresses and the pressures of modernity, whose nervous systems were stretched tightest, eventually to breaking point’ (96). American modernization occurred very rapidly following the Civil War. For Britain and Germany, it happened earlier and across a more extended period. By the time the U.S. experienced the full-scale effects of modernization after the civil war, Europe had already witnessed different forms of modernization, and modernization was already in their cultural psyche. For this reason, Americans experienced the impact of modernization much more forcefully than did other nations, and for this reason I choose

the late-nineteenth century American context for the examination of the evolution of psychological trauma.

Literature and Science in Late-Nineteenth Century America

It is also important to explore how the literature of the period, particularly the short fiction form, contributed to the more informed understanding of psychology, particularly trauma. To accomplish this it is essential to trace the development of science through literature and elaborate on how interconnected these two fields were in the nineteenth century. Laura Otis explains that the term ‘science’ began to hold a more modern meaning in the 1830s. She refers to Robert Southley who observed in 1834 that ‘the medical profession ... was an art ... before it became a science’ (qtd. in Otis, n.pag). She also references William Whewell who, at the meeting for the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1833, proposed the term ‘scientific’ for ‘investigators who until then had been known as natural philosophers’ (qtd. in Otis n.pag). This evolution of science from the arts and philosophy is crucial in explaining the interconnection of science, particularly psychiatry and neurology, and the literature of the nineteenth century, and to understand how both disciplines nurtured one another. Otis also reveals another interesting factor in the correspondence of the disciplines; up until the modern period, true education was considered an education in the classics and arts (Otis n.pag). Thus, emerging scientists in the nineteenth century needed to be educated in classical literature in order to be considered trustworthy by the public. Many of them even had to write to make a living until their scientific careers could support them. These factors all explain and reinforce the idea that science and literature were inextricable in late-nineteenth century America and that it is reasonable to suggest that literature played a significant role in the evolution of psychology.

Otis explains that the idea of a ‘split’ or ‘gap’ between the disciplines of science and literature would have been a notion alien to the nineteenth century. More interesting (and very relevant to this project) is the extent to which the popular press also reinforced the overlap of the two disciplines. She explains that in the popular press the two disciplines existed in singularity and were available to all readers. She writes:

Scientists quoted well-known poets both in their textbooks and in their articles for lay readers, and writers who now identify as primarily ‘creative’ explored

the implications of scientific theories. Science was not perceived as being written in a ‘foreign language’ – a common complaint of the 21st century readers. As a growing system of knowledge expressed in familiar words, science was in effect a variety of literature. (xvii)

As expressed in this passage, during the nineteenth century, there was a clear and strong relationship between science and literature and the authorities in each field were usually knowledgeable about ideas in both areas. The fact that both fields shared publication spaces, knowledge about both domains and as a similar language allowed for a union of the two fields particular to the late-nineteenth century.

John Tyndall, a prominent nineteenth-century Irish physicist, remarked in ‘The Belfast Address’ (1874): ‘it has been said that science divorces itself from literature; but the statement, like so many others, arises from lack of knowledge’ (61). In arguing that science is incomplete without literature, he wrote:

The world embraces not only a Newton but a Shakespeare—not only a Boyle but a Raphael—not only a Kant but a Beethoven—not only a Darwin but a Carlyle. Not in each of these but in all, is human nature whole. They are not opposed but supplementary—not mutually exclusive but reconcilable. (64)

The passage points at Tyndall’s determination to preserve and encourage the unity of science and humanities, believing that this unity allows for the holistic exploration and presentation of scientific ideas. Tyndall believed that successful scientists were those who possessed a strong imagination and literary skill (62). In this regard, Sigmund Freud would be a good example of a psychologist whose success in transmitting his ideas of psychoanalysis depended, to a certain extent, on the superiority of his articulation. Many of his findings were presented as case studies, which could be read similarly to works of realistic literary fiction. Taking this into consideration, I assert that the writers in this thesis also use the language of fiction to express forms of psychological suffering which did not yet have a language. Through the metaphor of the disfigured face, for example, Stephen Crane and Ambrose Bierce were able to reproduce the transformations and distortions that manifested as a result of psychological trauma.

Jane Thrailkill, for example, suggests in *Affecting Fictions* that:

the realist fiction writers of the nineteenth century ‘actively engaged with ideas of mindful corporeality of affective experience as theorized by Charles Darwin, William James, and John Dewey. A focus on the exemplary realist emotions of pity, fear, nervousness, pleasure and wonder reveals how attention to bodily response placed literature and aesthetic experience at the center of nineteenth-century explorations into human consciousness. (7)

All the authors in this thesis were realists who engaged with scientific discourses and ideas, thus facilitating the cross-fertilization between the sciences and humanities.

Many critics agree that the late-nineteenth century was a scientific age. They believe that the literature of this age had to undergo inevitable change after Darwin. It is not surprising, then, that most critics draw a link between the scientific climate of the period and the emergence of realism and naturalism in literature. Edmund Gosse and James Sulley, for instance, observed that the scientific devotion to the accuracy of detail and to the factual presentation of data directly influenced the direction that literary art took toward realism. In 1890, Edmund Gosse noted that in 1877 Henry James ‘inaugurated the experimental novel in the English language with *The American* and James Sully made the sweeping observation that the novel flatters science by imitating her experimental activity’ (qtd. in Newlin 75).

Charles Darwin’s emergent philosophies largely affected the humanities of the late-nineteenth century, playing a substantial role in the adoption of scientific ideas by the literature of the time. Bert Bender elaborates on the great impact of Darwinian ideas on late-nineteenth century American literature by pointing out that American writers of the period were not only reading the discussions of Darwin and reading Darwin firsthand, but sharpening their thinking by closely reading and contesting each other’s works with Darwinian ideas. For example, William James’s notion of evolving consciousness was influenced by Darwinian thought. In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890) James, influenced by the philosophy of natural selection, suggested that ‘consciousness is at all times primarily a *selecting agency*’ (James, *Principles* 142). He compares the reflex arc to a series of filters where selection at one level provides variation at the next’ (James, *Principles* 391-392). He writes:

One liability of such arcs is to have their activity ‘inhibited’ by other processes going on at the same time. It makes no difference whether the arc be organized at birth or ripen spontaneously later, or be due to acquired habit, it must take its chances with all other arcs, and sometimes succeed and sometimes fail, in drafting off currents through itself. The mystical view of an instinct would make it invariable. The physiological view would require it to show occasional irregularities in any animal in whom the number of separate instincts, and the possible entrance of the same stimulus into several of them, were great.

James seems to have understood consciousness through a Darwinian lens, continuously affected by influencing factors that decide the nature of the subsequent level of consciousness.

James, along with William Dean Howells, tried to make the best sense of this new understanding of an evolving nature of human consciousness that they could. They were intensely and self-consciously engaged in the cultural debate that sought to define and interpret the Darwinian ‘reality,’ with all its social implications. In one instance, after reading his brother Henry’s *Roderick Hudson* (1875), William James exclaimed to Henry: ‘I am again struck unfavorably by the tendency of the personages [in *Roderick Hudson*] to reflect on themselves and give an acute critical scientific introspective classification of their own natures and states of mind. Take warning once more!’ (Skrupskelis and Burkeley 101).

In another case, remarking on *Mark Twain and Science: Adventures of a Mind* (1988), Sherwood Cummings elaborates on the large amount of scientific material in the journals of the early 1870s, along with Twain’s association with *Galaxy* beginning in May 1870. Cummings also discusses Darwin and *The Descent of Man* (1871) to demonstrate how, for Twain—as with his fellow contributors to the *Galaxy*—Darwin was unquestionably the dominant figure in the field of science and in literary efforts to reflect this new science. Cummings elaborates on how Twain acquired a copy of *The Descent of Man* and ‘studied the first four chapters’ in 1871 (Bender 366). The editors wrote: ‘[Darwin] has given us a new reading of nature, has opened the higher questions of life and human relations, has furnished a new method to the mind, and is fast becoming a new power in literature’ (qtd. in Bender 368).

Additionally, Justine Murison reveals that much fiction of the nineteenth century ‘tested, imagined, and extended’ the ‘exciting yet unstable medical world of the

nervous system' (5). Weir Mitchell and Wendell Holmes are good examples of professionals who were involved in the fields of both science and literature, and who used literature as a means for the exploration of scientific phenomena. According to Murison, 'fiction afforded them a mode to explore those aspects of the nervous system that reached beyond clinical analysis' (5). For example, in his preface to *Elsie Venner: A Romance of Destiny* (1861), a novel about serpentine hysteria, Holmes suggests that 'a grave scientific doctrine may be detected lying beneath some of the delineation of characters' (qtd. in Murison 5). Holmes maintained that his type of 'romance' was grounded in science 'as it stretches beyond nonscientific limits' (qtd. in Murison 5). Murison's study uses Holmes as an example of how romance, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, functioned as a vital and integral complement to scientific realism rather than as its opposite (5). To Murison, nineteenth-century medicine and experimental non-realist fiction were mutually influential and inspirational to one another. She writes, 'These fictions were continuous with rather than rejections of the nineteenth-century scientific speculation' (6).

In *Neurology and Literature, 1860-1920* (2007), Anne Stiles explores the strong interdisciplinary collaboration between literary writers and neurologists in post-Civil War America. The emergence of biological reductionism and a large corpus of new American literary writing coincided in this period. During this era, neurologists such as Weir Mitchell and Santiago Cajal wrote affecting fiction while literary authors like H.G. Wells, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Wilkie Collins produced literature that dramatized theories in neurology and analyzed the philosophical consequences of scientific findings. In the period from 1860 to 1920, scientists and artists expressed great interest in the ideas of one another, allowing for an important exchange between the outputs in both disciplines. The communication between the science and literature of the period was 'dialogic or circular'; the authors of literature and those of science responded to each other with mutual interest and reception, 'collaborating, quarrelling, and generally struggling to find ideological common ground' (2).

The Short Fiction Form

So, why examine the short fiction form for a further exploration of the intersection of literature and psychology at the end of the nineteenth century? In considering such a question, it is important to consider Frank O'Connor, who considered the short story

form appropriate for ‘telling the tale of the outsider’ (qtd. in Bostrom 44). In his 1962 study, *The Lonely Voice*, he acknowledged that ‘the short story is the genre most appropriate to the portrayal of those on the fringes of society—presumably the very people whose behaviors psychologists and sociologists, not to mention lay readers would find most interesting’ (Bostrom 42). Clare Hanson also writes in *Re-Reading the Short Story* (1989) that ‘the short story has offered itself to losers and loners, exiles, women, blacks—writers who for one reason or another have been part of the ruling ‘narrative’ or epistemological/experiential framework of their society (Hanson 2). She also suggests that ‘the [genre’s] formal properties—disjunction, inconclusiveness, obliquity—connect with its ideological marginality and with the fact that the form may be used to express something suppressed/repressed in mainstream literature’ (6).

These suggestions are of great value, considering the authors chosen for this thesis and their determination to alleviate the pains and misrepresentations of the marginalized individuals of their interests. For example, Gilman used the short story form to present an in-depth analysis of women’s minds under distress. Similarly, James used the short story to reveal the complexity of and psychological processes of homosexual individuals who were alienated, ostracized and repressed. All the authors and their short stories that I am interested in for this thesis deal with certain marginalized social groups of late-nineteenth-century America, offering insight into the psychological processes of these individuals. Thus, the short story is of great value for the purpose of this thesis.

Moreover, the short story form enabled these writers to achieve the effects they were looking to produce. The short story offered Bierce, for example, a formula to gravitate toward the ‘dramatic and shocking’, according to Richard Fusco. Fusco states that ‘the descending helical allowed him to explore aspects of literary impressionism—especially of how a crisis intensifies and dilates the individual’s consciousness’ (104). He writes:

For Bierce, the severity of his war experience, the breakup of his marriage, and the grotesque circumstances that surrounded his son Day’s suicide after a gun battle over a woman—all supported his vision that life’s meaning can be reduced to its isolated, almost farcical moments of defeat. In his short stories, Bierce seldom carries a plot beyond this point; any appendix would ultimately

prove superfluous and perhaps would threaten to dismiss his insights by rendering them sentimental (105).

In both of Bierce's short stories used in this thesis, Bierce focuses primarily on the moment of his protagonists' defeat, and his consciousness at the time of this defeat. It is this moment that matters to Bierce and nothing beyond it. Thus, the short story form allows Bierce to capture the in-depth processes of consciousness under the effects of trauma without giving importance or detail to much else. By doing this he is able to achieve his purpose, to 'dilate' his protagonist's consciousness and reveal the dramatic effects of psychological trauma. Therefore, for the purpose of exploring the traumatized mind, the short story form (particularly the descending helical) is appropriate for Bierce.

The short story is also important for the purpose of my thesis since I am concerned with the ways in which the authors of my interest explore and present the unconscious mind during trauma; the short story as a form mimics the dream-like and unordered quality of the unconscious. As Hanson suggests, 'the short work refuses to give us a world of law and order' and 'we are refused a point of entry into and identification with the text and are denied the v(ic)arious satisfactions which we derive from seeing the characters of a novel take action, thus appearing to control the fearful endlessness of reality' (Hanson 31). She writes:

the short story may often refuse a certain level of narrative, that it is not as it were 'stitched together', as narrative, by the operations of the conscious mind. In the relations of its parts there is a dream quality which refers us back to the operations of the unconscious. (31)

Because the authors in this thesis are all interested in presenting the mind under trauma and the ways in which the unconscious functions in traumatic situations, the short story genre is the most appropriate form for this thesis.

Also, the pessimistic climate of the last decades of the nineteenth century contributed to the emergence of the general desire for and appreciation of the shorter form. This newly found national anxiety in post-bellum America not only affected the ability of the authors of the period to produce their work as before, but also influenced the type of literature that the population demanded. Margaret Fuller explains that the

population during this period was so overwhelmed by anxiety regarding the war that they read nothing but newspapers. This change affected the demand for literature as well, as periodicals and journals featuring works of short fiction flourished during this period (Fuller 22). According to Fuller, newspapers and magazines were a rising popular reading trend, and representation of the real and ugly experiences of war was one of the important criteria for publication (23). It is important to note that many short story writers, including all the authors discussed in this thesis, began writing short stories in newspapers and magazines.

By the 1890s magazines and newspapers printed short stories regularly, along with debates about the short story itself. Henry James, in 1898, described the short story, which was a very new term at the time, as ‘an object of almost extravagant dissertation’ (qtd. in Chan xvi). Brander Matthews, a professor and writer of short stories during this period also wrote, in the *Saturday Review* magazine, that the short story is ‘an artistically superior genre’ (xvi). During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the majority of short stories appeared in magazines and newspapers. Short story publications and the success of periodicals, therefore, depended significantly on one another. During this time, the magnitude of the periodical press was vast and in order to survive immense competition amongst each other, periodicals competed for fiction in order to appeal to as many members of the growing population of middle-class readers as possible. Similarly, short fiction flourished during the late-nineteenth century because it was a period where the success of a periodical depended greatly on its fiction section, the fiction at that time being mainly short stories (Maunder 264-265).

Another factor to consider in the choice of the genre of the short story for this research is the interconnection between these writers and their representations of different forms of marginality in periodicals of the time, along with key scientific or psychological themes. Laura Otis reveals the role of the nineteenth-century popular press in the juncture of the two fields. She explains that it was the most important channel for the exchange and dialogues among writers of all fields: ‘In nineteenth-century periodicals, magazines, and newspapers, articles on scientific issues were set side by side with fiction, poetry, and literary criticism’ (Otis xix). It is important to note that all the writers presented in this thesis were at some point in their careers writing for periodicals and, in this regard, at least connected in one way or another to ideas in psychology and neurology. They also presented very moving fictional accounts of neurological and traumatic phenomena.

After having considered the late-nineteenth century climate, it is clear that this period is suitable for the exploration of the evolving notion of trauma. In addition, the authors in this thesis, all being reformist short story writers and citizens who were determined to present the truthful realities of the American experience, are seminal in foregrounding and portraying the traumatic conditions that lay behind illnesses of the misrepresented and the marginalized.

Selected Authors and their Literary Works

The works that will be analyzed in this thesis all demonstrate the authors' advanced awareness of the ways in which the mind alters and distorts under the pressure of traumatic situations. In his Civil War stories, 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' and 'One of the Missing', Ambrose Bierce explores war trauma and its related mental impact, which he was aware of due to his participation in the Civil War as a soldier. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in 'The Yellow Wallpaper', offers insight into the traumatic experiences produced by the oppression and pressures upon the women of the time. Henry James, in 'The Author of Beltraffio' and 'The Pupil', examines the traumatic alienation and marginalization endured by men with sexual orientations that were considered deviant and degenerate at the end of the nineteenth-century. Lastly, Stephen Crane and Mark Twain, in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) and 'The Story of the Bad Little Boy who did Not Come to Grief' (1865) respectively, bring to the fore the deleterious effects of traumatic childhoods.

One main element that binds these authors is their shared interest in social reform and in promoting the recognition that psychological disorders resulted from taxing conditions, misunderstandings and mistreatment. They were all also aware that the pressures and strenuous conditions endured by the social group which each represents were, to a certain extent, created and exacerbated by the misleading and limited cultural ideologies of their time. These writers, all social reformers of the last decades of the nineteenth century, were aware that such flawed dominant belief systems and representations contributed to psychological struggles in the victims of such exploitive and misleading representation, and strove to express the truth and a deeper understanding of human behavior in their fiction. They strove to promote change through their written expression and to promote awareness regarding dysfunctional aspects of society. Moreover, because they were aware that the sensational presses

played a contributing role in some dysfunctionalities, they also strove to oppose the deceptive discourses promoted through these presses. Thus, through their fiction, they sought to alleviate the suffering of the marginalized or the victimized by presenting untold truths.

Charlotte Gilman, for example, was a leading figure in the reform of women's social conditions and medical treatment in the 1890s in America. She was determined to achieve this goal through her fictional and nonfictional writing. For example, Sabine Doran reveals that in Gilman's desire for a more accurate and nuanced media representation of late-nineteenth century issues, especially issues related to women whose understanding and evaluation were controlled by the representation of a patriarchal media and society, Gilman started publishing the *Forerunner* periodical in 1909. Being a journalist and fiction writer, Gilman aspired to reveal the more inclusive truth about women and their lives and to reject patriarchal representations and understandings of women (Edelstein 131). For this reason, Gilman is a valuable author for this project. She was acutely aware of the detrimental effects of trauma on women (their traumatic oppression, suppression, and mistreatment), and she was resolute in her cause to produce corrective literary expression that would reverse what she saw as a faulty understanding of women and their relationships to trauma (labeled as hysteria at the time). Because Gilman was herself a victim of her era's misconceptions of women and their psychological ailments, and because she possessed a more accurate understanding of women, their lives, and their disorders, she was seminal in her role as a social reformer for women's rights and medical treatments. Through Gilman's passionate reformist writings and her autobiographical novella, 'The Yellow Wallpaper', she was able to facilitate a better understanding of women's psychological conditions and suggest a more nuanced way of treating these conditions.

Ambrose Bierce was also interested in reform; he believed that true art should have the ability to send a message and make a change in the world. This belief can be seen in a letter that he wrote to his friend, Blanche Partington, on August 15, 1892, in which he criticized literature and producers of the literature who wrote only to achieve fame by writing and submitting within current trends. In short, he accuses them of not being true artists. In his criticism of these writers, he specifically wrote: 'The work of these men is better, of course, than the work of men of truer art and inferior brains; but always you see the possibilities—possibilities to them—which they have missed or consciously sacrificed to their fad' (Bierce, Letters 45). Bierce strongly prioritized the

possibilities that writers can achieve through their writing. He believed that if an author's work does not send a message or, in other words, promote change or reform, then this author is missing an important opportunity for progress. Moreover, his selected fiction reflects his disapproval of and opposition to the discourse of the time that promoted the prioritization of valor and patriotism over individual survival and wellbeing.

Crane also prioritized the understanding of human experience over established, possibly faulty cultural ideologies. Ronald Martin describes Crane as having been an 'American knowledge destroyer' who focused on the importance of human experience and exhibited 'absolute reverence for experience' over any other form of 'knowledge' (122). Crane looked to the authenticity of human experiences to understand human behavior and reactions rather than to the established erroneous belief systems. According to Martin, Crane was in extended opposition to his society 'and especially with its gentility, sentimentality, idealism, and complacency' (123). Martin also argues that Crane's works have a clear objective: 'to open his readers' eyes to the brutalization of life in the slums, to the hollowness of wartime heroism, to the destructiveness of social self-righteousness, to the dangers of cultural myths and their believers, to the revelation that the universe doesn't love us (123). Martin's comment can be verified by Crane's exploration of the dangers of the social self-righteousness and cultural myths, which he clearly attacks in *Maggie* (see Chapter Four). Crane is highly critical of the nineteenth century's cultural myths that demonized immigrant children and promoted harsh corporal discipline.

Also, according to Shelley Fisher, Twain was an unrelenting rival of anything that stood in the way of human progress and individual potential, and he abhorred religious hypocrisy and organized religion (205). Also, according to Gladys Bellamy, Twain's creed was humanity. From his earliest days of writing until his last, 'he is never long without some cause to champion, some wrong to right, some victim to defend' (Bellamy 56).

This group of authors also all shared an awareness of the dangers of pernicious and potentially misleading discourses and ideologies expressed by the dominant and emerging popular presses of their context. The late-nineteenth century journalistic outlets were predominantly controlled by two leading sensational presses: William Randolph Hearst's *San Francisco Examiner* and Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*. Whether the propagandist discourse that encouraged patriotism and heroism and

‘masculine’ valor in men, or the devious discourse that promoted submissiveness and passivity in women, or the slanderous rhetoric that alienated and criminalized homosexuality, the prevalence of these ideologies was, according to this set of authors, dangerous. These authors were all aware that the politically biased and corrupt news reporting of the penny presses (whose main objective was to attract readers and generate money) usually compromised the accuracy in the documentation or reporting of the lives of the less fortunate or the oppressed, thus exacerbating the alienation and oppression of such people and social groups and fostering an array of psychological disorders. Where the journalists of this kind of news reporting, referred to as Yellow Journalism, were interested in producing catchy news that would easily sell (despite any inaccuracies), the writers chosen for this project were interested in complex truths and in the human emotion, suffering, and victimization behind these reports. For this reason, these authors all turned to fiction to achieve their goal of presenting the intricacy and truth behind human behavior.

Mass communications historian, Hazel Dicken-Garcia, noted that in the last decades of the nineteenth century, journalism emphasized drama and storytelling; the focus was turned to people and their actions and this telling often involved an element of sensationalism (Sachsman xxv). Because all of the authors discussed in this thesis were journalists early in their writing careers, they were exposed to and experienced the partiality and often inaccuracy in the representations of the penny presses. This exposure would generate the values of truth and accuracy that would later underpin their fiction. Shelley Fisher Fishkin notes that the late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century American writers who were initially journalists received exposure that would force each of them to become keen observers. This exposure, Fishkin notes:

nurtured in [them] a respect for fact, and taught [them] lessons about style that would shape [their] greatest literary creations. It taught [them] to be mistrustful of rhetoric, abstractions, hypocrisy, and cant; it taught [them] to be suspicious of second hand accounts and to insist on seeing with [their] eyes. (4)

Thus, I argue that these authors are important contributors to the exploration and analysis of human behavior, experience, and mind in the latter part of the nineteenth century in America, at arm’s length from, or at times in opposition to, popular newspaper journalism of the time.

According to Underwood, the culture of news reporting and the attitude of the urban journalists by the late-nineteenth century were characteristically ‘exploitive of human tragedy’, and both Twain and Crane were antipathetic toward this (5). Twain, for example, started to move away from his reporting career in 1864, partly because the *San Francisco Morning Call* refused to print his story of a Chinese immigrant who was stoned by a mob of Irish juveniles (Underwood 4). Both writers strove for a more authentic and holistic expression of the external pain they witnessed around them and found that the journalism of the time fell short as a medium of such genuine presentation. Bierce also expressed a strong aversion for the popular presses of his context. He worked for William Randolph Hearst, one of the biggest popular press magnates at the time. Yet he was aware of the corruption involved: Roy Morris Jr. revealed in *Alone in Bad Company* (1995) that Bierce never ‘warmed to his odd distant employer’ (Morris 199) and viewed Hearst’s political views as those of ‘a mischievous demagogue’ (199). Bierce admitted that if he were to justify his service to the journal of the person he loathed and whose policies he disagreed with it was because it was easy service. He clearly expresses his desire to oppose misleading news: ‘As to the point of honor ... I, O well, I persuaded myself that I could do more good by addressing those who had greatest need of me—the millions of readers to whom Mr. Hearst was a misleading light’ (qtd. in Joshi and Schultz 202). Bierce was thus unquestionably concerned about his readers and about the necessity to protect them from misleading news and misleading ideologies that would push them to pursue ‘heroism’ and ‘masculine bravery’ at the cost of their own mental health.

Only through such social reform and the revelation of the corruption and propaganda of yellow journalism (which transmitted dominant ideologies of the era) were readers offered the truth and reality of human suffering. Through the more truthful expression of suffering presented through fiction, readers were exposed to deeper psychological insight pertaining to the suffering of individuals or social groups, in the hope that the people that were represented in this fiction would be understood rather than slandered. Where the popular press idealized patriotism and encouraged valorous fighting in war, writers like Ambrose Bierce highlighted the overlooked reality of the psychological suffering involved in battle. Where yellow journalism continued to exhibit and promote patriarchal ideology (for example the cult of true womanhood) to control and suppress women, writers like Charlotte Gilman exposed the dangers and psychological damage that such oppression caused women. Where yellow journalism

criminalized and alienated gay men, writers like Henry James revealed the suffering and hurtful marginalization that these men endured, and how such suffering caused them mental distress. In order to expose the psychological reality of the victimized groups of this period, it was important for these authors to unravel the faulty belief systems and ideologies that the popular presses promoted, and explore and reveal the true suffering that they endured. These writers were all conscious that ideology and psychology were intertwined and thus battled the misleading ideologies which contributed to great mental strain in individuals who did not fall into the category of 'normalcy' which such hegemonic socio-cultural systems constructed.

Another shared commonality among these authors and rationale for combining them in my analysis of the relationship between their fictional expressions and the nuanced expression of trauma, is their shared understanding of life as deterministic, and human behavior as linked to environmental forces. Although not all of these writers can be considered naturalists, they all expressed one of the core ideas of naturalism in their writing, which is fidelity to a scientific understanding of nature. Donald Pizer suggests that the common belief is that literary naturalists expressed commitment to details of contemporary life, focusing on the role of environment and heredity in shaping human behavior (86) — something that these authors give substantial importance to. The naturalist often presents his characters as products of their environment and their instinct, according to Pizer (Pizer 86). He notes that Naturalism proposes that 'even the least significant human being' has deep feelings and can suffer powerful consequences of these feelings, thus leaving no array of human behavior free from moral complexity (87). It is this understanding which all of these authors share, and it is this understanding which allows them to recognize and explore the psychological consequences of traumatic environmental conditions and reject superficial notions or understandings of immorality. They all harbored a common interest in exploring the scientific and psychological reactions to their characters' traumatic environments, and demonstrate how, in situations of intense stress, the animal instinct of survival—the fight or flight response— (often in form of dissociation) overtakes an individual's behavior.

One striking similarity among these authors' perception of determinism is what Jennifer Fleissner refers to as a situation of psychological 'stuck-ness' and 'compulsion' (37). In *Women, Compulsion, Modernity* (2004), she argues that 'the psychological writings of the turn of the century in fact focused more intensely than any

have since on compulsive activity as a dialectical process in which every attempt at a more perfect order leads inexorably to the order's failure' (10). Although in this statement, Fleissner refers to the genre of naturalism and its descriptive stuck-ness in its attempt to provide more detail and order, I see this failure as the mental collapse or entrapment which all the protagonists in this thesis end up experiencing due to their attempt at order (which comes at the cost of repression). All of these protagonists repress either fears, desires, or needs in order to comply to the 'order' of civilization, ending up captured in some kind of mental entrapment or compulsion. In substituting the notion of naturalist determinism, with the more nuanced concept of compulsion, Fleissner writes:

Compulsion, we will see, draws together several aspects of the 'natural-ist' project. Most broadly it has the potential to name an understanding of agency in which individual will and its subjection to rationalizing 'forces' appear as more deeply intertwined. More specifically, to the extent that nature appears not as the presocial wilderness in these texts but as an important feature *within* human social life, various everyday rituals taking place around the fact of embodiment (sex, birth, death, illness, cleanliness, etc.) take on a new interest to these novelists just as to the era's anthropologists, psychologists, historians, and sociologists. Dedicated to making order out of bodily lives, these rituals appear at their most elaborated as pioneering literary representations of what we would now term 'obsessive-compulsive' behavior. (10-11)

In parallel with this nuanced consideration of determinism, I believe that the authors of my interest all demonstrate the deterministic aspect of their protagonists' lives in the form of psychological entrapment and 'stuck-ness'. Although not necessarily in the form of compulsion or obsessive compulsive behavior, these characters are all trapped or stuck in and determined by their psychological malfunctions. Where Bierce's protagonists for example, repress fear and hesitation to be good citizens and contribute to national 'order', Gilman's protagonist represses her desire for independence and stimulation to be a proper wife and contribute to the 'order' of the domestic realm. Also where James's protagonists repress their authentic sexuality to contribute to societal and 'marital order', Crane's and Twain's characters repress their attachment needs in order

to regulate their emotions. In all of these cases the exaggerated attempt at order results ultimately in failure of order through psychological collapse.

Theoretical (Psychological) Framework and Overview of Chapters

Because of my interest in the literary expression of trauma and its development in late-nineteenth century America, and its correlation to shocking or traumatizing situations, the main psychologists whose ideas are utilized in this thesis will be George Beard, William James, Sigmund Freud, Pierre Janet, Joseph Breuer, Jean Charcot, Edward Kempf, Russel Noyes, Roy Kletti, Raymond Moody, and John Bowlby. It was these psychologists (with the exception of Noyes, Kletti, Moody and Bowlby) who dealt with the notion of trauma around the turn of the century and who, like the authors in this research, believed in a correlation between stressful experiences and psychological reactions or disorders. Many of these psychologists' ideas, which paved the way for the understanding of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders, were already circulating in the literature of these writers before they became recognized scientific concepts. Therefore, using the ideas of these psychologists is fundamental in demonstrating the similarities between the ideas of the chosen psychologists and psychiatrists and the selected writers of this thesis. Drawing on the striking similarities in the ideas of these intellectuals allows for the substantiation of my claim that these writers were advanced in their understanding of psychological trauma and that the representations of psychological trauma in their short stories are akin to the insights and understandings of the referenced psychologists.

My research combines both European and American psychologists, the rationale behind this being that during this time there was a fluid interchange in ideas between European and American psychologists. The ideas of Freud, for example, were enthusiastically welcomed by American intellectuals and circulated at large in the American periodicals at the turn of the century. The reverse is also true however. The theories of George Beard, for instance, were also enthusiastically received by Freud. Freud had read Beard in 1895 and admired his case method pragmatism and Darwinism, even though he was critical of his aetiology (Wiener 274). Freud quoted the Swiss psychiatrist, Otto Binswanger's *Die Pathologie und Therapie der Neurasthenie* (1896) in his article 'Civilized Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness' (1908):

Neurasthenia especially has been described as essentially a modern disorder, and Beard, to whom we are first indebted for a general description of it, believed that he had discovered a new nervous disease which had developed specifically in America. This assumption was, of course, erroneous; nevertheless, the fact that an American physician was the first to perceive and maintain—as the fruit of great experience—the particular symptoms of this disorder cannot fail to point to a close connection between them and the modern way of life. (Freud, *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love* 10)

Although one cannot be certain about the extent to which Freud was influenced by Beard, it is very clear that Freud read his ideas and approved of them. What is important in this example, however, is the indication that European and American psychologists were exposed to the works and ideas of each other.

Also according to Gerald Myers, Freud visited the U.S. to deliver his *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1909. During that visit, Myers notes, Ernest Jones reported William James's comment about Freud, that the future of psychology belonged to his work (Myers 593). James also referred to the ideas of Breuer and Freud on psychopathology in his graduate lectures in Harvard (1893-98) and cited some of the cases from their *Studies in Hysteria* in his Lowell Lectures of 1896 (Taylor 466).

Francis George Gosling notes that although Freud is seen to have introduced the idea of neurosis and the power of the mind in producing somatic disturbances, this was an awareness already present among the American neurologists in the late-nineteenth century (5). Thus, Freud's lectures in Clark University in 1909 were received by an already aware audience; as Gosling puts it, 'these were notions that had been widely discussed but never put into the precise and scholarly form that Freud used' (Gosling 5). In the 1920s, American psychiatrists, young and old traveled to Vienna to study with Freud and his followers. However, as Gosling emphasizes, they went with their own intellectual traditions, which had been developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Gosling 5). This interaction between Freud and American neurologists, who already paralleled his own thoughts, demonstrates a clear reciprocation of ideas pertaining to neurosis. Rather than a one-sided reception of Freudian thoughts by American psychiatrists, it was instead an exchange of ideas between them. Thus, it can be argued that Freud also learned from the American

psychiatrists and neurologists, and what became psychoanalysis was inevitably influenced by the contribution of late-nineteenth century thinkers interested in psychology.

Charcot also recognized the importance of George Beard and referenced him for his contention that the nervous states that resulted from railway accidents were in fact largely related to the psychological shock induced by the situation and not exclusively by a blow to the head. For example, in his discussion on neurasthenia, Charcot wrote, in *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System* (1873):

Now, gentlemen, the neurasthenic state, together with the collection of phenomena which Beard has assigned to it in his remarkable monograph, is one of the nervous affections which become developed most frequently in consequence of a shock, particularly in railway accidents. (236)

Clearly, American psychological ideas were also being received by European neurologists and psychologists. It is worth emphasizing that in referring to Beard's theory of neurasthenia, Charcot used the phrase 'remarkable monograph,' demonstrating his appreciation for Beard's enriching ideas.

Because Chapter One will explore the psychological processes of the traumatized Civil War soldier in Ambrose Bierce's Civil War short stories, I will draw on the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud, George Beard, Russel Noyes, Roy Kletti and Raymond Moody. In 1860, George Beard introduced the idea of nervous shock; he theorized that neurasthenia resulted from exhaustion to the nervous system and that civilized life and modernization were responsible for nervous exhaustion. Beard's idea of nerve exhaustion is important for Chapter One for the analysis of Bierce's 'One of the Missing' (1888), where the protagonist drives himself to death because of terror—in other words, nervous exhaustion. I also refer to the later thinkers, Noyes, Kletti and Moody in this chapter because these were the psychologists who introduced near-death psychology and peri-traumatic stress disorder, reactions that appear in Ambrose Bierce's later story, 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' (1890).

Chapter Two will draw on the ideas of Freud, Janet, and Charcot. I briefly reference Weir Mitchell in this chapter because his flawed standardized theory of the rest cure is used as the cure for Gilman's protagonist in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1892). His direct application of this theory to Gilman fueled both her psychological

distress and her desire to express the detrimental effects of such a treatment in her writing. Mitchell recommended to psychologically distressed women six to eight weeks of absolute rest, rich foods, massages and no mental activity whatsoever. ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’, which will be explored in Chapter Two, addresses Mitchell’s rest cure and criticizes it not only as ineffective but also as detrimental to women’s health.

In this chapter, I also draw on the psychological theories of Mary Putnam Jacobi, an American female physician who worked with Gilman and relied on Gilman’s experience with her condition to establish more effective treatments for women’s psychological ailments. In addition, I draw on Freud’s ideas of suppression and neurosis in demonstrating how the protagonist’s oppression led to her mental collapse. Reference to Janet’s understanding of the link between traumatic circumstances and dissociation in individuals is also essential for Chapter Two because Gilman was a strong believer that it was women’s stressful environment that led to mental distress and not, as was a common nineteenth-century misconception, women’s inherent hysterical tendency and biological makeup.

Chapter Three will explore Henry James’s cognizance of the suffering that homosexual men underwent due to their alienation and the late-nineteenth century society’s perception of them as depraved individuals. Because of late-nineteenth century attitudes towards gay men, James was aware of the necessity of repression and sublimation and expresses it in his ‘The Author of Beltraffio’ (1884) and ‘The Pupil’ (1891). Therefore, this chapter will draw on Sigmund Freud’s ideas of repression and sublimation, scopophilia, and sexual aberrations, to illustrate the characters’ sexual suppression and consequences of this suppression. Freud’s *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905) is a fundamental reference for this chapter. I will also make reference, in this chapter, to Edward Kempf, who defined homosexual panic as due to the pressure of uncontrollable perverse sexual cravings (Rosario 71). The older homosexual men in the given short stories express homosexual panic when faced with opportunities of sexual expression and James himself arguably exhibits homosexual panic in his decision to kill off both children (objects of sexual desire) at the end of these stories. Michel Foucault is also an important point of reference for this chapter. As we know, Foucault opposed the nineteenth century medicalization of sexuality and the secrecy and shame associated with homosexuality. In fact, Foucault himself suffered from depression and made several attempts at suicide because of his own repressed homosexuality. After 1968, however, Foucault, interested in the mechanisms of power, began to break free from the

‘normative networks of repression’ (Crespo et al. 115). In 1995, Foucault published *A Dialogue on Power* with Gilles Deleuze, in which they argued that protests were the expression of nonconforming voices that refused categorization (18). According to Crespo et al.,

These voices represented a counter discourse that sought to normalise homosexuality in society and that tried to transform a culture of repression into one of affectivity and to educate people sentimentally regarding the interpersonal relations of friendship and solidarity. (115)

Because Chapter Three demonstrates the ways in which Henry James uses this counter discourse to reveal the ill effects of imposed sexual repression and the ill effects of criminalizing homosexuality, Foucault is a seminal reference.

Chapter Four will incorporate the ideas of Freud and Janet on dissociation, the splitting of consciousness as well as splitting and idealization. The ideas of the contemporary psychologist John Bowlby are also crucial to this chapter. Bowlby was the first to formulate a theory of attachment personality disorders. Because Chapter Four explores the ways in which Stephen Crane and Mark Twain demonstrate an awareness of how traumatized children grow up to be dysfunctional adults with attachment and personality disorders, Bowlby (although a twentieth-century psychologist) is vital in conceptualizing some of the ideas contained within their work. Along with Bowlby, even more contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists—Robin Morse-Karr, Richard Kluft, Mario Mikulincer and Philip Shaver—are referenced in Chapter Four since they provide a fascinating and striking resonance with the psychological ideas that emerge from the fictional accounts of Twain and Crane. The use of these more contemporary psychologists’ works demonstrates how pioneering and preemptive these authors were in their understanding and presentation of the link between child maltreatment, psychopathologies and personality disorders.

All of the late-nineteenth century and early to mid-twentieth century psychologists referenced in this thesis were involved in the study of trauma and its varying effects on human behavior and mental alteration. More importantly, they all recognized the etiological and contextual influences of trauma and refused outmoded ways of understanding it. For this reason, their theories and development of the understanding of trauma are of particular importance for this thesis.

Although some research has been done on the psychoanalytical readings of the selected texts, the originality of this thesis lies in its assimilation and comparison of the specified authors who were strikingly and progressively cognizant of the modern notion of trauma in a time period where this notion was inaccessible. The combination of the authors functions to bring together, through their fictional expressions, the different forms and causes of trauma during the late-nineteenth century, thus providing a wide-ranging understanding of the time in its relationship to the re-evaluation of the nature and causes of trauma. This thesis is unique in its positioning of the designated authors alongside each other so as to establish a relatively broad coverage of the different sources of trauma at the turn of the century in the United States. Each of the authors chosen for this study represent a different contextual and cultural struggle particular to the respective social groups at the heart of their fiction, be it Civil War soldiers, suppressed women, gay men, or abused and neglected children. The grouping of these writers in the interest of exploring the context at large in its radical changes and resulting traumas is distinctive to this thesis.

CHAPTER 1: Near-Death Psychology and Combat Trauma in Ambrose Bierce's

'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' (1890) and 'One of the Missing' (1888)

The objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how Ambrose Bierce's war fiction, specifically 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' (1890) and 'One of the Missing' (1888), exhibits an advanced understanding of trauma through the experiences of American Civil War soldiers. This chapter explores how Bierce's protagonists psychologically react in threatening situations on the battlefield. To demonstrate this, I will show how Peyton Farquhar, the central character of 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge', undergoes a pleasant, other-worldly psychological experience during his harsh external reality of execution. The psychological experience plays a significant role in alleviating the traumatic physical reality of his external experience. I will also study the psychological reaction of Private Searing, the protagonist of Bierce's 'One of the Missing', to further demonstrate the suggestion of the author's progressive psychological awareness and to accentuate his demonstration of the power of the mind over the body. In the case of Private Searing, the negative psychological experience has a powerfully destructive mental, and consequently physical, effect on his life.

It is my contention in this chapter that the psychological trends appearing in the works of Ambrose Bierce are later introduced with scientific contextualization by late-nineteenth century and early-twentieth century psychologists and psychoanalysts. In other words, Bierce was ahead of his time in his analysis of the mind's processes and he communicated his advanced insight to his readers through his fictional expressions of this mental phenomenon. As previously mentioned, the thesis as a whole aims to present the ways in which the chosen group of authors all produced fictional expressions of the twentieth-century notion of psychological trauma and its consequences on the human mind; each author is chosen to represent a respective oppressed or pressured social group. The works of Bierce in this chapter represent the traumatized Civil War soldier and his psychological reactions to trauma—reactions that conform to the twentieth-century understanding of trauma-related mental dysfunctions. For this chapter I will draw on the theories of Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet to

demonstrate Bierce's strikingly prescient awareness of the psychological repercussions of the pressures of civilization on men, and their mental reactions to severe traumatic pressure. I will also draw on the more modern psychological theories of Russel Noyes and Raymond Moody to establish Bierce's remarkable early awareness of the processes of near-death psychology.

Ambrose Bierce and the Neologism of Combat Trauma

Ambrose Bierce was fundamental in bringing to the fore the ugly realities of the American Civil War and making tangible impalpable psychological war injuries. Agnieszka Soltysik Monnet notes that Bierce used the Gothic 'as a means for describing psychological damage'. She writes:

The Gothic allows Bierce to show something that was only beginning to be understood at the time, namely that war can destroy people physically as well as psychically. Thus, Bierce's war stories are full of characters with varying degrees of madness, and the Gothic tropes of haunting, the undead, and the uncanny are used to illustrate this insanity. (Monnet 177)

Monnet's suggestion in this passage supports my strong conviction that Bierce's fictional expressions of psychological suffering in his Civil War stories were essential in exposing readers to the idea of psychological injury. Monika Elbert points out that the Civil War, its events and its repercussions were introduced to the public most effectively through the prose of Ambrose Bierce and Stephen Crane. She explains that Bierce 'took psychological gothic to a new level, one where horror, the grotesque, black humor and compassion for the damaged soldier intermingled' (Monnet 176). This new kind of war writing was innovative in its accentuation of psychological conditions and mental trauma. When writers like Bierce, for example, employed the gothic genre, the purpose was to bring out war-related psychopathology. Bierce was determined to show readers that war and combat could lead to madness in soldiers and sometimes resorted to the gothic genre to explore and bring out this madness. For example, in his short story, 'Chickamauga', Bierce encapsulates the maddened state of a young boy who has lost his mother in the Civil War through the use of grotesque. He describes the child's traumatized state at seeing his mother's dead and distorted body:

The child moved his little hands, making wild, uncertain gestures. He uttered a series of inarticulate and indescribable cries—something between the chattering of an ape and the gobbling of a turkey—a startling, soulless, unholy sound, the language of a devil. (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 25-26)

It is through this stripping away of articulation that Bierce forces his readers to focus on the expressions of body language—the body language produced by psychological trauma. To Bierce, it is this inability to articulate, this uncontrollability and defamiliarization of the familiar that constitute the language of psychological trauma. What is very interesting in this passage is that Bierce presents the child in a primal state when attempting to pronounce the trauma that he undergoes. He compares the child's cries to the sounds of an ape or turkey to emphasize the emergence of a more primitive or primordial condition when under the effect of trauma. As a naturalist, Bierce was obviously aware that human beings are essentially animalistic and that, especially when under threat their instinctual selves dominate their social selves. Monika Elbert maintains that Bierce at times resorts to the Gothic genre to powerfully illustrate the terrors of the battlefield, compellingly endorsing the awareness that certain experiences are terrible enough to induce madness or psychopathologies in the person involved. He also uses the Gothic genre, she argues, to depict the horror-like effects of madness and the defamiliarizing effect it imposes on an individual. The child here becomes defamiliarized through his madness, resembling an ape, or a turkey and even a devil, but not a child. In other words, the Gothic genre, in its 'language of haunting and mental disarray', was appropriate for writers hoping to exteriorize and materialize the mind impaired by war trauma, and Bierce was definitely one of these writers (Elbert 176).

According to Elbert, post-traumatic stress disorder was not officially identified before 1980, but I would argue that the consciousness of the existence of mental war trauma appeared in the late-nineteenth century following the American Civil War. Although there was little agreement on how to define and treat it, mental damage suffered by soldiers became increasingly hard to ignore. One reason for this impossibility to ignore psychological suffering was the fictional representations and expressions of the psychological damage of these soldiers in the post-bellum period. Bierce, being the most prolific writer of Civil War short stories in his time, was vital in facilitating the accessibility of this mental damage that Civil War soldiers endured. As

mentioned in the introduction, up until around the mid-twentieth century, trauma was perceived as originally physiological, resulting from discharged shells or other somatic shocks to the nervous system. If a soldier had no physical proof that he had been shocked by some kind of explosion, for example, he would often be considered a sluggard or a coward by his social surrounding and even often by physicians (Elbert 176). Bierce, however, much earlier, knew otherwise and wrote with the clear purpose of correcting this misleading conception. He was determined to emphasize the inevitable, destructive psychological trauma that resulted from the emotional shock of the dreadfulness of war. For Bierce, fiction was the most appropriate medium for revealing this truth.⁴ In 'The Undeclared War between Journalism and Fiction' Doug Underwood notes:

Bierce found that he could express in his newspaper writing the depth of outrage that he felt about his Civil War combat experiences—as long as he framed it in fiction. Bierce most piercingly used the fictional short story to shock his audience with vivid, often gruesomely described, scenes of personal peril that typically were not acceptable in so-called 'factual' newspaper war reporting. (102)

As mentioned in the introduction, Bierce was aware that if he were to offer the truth about experiences of war, journalism would not be the appropriate medium. Selective, misleading and lacking in intricacy, journalism would fail him in his attempt to expose the very ugly realities of war.

Peter Morrone argues that '[t]he psychological landscape and conditioning agents shaping a soldier's cognition are Bierce's primary concern, and while his tales transpire on the battlefield, the true settings evident in his writing are situated in the minds of his protagonists' (310). He also believes that the psychological state of Bierce's main characters is an outcome of extreme military discipline that puts pressure on the Civil War soldiers. It is this awareness and expression of psychological trauma that Bierce exhibits in many of his war stories, which I am interested in for this chapter. Bierce was determined to demonstrate the psychological possibility of trauma, which

⁴ The San Francisco Examiner, for example, which Bierce wrote for, still printed stories occasionally during Bierce's time.

contradicted the common belief of the time that trauma was solely physiological. And, since his Civil War stories were important in the documentation (albeit as fictional accounts) of the traumatic mental repercussions of war in the latter decades of the nineteenth century in America, it is reasonable to assume that his works must have been to some extent influential in generating a greater consciousness of war-induced mental trauma.

A characteristic or criterion for the realistic depiction of war in late-nineteenth century literature involved the straightforward and trenchant account of physical suffering. However, authors like Bierce were aware that this was not enough in documenting the complete reality of the Civil War and that the account of psychological injury was still missing. According to Jennifer Travis, although realist writers of the period did incorporate a blooming ‘language of wound and working vocabulary about injury’ (27), Bierce lamented the lack of true and comprehensive representation of the Civil War in literature, which he believed comprised the missing or insufficient representation of psychological injury or trauma.

Bierce’s desire to express the complete meaning of war-induced injury (both physical and psychological) was rooted in his intention to discourage blind patriotism. Edwards considers Bierce’s works an example of the kind of literature that exposes the raw realities of war and rejects romantic representation (Edwards 73). To Bierce, no cause was worth the mass murder and dehumanizing suffering that took place during the Civil War. He wanted people to see war from the inside, what really occurs in combat, and thus deviate from blind sacrifice and zealous bravery. According to Underwood, Bierce used the columns of William Randolph Hearst’s *San Francisco Examiner* ‘to convey the feelings of dread and psychological disassociation that he had experienced as a front-line soldier’ (101). Underwood argues that Bierce was determined ‘to bring the unvarnished truth about war to a culture that—cheer-led by Hearst—preferred to view military adventures in patriotic and heroic terms’ (Underwood 102).

Hearst was a catalyst in pushing the United States into the Spanish-American war through a manipulative journalistic discourse that took hold of a big portion of the population; he encouraged citizens to fight with ‘sword’ and ‘shield’ to protect democracy in the U.S. (Procter 54). According to Ben Procter, one of main objectives that Hearst focused on was winning the war, and he directed his ‘media empire’ toward the same goal (54). He reveals that even before war was declared between the U.S. and

Spain, 'Hearst directed his newspapers to crusade for universal military service, urging Congress to enact draft legislation immediately (54). Hearst's newspapers, Procter notes, 'actively helped recruit men into the army and navy' luring citizens to enlist by promising them dates with beautiful women. This was the attitude that Bierce strove to oppose; he wanted to allow readers to see the destruction that accompanied fighting in war and the falsity in the concept of patriotism.

My understanding of Bierce, his knowledge about psychological injury, and his determination to introduce it to the public in order to curb blind patriotism promoted by sensational presses, concurs with that of Underwood. Bierce clearly refused and depreciated social and political loyalty. For example, in 'The Shadow on the Dial' (1909), Bierce describes patriotism as being 'as fierce as a fever, pitiless as the grave, blind as a stone, and irrational as a headless hen' (36). In his Civil War writings, he wanted to magnify the traumatic details that the patriots disregarded in pursuit of a bigger cause, a cause that could only be achieved at the expense of individual sacrifice and naïve idealism.

Several critics, such as Clifton Fadiman and Edward Shorter have described Bierce as a misanthrope, who hated life and people and refused to reveal anything positive about life in his works. In 'Portrait of a Misanthrope' (1946) Fadiman analyses Bierce's attitude as nihilistic and brutal, making him unconvincing, unqualified, bare, and lacking in philosophy. He further argues that Bierce is too pessimistic and unselective in his rage (149-150). Fadiman, however, greatly misunderstands Bierce, as he is, in fact, one of the most humane and perceptive authors of his time. His brutality is indicative of the penetrating anger he felt about the suffering of soldiers, and his anger is in fact understandable and worthy of great respect, being both convincing and humane in its conviction. Bierce's experiences as a soldier forced him to contemplate the brutality of humanity, the transience of life, and the psychological and physical limits of pain. They urged him to question the very idea of heroic civilians and imagine the mental torture that they might endure. His personal experiences with war allowed him to reconsider the meaning of heroism as the mere physical survival of an individual. Moreover, his determination to lead citizens away from the horrors of fighting in war reveals his empathy and concern for blind and self-sacrificing individuals. In 'The Shadow on the Dial', Bierce expresses great concern for human life and his disillusionment with his country for failing to value it:

A government that does not protect life is a flat failure, no matter what else it may do. In no country in the world, civilized or savage, is life so insecure as in this. In no country in the world is murder held in such light reprobation. In no battle of modern times have so many lives been taken as are lost annually in the United States through public indifference to the crime of homicide—through disregard of law, through bad government. (19)

Clearly, Bierce was in fact the opposite of a misanthrope and cared deeply about people. He valued human life and believed that a government that did not protect human life was pointless, regardless of any other successes. This indicates that Bierce, if bitter, was bitter about the way in which human life was not protected and respected.

Also, contrary to Fadiman's assertion, Bierce had a good understanding of the human mind, possibly a better understanding of the mind and its processes than many of his contemporaries. Indeed, Bierce was an avid reader of philosophy and was very interested in American and European philosophy. Lawrence Berkove reveals that his outlook on life was significantly influenced by philosophers before him such as Aristotle, Plato, the Eleatics, the Cynics and the Stoics (Bierce, *The Short Fiction* 973). Berkove acknowledged Bierce's attempts to formulate a philosophy of life based on logical reasoning and has expounded on Bierce's beliefs about the mind and human psychology, describing him as a man who fits in with the philosophical currents of his day (973). Thus, there is evidence to indicate that Bierce's works did contain significant philosophical depth.

Berkove reveals the great influence of Stoicism on Bierce's writing. Bierce himself, in fact, admitted to having been influenced by the Stoics. For example in 1893, Bierce wrote:

I am for preserving the ancient, primitive distinction between right and wrong. The virtues of Socrates, the wisdom of Aristotle, the examples of Marcus Aurelius and Jesus Christ are enough to engage my admiration and rebuke my life. From my fog-scourged and plague-smitten morass I lift reverent eyes to the shining summits of eternal truth, where they stand; I strain my senses to catch the law they deliver. (Bierce, *Complete Works*, IX 176-77).

He also later referred to Plato, Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca ‘and the lot’ as ‘custodians of most of what is worth knowing’ in his advice on how to train to be a writer. He particularly expressed acclaim for Epictetus, who, to him, teaches ‘how to be a worthy guest at the table of the gods’ (*Complete Works*, X 76). Also in 1899, he wrote a consolation to his friend, Percival Pollard, recommending to him a way to find comfort:

When I’m in trouble and distress I read Epictetus, and can warmly recommend that plan to you. It does not cure, but it helps one’s endurance of the ill. I go to Epictetus with my mental malady—and misfortunes themselves are nothing except so far as they affect us mentally. For we of our class do not suffer hunger and cold, and the like, from our failures and mischances—only dejection. And dejection is unreasonable. (qtd. in Berkove 55)

Evidently, and very contrary to Fadiman’s claim, Bierce was strikingly philosophical, compassionate and humane, and he did have great knowledge of the human mind and of human suffering. His thoughts here reveal a man who knew the pains of mental suffering and who showed empathy toward those who experienced it, a man who resorted to philosophical and religious ideas as a recourse from pain and a way to understand human life.

Eric Solomon contends that Bierce’s works are ‘vignettes of cosmic irony wherein man is brought to realize his insignificance in the face of the all-encompassing universe of war’ and which ridicule conceptions of bravery in war as glorious (147, 154). Berkove goes on to suggest that Bierce’s works of fiction and his journalistic writings are essentially ‘peace tracts’ and that, to Bierce, the justification of fighting in war as patriotic and idealistic was a lie (iv, ix). With his first-hand experience and witnessing of occurrences in battle, Bierce was conscious of the reality that war brought nothing but human suffering and misery on various levels; his particular interest and focus was on psychological suffering.

Furthermore, Bierce is an essential writer for the exploration of Civil War-induced trauma because he fought in the Civil War and is suspected to have himself suffered from post-traumatic combat stress for the rest of his life after his service as a soldier. In the years after his service, Bierce exhibited emotional and psychological detachment from his family and relationships in general. He spent more and more time

away from his family and would visit home only on weekends. He grew progressively isolated and introverted. According to Morris, he also suffered from disrupted sleep during the night and as a result spent most of his time sleeping during the day, even when he was at home (187). Bierce's publisher, Walt Neale, also revealed that Bierce 'at times drank copiously and even got drunk' (59). Thus, there is significant evidence to suggest that Bierce may have himself experienced what would later be termed post-traumatic stress, and was aware of the suffering that came with this trauma. Equipped with such experiences and knowledge about the effects of war trauma and the appropriate skills of realistic expression, who could be better than Bierce in contributing to the understanding of psychological trauma?

Bierce's desire to pronounce the psychological pain that comes with war is evident in his definition of pain, in his *Devil's Dictionary* (1906): 'an uncomfortable frame of mind that may have a physical basis in something that is being done to the body, or may be purely mental, caused by the good fortune of another' (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 575). This definition reflects his belief in the power of the psyche and his acknowledgement that the mental and physical realms of the body are interrelated. Moreover, it reinforces the idea that he was aware of the possibility that traumatic injury could be psychological in nature. His Civil War stories demonstrate such insight and reflect his desire to reveal the nuanced understanding of war injury and war trauma as possibly psychological. His definition of pain signals his progressive cognizance of mental trauma in a time when the scientific definition and understanding of psychological trauma did not yet exist. It was this awareness that Bierce brought to the fore through his Civil War short fiction with the intention of reversing so called valorous patriotism.

Bierce was acutely aware of the influence of the climate of his time on art. He was concerned about the impact of science on contemporary culture, but he was pragmatic in his response to the quickly changing world around him and acknowledged the need to adapt to progress. He remarked: 'I do not regret the substitution of knowledge for conjecture and doubt for faith; I only say that it has disadvantages and among them we reckon the decay of poesy.' However, he acknowledges that 'the world's greatest poets have lived in rude ages, when their races were not long emerged from the night of barbarism' (*Complete Works* X: 270-271). Although Bierce appreciated poetic and exalted forms of writing, he was aware that post-bellum America was not compatible with such forms of writing given the national trauma of a divided

country and the task of Reconstruction. In recognizing the need to adapt literary form to the climate of the time, Bierce states: '[a]s a poetical mental attitude, that of doubt is meaner than that of faith, that of speculation less commanding than that of emotion; yet the poet of today must assume them' (*Complete Works* X: 272). This statement reveals his interest in adapting a more direct and scientific writing style in order to accommodate the environmental changes of his time. He embraced this style to expose his readers to a clearer, more tangible and more scientific understanding of the traumatized mind.

Ben Shephard, in studying the origins of psychology in the United States, points out the irony in the fact that American neurologists and psychiatrists in the late-nineteenth century eagerly read the new British reports of nervous diseases caused by war, without considering their own rich literature pertaining to these nervous diseases (123). In listing the literature on nervous disorders that already existed in the U.S. such as that of Weir Mitchell, George Beard, and Jacob M. Da Costa, Shephard also recognizes Ambrose Bierce as a prominent writer who contributed literature (although fictional) to the field of war-induced nervousness. He notes that Bierce 'made powerful use in [his] works of the after-effects of war' (123). Although Bierce resorted to fiction, he was indeed generating scientific awareness of war-induced psychological suffering. In concurrence with Shephard, it is my contention that Bierce, through his fictional expressions of war trauma generated a general awareness of the psychological trauma that resulted from the terrors of war.

The psychological elements and reactions to traumatic events contained in his works, whether having had direct influence or not, were introduced by psychologists and psychoanalysts in later periods. Following a major theme of this thesis, in this chapter, for example, I draw on the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud regarding the pressure of civilization as well as his ideas about war and one's inability to experience one's own death, to demonstrate how Bierce preceded Freud in his ideas which were later introduced in the twentieth century. For example, an interesting ideological similarity that exists between Bierce and Freud is their mutual belief that civilization and societal structure and norms are responsible for human suffering. For example, in his 1912 essay, 'Civilization', Bierce states:

The cant of civilization fatigues. Civilization is a fine and beautiful structure. It is as picturesque as a Gothic cathedral, but it is built upon the bones and

cemented with the blood of those whose part in all its pomp is that and nothing more. (Bierce, *Complete Works* 52)

As this passage seems to demonstrate, Bierce shared with Freud the recognition that civilization contradicts man's nature and well-being, and that civilization was built upon the suppression of man's happiness. Freud, in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927), articulates, in a very similar way to that of Bierce before him, that 'civilization must be built upon coercion and renunciation of instinct' (6) and that 'every individual is virtually an enemy of civilization' because although men cannot live in isolation, 'they should nevertheless feel as heavy a burden the sacrifices which civilization expects of them in order to make a communal life possible' (6). He explains that the contributions made by citizens from the sacrifice of their own inner happiness allow for the materialistic flourishing of civilization.

Bierce also produced fictional expressions of this struggle between civilization and the impulses of the inner self in his Civil War stories, where he disapprovingly presented soldiers who were obliged to sacrifice their physical and psychological wellbeing for the sake of their country's progress. According to Bierce, the compromising of individual happiness and health for the flourishing of civilization (fighting in war being the focus for this chapter), can result in psychopathologies. The continued focus of this chapter are the psychological struggles of the Civil War soldiers caused by the pressure to conform to the manly valor of the so-called honorable soldier. This was not unique to the American context. Freud explains, in 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death' (1915) that civilized society focuses on people's upright conduct rather than their instinctual needs, pressuring them, consequently, to act in opposition to their nature. By suppressing their instinct to meet extremely high moral standards imposed by society, they become increasingly estranged from their inner or instinctual selves and experience great tension (71). Freud believed that those who constantly submit to such suppression are actually, whether or not they are aware of it, living in hypocrisy, which is greatly valued by society and essential for its progress. For this reason, Freud argued, drastic changes would have to be made for people to live in harmony with their psychological truth. Bierce shared this belief and expressed it in his fiction years before Freud. By exposing the tragic psychological repercussions of suppressing fear and the need to survive to conform to the societal standards of

masculinity, Bierce inspires his readers to reconsider the misleading ideologies of masculinity and patriotism.

A good example of this struggle between individual prosperity and the demands of civilization is demonstrated in Bierce's short story 'Killed at Resaca' (1891). The narrator of this story is a topographical engineer of a Union fighting unit during the Civil War, who tells the story of an intriguing and unique lieutenant, Herman Brayle. Brayle exhibits impulsive bravery at the battle of Stone River. Examples of his foolhardy 'courage' are how he would sit, unprotected, like a statue on his horse in the face of attacking bullets. In fear of appearing uncourageous or unmanly by the standards of his society, this man behaves in a way that conflicts with his own natural survival instinct. Also, Brayle would tend to his duties without ever ducking or hiding from danger when it appeared. Toward the end of the story, the narrator reveals the secret of such behavior. Brayle is shot in one of his episodes of blind courage. The narrator later finds a letter in his pocket from his beloved, informing him that she had heard a hateful and hurtful rumor that he was crouching behind a tree at a battle in Virginia. She writes: 'I could bear to hear of my soldier lover's death but not of his cowardice' (Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary* 51). This story is a powerful demonstration and critique of the social pressure that men and soldiers had to endure and live up to during that period, causing them to go through extreme measures and even possible death to prove their socially acceptable masculinity. It is also a striking reflection of Bierce's awareness that society forces individuals to behave in contradiction to their natural instincts.

However, this social mask is bound to shatter under the pressures of war, as demonstrated repeatedly by Bierce, when societal expectations dissolve in the face of death and danger. John Casey contends that during the American Civil War, as soldiers rushed from one battle to the next, 'something elemental in them changes. Instinct takes over as fatigue wears down consciousness' (8). In this view, in the face of danger and death, one's social identity disintegrates. Bierce demonstrates this disintegration of social identity in all of the protagonists of his Civil War stories. Once Bierce strips away the social identity of these characters in his stories, he is able to immerse the reader in their terrified minds, and thus bring out the psychological reality behind the identities shaped by social pressures.

‘An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge’ (1890): The Mind at Death

In ‘An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge’ (1890), Bierce narrates the hanging of Peyton Farquhar, a civilian, probably a plantation owner, who goes against the prevailing social order that is the Northern cause during the American Civil War. As Farquhar stands waiting to be hanged, he is lost in his own imagination. He imagines his escape by swimming home to his family, while pursued by his captors. He imagines that he successfully evades his hanging and the subsequent attacking bullets, finally making it back to his home where his wife awaits him. In the process of doing so, he witnesses the beauty of nature and indulges in this new realization of such natural wonder. As he approaches his wife to embrace her in his imagination, the hanging takes place and we are told at the end of the story that his body dangles dead.

In this short story Bierce explores in detail the processes of Farquhar’s mind in the face of death and the psychological coping mechanisms involved in his encounter with death. Bierce unravels the process of Farquhar’s psychological effacement of dying by taking the reader through the most intricate details of the process of mental dissociation in the face of near-death trauma. He was evidently knowledgeable about and familiar with the mind’s ability and tendency to protect itself against pain or severe threat. Farquhar’s mental detachment from his external reality (which will be demonstrated below) resonates with Freud’s later suggestion that one does not really experience his own death. In 1915 Freud argued, in ‘Thoughts on Times of War and Death’, that one cannot experience his own death and that if he tries to imagine it, he finds himself an onlooker, not as a subject of death. To Freud, it is the observer of the dying who experiences and suffers the tragedy of death and ‘in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his immortality’ (77). In 1890, twenty-five years before Freud’s suggestion that one cannot experience his own death, Bierce expresses this phenomenon in ‘An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge’. His protagonist, although being hanged, does not experience his dying. Rather he inhabits, through his mind’s detachment and dissociation, a different dimension of reality where he survives. The one left with the ugliness of such a reality and the thoughts it entails, according to Freud, is the spectator, not the subject of death. The spectator, in observing and experiencing it, becomes consumed with and burdened by its oppressive reality; consequently, the onlooker becomes vulnerable to the realization of death’s inevitability. This notion holds true to the grieving families of dead soldiers of the American Civil War. Drew Gilpin Faust, in *This Republic of Suffering* (2008) reveals

the desperately tragic reality of the suffering of the family members who received bad news about their relatives who died in combat. He suggests that the actual death of a soldier was ‘sudden and swift’ (144)—as if in a moment—even if it followed prolonged suffering and pain. However, explains Faust, ‘for his survivors, his death was literally endless. His work was over, but theirs had just begun’ (144).

This suggestion corresponds with the way in which Bierce decides to end his story and his protagonist’s near-death psychological experience. After focusing extensively on Farquhar’s psychological escape (which I will later describe in detail), throwing the whole process into slow motion, Bierce then reveals in a line that his protagonist had died: ‘Peyton Farquhar was dead; his body with a broken neck, swung gently from side to side beneath the timbers of Owl Creek bridge’ (Bierce, *The Devil’s Dictionary, Tales & Memoirs* 19). By providing a very short and brief mention of Farquhar’s death and by maintaining the absence of his experience of the actual dying, Bierce emphasizes the idea that one in fact does not experience his own death. What he does experience is a different reality—one detached from the reality of dying.

Bierce’s demonstration of Farquhar’s detachment from his terrifying reality resonates with the dissociation theories of Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud. According to Aida Alayarian, Janet contended that dissociation occurs as a mind’s defense against traumatic experiences. Freud believed that ‘consciousness could fragment whenever instinctual conflict resulted in the disruptive action of other mental forces working to banish such conflict from consciousness’ (qtd. in Alayarian 153). It can be argued that Farquhar experiences dissociation in his immediate detachment from his traumatic reality. However, contrary to Freud, Bierce was aware that traumatic dissociation could occur in the presence of any traumatizing situation, and was not particular to childhood sexual abuse or Oedipal conflicts. Farquhar’s traumatic dissociation clearly results from his terrifying situation. Through such dissociation, his mind protects him against the terror of being hanged even while his hanging takes place. The fact that Bierce was cognizant of the mechanisms of near-death psychological experiences and the ability of a traumatized mind to dissociate from reality, and incorporated these elements in his fiction, well before they were even recognized as aspects of a psychological process, is crucial to my contention that Bierce anticipated and expressed a more comprehensive understanding of trauma, specifically PTSD.

In his determination to emphasize the etiological cause of dissociation in his protagonist (the terror of being hanged), Bierce pronounces the horror and agony that he

initially undergoes. Farquhar tries to focus on his family but is distracted by the ticking of his watch—‘a sharp, distinct metallic percussion like the stroke of a blacksmith’s hammer upon an anvil’ (Bierce, *Devil’s Dictionary* 12). His brain is in agony, unable to handle even the slightest sound:

Its recurrence was regular, but as slow as the tolling of a death knell. He awaited each new stroke with impatience and—he knew not why—apprehension. The intervals of silence grew progressively longer; the delays became maddening. With their greater infrequency the sounds increased in strength and sharpness. They hurt his ears like the thrust of a knife; he feared he would shriek. (12)

In this passage, Bierce skillfully amplifies and intensifies the agonizing anxiety that Farquhar undergoes in anticipation of his hanging. He focuses on his protagonist’s overwhelmed mind and its inability to cope with the maddening pressure of fear and anxiety. By capturing Farquhar’s mental torment and agony, Bierce is able to draw a clear link between this man’s later dissociation and his present agony.

Bierce heightens Farquhar’s mental tension and agony until the pressure becomes unbearable and his mind reaches a breaking point. Once the breaking point is achieved, Bierce then plunges his protagonist into an altered mental state—a state of peritraumatic dissociation. It is important to recognize that not until Bierce establishes the traumatic conditions that have created great mental stress in his character does he then allow for this transition. He perhaps accomplishes this to stress to his readers that psychological disorders experienced by soldiers (particularly dissociation in this case) were in fact engendered by the traumatic conditions of war. Bierce also strove to reverse the notion that trauma was exclusively physiological. For this reason, Bierce first establishes unbearable mental stress in his character before then illustrating his mental dissociation to highlight the idea that mental disorders in soldiers resulted from mental trauma.

Bierce does anticipate, in this short story, the psychological ideas of trauma and dissociation that were introduced by Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud, but he also offers perhaps more detail regarding the potential origins of dissociation. For example, where Freud linked dissociative disorders to the traumatic effects of childhood sexual abuse, Bierce was sharply aware that the realm of trauma was much broader. Even more fascinating, however, is Bierce’s anticipation of the psychological ideas of more

modern, twentieth-century psychologists like Raymond Moody, Russel Noyes and Roy Kletti. The idea of near-death experience and peritraumatic dissociation, which I argue that Farquhar undergoes, was first formally recognized by Russel Noyes and Roy Kletti and informally before that by Bierce.

Noyes was a twentieth century psychiatrist who was greatly interested in the phenomena of near-death psychology. He defined peritraumatic dissociation as an experience that occurs at the actual time of the traumatic event and includes features of depersonalization, derealization and an altered sense of time (Beck and Sloan 163). Noyes and Kletti researched near-death experiences in the 1970s and concluded that the most prevalent characteristics of peritraumatic dissociation include a distorted perception of time, a sense of surreality, and a feeling of confusion or disorientation (20). He notes that when feelings of fear and terror did manifest, they only did so initially and for a short period and were quickly followed by a feeling of ‘peace of equal or greater intensity’ (20). Bierce, who before Noyes, was already acquainted with the mechanisms involved in near-death experiences, had already expressed them in this short story.

As previously established, Bierce initially describes Farquhar as experiencing fear. But this fear is short-lived and followed by a detailed and prolonged description of the peaceful sensations and state of mind that Farquhar then experiences. The presentation of this psychological experience strikingly parallels Noyes’s observations around a century later, that peritraumatic dissociation involved initial, short-lived fear before its onset. Another of Bierce’s fascinating prefigurations of Noyes’s theory of peritraumatic dissociation is Farquhar’s experience of derealization and depersonalization. Noyes and Kletti describe depersonalization as ‘a subjective mental phenomenon having as its central feature an altered awareness of the self’ which involve feelings of detachment, unreality and strangeness (qtd. in Greyson, Holden and James 127). They suggest that these feelings of detachment and unreality emerge to protect the person from the threat of death (127). First, to leave no doubt in his reader’s mind that Farquhar undergoes derealization, Bierce makes it a point to reveal his protagonist’s actual and physical reality: ‘The man’s hands were behind his back, the wrists bound with a cord. A rope closely encircled his neck’ (Bierce, *The Devil’s Dictionary, Tales & Memoirs* 10). Farquhar is in fact obviously hanged as he experiences ‘the pain of a sharp pressure upon his throat, followed by a sense of suffocation. Keen, poignant agonies seemed to shoot from his neck downward through

every fiber of his body and limbs' (14). Bierce, however, places this reality in striking opposition to a parallel dimension which Farquhar inhabits.

After Farquhar's short-lived fear and consciousness of his actual, external reality, he enters a more peaceful state by experiencing depersonalization, derealization and surreality. Suddenly Bierce engrosses Farquhar within a surreal and beautiful world, quite separate from his reality. He now feels peace in great intensity. Bierce reveals that Farquhar was in a state of extreme peace, in which he would be happy to remain. Clearly, Farquhar here experiences derealization in the complete transformation of his reality. He is very content in this new state and has thus escaped his reality without experiencing death:

The trees upon the bank were giant garden plants; he noted a definite order in their arrangement, inhaled the fragrance of their blooms. A strange, roseate light shone through the spaces among their trunks and the wind made their branches the music of Aeolian harps. He had no wish to perfect his escape—was content to remain in that enchanting spot until retaken. (17-18)

As illustrated above, Farquhar was, in actuality, positioned to be hanged on a noose—a completely different reality to the one newly assumed in his mind. Farquhar's state of derealization allows him great happiness and serenity, providing him escape and relief from the ugliness of his impending death.

Farquhar also experiences depersonalization. In his state of derealization, Farquhar acquires an objective and outsider view of his own body; he had no control over his body parts. Also, Bierce describes him as having lost all material substance, 'encompassed in a luminous cloud, of which he was now merely the fiery heart, without material substance' (14). As Farquhar imagines himself escaping in the stream, he notices his hands (which he has no control over) involuntarily try to remove the rope from his neck. He is described as viewing his own body parts as foreign to himself. He observes his hands as a bystander with no control over them:

He was not conscious of an effort, but a sharp pain in his wrist apprised him that he was trying to free his hands. He gave the struggle his attention, as an idler might observe the feat of a juggler, without interest in the outcome. He watched them with a new interest as first one and then the other pounced upon the noose

at his neck. They tore it away and thrust it fiercely aside. 'Put it back, put it back!' He thought he shouted these words to his hands. (14-15)

This passage expresses Bierce's awareness of the mental process of depersonalization in the face of dying. It is fascinating that Bierce already knew and expressed the phenomena of near-death experiences nearly a century before it first became recognized scientifically by Russel Noyes and Roy Kletti, the earliest researchers in the scientific aspect of near-death experiences.

Although near-death experiences have a long spiritual history, Noyes and Kletti focused on the scientific explanation of such occurrences. William James, before them, for example, viewed near-death experiences as mystic states of consciousness. In 'The Varieties of Religious Experience' (1936), James described mystical experiences as having a noetic quality. He wrote:

They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by discursive intellect. They are illuminations, revelations, full of significance and importance, all inarticulate though they remain; and as a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time. (James, *Varieties* 293).

To James, in such mystical states the individual feels as if 'he were grasped and held by a superior power' (James, *Varieties* 293). While James did not classify near-death experiences under diagnostic categories, understanding them rather as spiritual experiences, Noyes and Kletti, and Bierce before them in his fiction, acknowledged a more scientific way of perceiving them.

Farquhar undergoes all the processes of a near-death experience that these two psychologists later establish. Noyes and Kletti, the earliest researchers in the scientific approach to near-death experiences, suggested that near-death experiences are a form of depersonalization, 'a subjective mental phenomenon having as its central feature an altered awareness of the self, involving feelings of detachment, strangeness and unreality' (qtd. in Greyson, Holden and James 127). They suggested that individuals who undergo near-death experiences protect themselves from the threat of death through the induced feelings of detachment and unreality (127). They found that when an individual faces extremely dangerous conditions, his personality splits into a 'participating self' and an 'observing self' (Hen, 176). Bierce, obviously familiar with

near-death psychological phenomena as a veteran in the Civil War, attributes such splitting to Farquhar who has a ‘participating self’—one who struggles with the noose, and an ‘observing self’—one who witnesses the autonomous actions of his own hands.

Moreover, Farquhar experiences a heightened sense of perception and surreality in his newly established state of derealization, indicating Bierce’s striking awareness of yet another phenomenon characteristic of near-death experiences introduced by Noyes and Kletti. As Farquhar detaches from his reality, Bierce clearly provides him with intensely amplified senses:

He was now in full possession of his physical senses. They were indeed preternaturally keen and alert. Something in the awful disturbance of [Farquhar’s] organic system had so exalted and refined them that they made record of things never before perceived. He felt the ripples upon his face and heard their separate sounds as they struck. He looked at the forest on the bank of the stream, saw the individual trees, the leaves and the veining of each leaf... He noted the prismatic colors in all the dewdrops upon a million blades of grass. The humming of the gnats that danced above the eddies of the stream, the strokes of the water-spider’s legs, like oars which had lifted their boat—all these made audible music. (Bierce, *Devil’s Dictionary* 15)

Farquhar’s newly acquired intensified sensory reception of the world around him allows him to experience the most intricate details of the beauty surrounding him.

Paradoxically the near-death psychological processes enliven Farquhar and bring him more in touch with the world than he ever was, allowing him to sense things he could have never sensed before his experience of derealization and depersonalization. He becomes conscious of the worldly wonders that he had never before recognized, having become intensely attuned to his exalted senses.

The indescribable beauty that Farquhar experiences in his dissociative state of derealization expresses great similarity with many near-death cases explored by Noyes in his research of near-death experiences. Noyes studied autobiographical testimonies of exceptional individuals who had undergone such experiences, among them Carl Jung. Following his heart attack in 1944, Jung experienced several near death visions. He later wrote that ‘what happens after death is so unspeakably glorious that our imaginations and our feelings do not suffice to form even an approximate conception of

it' (Jung 147). The fascinating similarity between Bierce's fictional account of a soldier's near-death experience and Noyes's later research findings and formal classification of this psychological process can be explained through the research that Noyes carried out on this phenomenon. Eager to find out what happened at death, Noyes started to collect narratives from literature, poetry, and first-hand accounts. After extensive research on citizens who nearly died but survived, Noyes was able to identify a pattern in most of the experiences of near-death—a pattern which Bierce evidently recognized before him.

Noyes and Kletti noticed that the pattern involved the process in three stages, the first stage being the 'period of resistance' where the person realizes that there is danger, is anxious to survive, struggles to survive and then quickly accepts death. The second stage involves the 'life review' process 'in which they experience a rapid panoramic replay of the important events in their lives'. This three-stage pattern is clearly present in the near-death experience of Farquhar. At first he tries to resist dying. He starts by refusing death in his imaginary escape. He imagines himself escaping in the river and avoiding the bullets that come rushing his way. After this resistance, Farquhar also undergoes a 'life review', a stage in near-death experiences where the individual sees flashes of his life and sees his life with more clarity and reevaluation. He sees his home and his wife and feels a sense of happiness and appreciation:

He stands at the gate of his own home. All is as he left it, and all bright and beautiful in the morning sunshine...As he pushes open the gate and passes up the wide white walk, he sees a flutter of female garments; his wife looking fresh and cool and sweet, steps down from the veranda to meet him. At the bottom of the steps she stands waiting with a smile of ineffable joy, an attitude of matchless grace and dignity. Ah, how beautiful she is! (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 19)

Farquhar, in this passage, undergoes a life review. Memories flash into his mind before he dies, as well as some kind of reevaluation of his life. He appears at this point to see what matters in life—his family and home, and not a worthless political cause that cost him his life. Bierce seems to draw out the irony in his realization that his wife's dignity and grace are matchless. Here Farquhar reviews the meaning of dignity and grace—it is not in fact 'masculine' valor achieved through heroic political loyalty. Rather, his

ability to see ‘matchless’ dignity and grace in his wife and in what seems like femininity in general, suggests his reevaluation of the actual meaning of dignity and honor. As he undergoes the process of life review, Farquhar seems to show signs of regret at sacrificing his life to his ‘dignified’ political endeavors, which he now recognizes as empty and meaningless.

In his book, *Glimpses of Eternity* (1975), Raymond Moody, a psychologist significantly influenced by Noyes, admits to having been influenced by other literature in establishing his idea of near death experience. He admits that ‘[g]reat literature too deals with elements of near-death-experience’ (3). As an example of such literature, he refers to an out-of-body experience during combat presented by Ernest Hemingway in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940)⁵. In other words, through American war literature, which was influenced by Ambrose Bierce, Moody was exposed to the idea of near-death psychology. Because of such a connection, it can be argued that Bierce’s Civil War stories did, to some extent at least, contribute to the development in the understanding of war trauma.

Bierce was evidently conscious of the psychological reactions to near-death situations because he witnessed and observed dying soldiers and listened to personal accounts of soldiers who came close to death. Donald Blume reveals that in Bierce’s ‘Prattle’ column in *Wasp*, a weekly satire magazine in San Francisco, he related in 1881 what had been shared with him by those who have endured near-death experiences in war. He related the experience of a man who had attempted suicide or, as he phrased it, experienced ‘the sensation of approaching death’ (215). He reveals that he was told that in a near death-experience ‘one lives centuries in an instant’ (qtd. in Blume 215). By the time the story ends, the reader is aware that Farquhar did in fact live centuries in an instant; the exhaustive description of everything he experiences seems to take place across many hours or even days. However, Bierce makes it clear that it all happened in an instant.

⁵ It is important to note, however, that Hemingway was known to have been substantially influenced by Bierce’s Civil War literature. Mary V. Dearborn reveals that in 1920, Hemingway took a bunch of books back with him from a Shakespeare and Company welcoming gathering for American expatriates in Paris. He later said that the books he took from their lending library were ‘enormously important to him’; of these readings he cited the stories of Stephen Crane, Ambrose Bierce, Gustave Flaubert, Guy de Maupassant and Rudyard Kipling (111). See Mary V. Dearborn. *Ernest Hemingway: A Biography*. Alfred A. Knoff, 2017.

'One of the Missing' (1888): Expressions of Psychological Trauma

Another of Bierce's Civil War short stories that demonstrates the power of the mind and its influence upon one's experience of reality is 'One of the Missing' (1888). In this story, Bierce demonstrates the debilitating effect of terror on Civil War soldiers through the example of his protagonist, Jerome Searing. This short story captures the psychological downfall of Searing, a soldier who is asked to get as close as possible to the enemy to return with news about them. He does as asked, getting as close as possible to the enemy grounds, and discovers that they have left the area. As Searing decides to return with the news that the enemy has retreated, the Confederate captain spontaneously releases a cannonball in the direction of the hiding soldier. The cannonball hits a nearby building that collapses, burying and confining Private Searing in its rubble. As he struggles to free himself, he becomes terrified by the realization that his loaded gun rests directed toward his face. This realization causes him to be consumed by agonizing terror leading to his death.

In this story, Bierce demonstrates a pioneering understanding of the psychological trauma that many Civil War soldiers experienced and the powerful influence of a distressed mind on one's physical condition. Bierce also exhibits an awareness of male nervousness in relation to the ideals of masculinity that, at the time, were seen as necessarily emotionlessness, machine-like, demonstrative of unshakeable bravery in combat, and exhibiting mental stability. Nervousness, fear, expression of emotion, and psychological anguish were considered feminine traits during the late-nineteenth century and this imposed paralyzing effects on veterans who attempted to confirm their 'masculinity' at any cost.⁶

Bierce's narrator, at the beginning of the story, introduces Searing as a brave, dutiful and unshakeable soldier, concerned with and committed solely to the mission of fulfilling his task. As he embarks on his mission, Searing is described as a brave man and a true soldier who had been ordered to undertake a precarious commission. Bierce goes on to describe the character of this brave man: 'an incomparable marksman, young, hardy, intelligent and insensible to fear' (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 34). Bierce seems to intentionally highlight the stability and fearlessness of this man, before he faces the psychological trauma of war. This accentuates the fact that any later instability

⁶ Barbara Welter addresses such gendered understandings of behavior in *The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1966.

would be related to the distress of his traumatic situation. In action, while following his orders, Searing behaves with great courage and self-composure. Bierce's narrator states:

His eyes penetrated everywhere, his ears took note of every sound. He stilled his breathing, and at the cracking of a twig beneath his knee stopped his progress and hugged the earth. It was slow work, but not tedious; the danger made it exciting, but by no physical signs was the excitement manifest. His pulse was as regular, his nerves were as steady as if he were trying to trap a sparrow (35).

It is very important to Bierce that his narrator emphasizes the initial fearlessness and bravery of his protagonist to bring out the contrast between Searing's condition prior to the traumatic incident and his condition after it. Searing represents what was conceived as an admirable soldier during the Civil War, since he finds danger exciting and shows no signs of fear. Bierce highlights these qualities of Searing to condemn such notions of soldierly heroism and expose a more realistic and traumatic aspect in the experiences of these men. Bierce also insists on revealing that even the strongest, bravest and most 'masculine' soldiers are susceptible to nervousness and mental disarray when under the force of traumatic situations.

It is not until after he is trapped under the rubble of the collapsed building that such 'masculine' and 'heroic' qualities begin to disintegrate in Searing. It is interesting to note that the soldiers in Bierce's works are inclined to experience psychological trauma once alone in their own thoughts, uninterrupted by the action of combat. Once denied movement or action, Searing cannot escape or be distracted from his mind or persistent thoughts, and thus realizes that he becomes 'trapped like a rat'. This trap seems to indicate a mental entrapment. As Searing finds himself caught within his own consciousness, he starts to experience dejection: 'Suddenly there fell a great silence, a black darkness and infinite tranquility, and Jerome Searing [was] perfectly conscious of his rathood, and well assured of the trap he was in' (38).

Searing is forced to face and be restricted to his terrifying thoughts after being confined and denied physical movement. He can no longer escape his fears and anxieties with the distraction of battle. In fact, it seems that soldiers, in general, once deprived of action, became drawn inward and thus became susceptible to mental distress and the depletion of mental energy. In support of such a notion, it is worth referencing George Beard, one of the most eminent American neurologists of the late-

nineteenth century. In *American Nervousness; Its Causes and Consequences* (1881), Beard describes neurasthenia as a depletion of nerve force or energy. He considered neurasthenia a modern condition related to civilization and its related stresses. To Beard, neurasthenia was more common among those with ‘superior intellect’ and those who engaged in ‘brainwork’ (Beard 26). Beard rejected theories which related neurasthenic illnesses to organic disorders and insisted that it was related to the exhaustion of mental energy. Beard found that American citizens who lived in urban areas and those who came from brain-working families suffered the most. He used an analogy of Thomas Edison’s electric light bulb theory in his explanation of neurasthenia to clarify the link between mental exhaustion and neurasthenia.

When new functions are interposed in the circuit as modern civilization is constantly requiring us to do, there comes a period, sooner or later, varying in different individuals, and at different times of life, when the amount of force is insufficient to keep all the lamps burning; those that are weakest go out entirely, or as more frequently happens, burn faint and feebly—they do not expire; but give an insufficient and unstable light—this is the philosophy of modern nervousness. (Beard 99)

Bierce, like Gilman, was evidently aware of the danger in the exhaustion of mental energy as he powerfully expresses the destructive consequences of Searing’s mental exhaustion.

Bierce is also clearly conscious that mental terror is the most powerful and most destructive injury a soldier can endure. Such an idea is effectively portrayed throughout both of the stories chosen for this chapter. In ‘An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge’, Bierce’s main concern is to allow his protagonist, Farquhar, to mentally escape the terror of being hanged. The character is not seen to suffer, despite his physical and actual hanging, due to his ability to escape mental terror. Conversely Searing, his protagonist in ‘One of the Missing’, is not offered escape from a terror-ridden mind, and thus suffers dramatically until he finally dies. Hendin and Haas argue that in many of Bierce’s stories, ‘the greatest threat to the bravest of soldiers (and civilians) lies not in the external dangers they confront, but rather derives from the inevitable consequences of internal terror’ (26). This observation supports the suggestion that Bierce was interested in the psychological injuries triggered by war and how the brain

adapts and functions in the face of death or extremely threatening conditions. More importantly, he was determined to divulge this truth to his readers in an attempt to reverse blind patriotism and sacrifice that was encouraged and promoted by the popular discourse of the last decades of the nineteenth century in America.

Bierce's decision to cause his protagonist to die as a result of his nervousness is an important idea to highlight for its reflection of George Beard's theories pertaining to what he called neurasthenia at the time. Searing eventually dies as a result of the complete depletion of nerve force due to the mental energy that he consumes in persistent terror and anxiety. Bierce himself could attest to such a longing for thoughtless physical action in escape from the pressure of inwardness. He expresses this longing at the conclusion of 'What I Saw of Shiloh' (1881):

Here in the night stretches a wide and blasted field studded with half-extinct fire burning redly with I know not what presage of evil. Again I shudder as I note its desolation and its awful silence. Where was it? To what monstrous in harmony of death was it the visible prelude? (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 678)

After he recalls his days of soldiering long after the war and feels a sense of melancholy, he realizes and admits to his desire for action over thought and memory:

Ah, youth, there is no such wizard as thou! Give me but one touch of thine artist hand upon the dull canvas of the Present; gild for but one moment the drear and somber scenes of to-day, and I will willingly surrender another life than the one that I should have thrown away at Shiloh. (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 678)

This is a clear expression of Bierce's discomfort with inactivity because it forces him to reflect inwardly; he was also aware that soldiers like him shared similar feelings. To him, combat and action, it seems, were easier and more bearable. What confirms the suggestion that life to Bierce was unbearable when left without the action-induced thoughtlessness is the fact that he regrets not having ended his life at Shiloh.

Michael Barton and Larry Logue reveal that many soldiers attested to a feeling of disembodiment during battle. While fighting, they were unconscious of their own bodies and requirements, focusing exclusively on the encounter at hand. They were unaware of hunger, thirst or exhaustion, as if in an automated state. They also explain

that it is only after being wounded that these men were brought back to the reality of the vulnerability of their bodies, which in some cases lead to panic, terror and anxiety about death. Many soldiers refused to leave the battlefield because on the battlefield they felt a safe distraction from reality (Barton and Logue 405). Bierce witnessed and partook in enough battles of the Civil War to know and understand this reaction in soldiers. He reflects the same idea in *Searing*, a good example of a soldier who experiences this awakening to the incapacity of his body once denied combat activity, and thus is afflicted with destructive panic and terror.

After the explosion buries *Searing* and he loses consciousness, he awakens to a state of confusion and hallucination:

For a while he believed that he had died and been buried, and he tried to recall some portion of the burial service. He thought that his wife was kneeling upon his grave adding her weight to that of the earth upon his breast. The two of them, widow and earth had crushed his coffin. Unless the children should persuade her to go home he would not much longer be able to breathe. He felt a sense of wrong. 'I cannot speak to her,' he thought; 'the dead have no voice; and if I open my eyes I shall get them full of earth'. (37)

Bierce makes important interruptions, however, to emphasize and reinforce the idea that *Searing's* trauma is in fact psychological and not physical. He does not want the reader to confuse *Searing's* condition as physical trauma or head damage but attempts to correct the misconception of the time that trauma was only physical in nature. Bierce clarifies: '*Searing* was not seriously injured, nor did he suffer pain. A smart rap on the head from a flying fragment of the splintered post, incurred simultaneously with the frightfully sudden shock to the nervous system, had momentarily dazed him' (38-39). Bierce suggests a more psychological than physical explanation for *Searing's* condition, having been acutely aware of such a truth. Tom Burns, in studying the origins of shellshock, taking it back to the traumas of the American Civil War, reveals that the suggestion of the psychological origins of shellshock was based upon numerous observations. First, the rates were much higher in the men who experienced prolonged stress and, second, the stress usually coincided with soldiers' waiting around rather than their direct physical exposure to battle. He also reveals that no studies showed clear relation between shellshock and fighting or concussion.

Birmes, Hatton, Brunet, and Schmitt (2003) clarify that what was initially conceived as a purely organic ailment caused by brain concussion was later recognized as traumatic neurosis. Herbert Modlin explains that although the concept of traumatic neurosis was well established by the 1890s, especially with the clinical observations of the English railway surgeons, John Eric Erichsen and Herbert Page in England, it had still been thought to result from ‘disarrangements in the central nervous system from jolts and blows, thus the historic designation “railroad spine”’ (264). Page later introduced the understanding of nervous shock and functional disorders as also possibly related to alarm. The medical experiences in the Great War further brought to light ‘the psychological factors in stressful, life-threatening experiences and the multiple maladaptive reactions thereto’ (264). In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud acknowledged that although traumatic incidents were external stressors, they were strong enough to ‘break through the prospective shield and inflict injury’ (7). Others, Birmes explains, theorize that the impact of traumatic experiences resulted in temporary ‘disconnection or dysfunction of the central nervous system’, which induced traumatic symptoms (Birmes et al. 2003). Bierce, well before all of these psychologists, demonstrates in his Civil War short stories, acknowledgement of the psychological origin of traumatic neurosis and the distinction between head injury and traumatic neurosis. He evidently recognized that soldiers during the Civil War were prone to developing traumatic neurosis, which had a purely psychological origin.

Jacob M. Da Costa introduced the term Irritable Heart Syndrome during the nineteenth century to explain the physical reactions to war trauma, specifically the American Civil War trauma. Irritable Heart Syndrome or Da Costa syndrome was a basis for later psychological understandings. In 1895, Freud published ‘On The Grounds for Detaching a Particular Syndrome from Neurasthenia under the Description of “Anxiety Neurosis,”’ in which he recognized the physical symptoms of what was called irritable heart (heart spasms, breathing difficulties, sweat outbreaks and other similar symptoms) as attacks of anxiety. Freud explained: ‘I call this syndrome ‘anxiety neurosis’ because all its components can be grouped around the chief symptoms of anxiety’ (qtd. in Gosling 5). Thus, Freud took Da Costa Syndrome a step further, suggesting that contrary to what previous writers considered a somatic disorder, this was actually anxiety, a mental disorder that manifested physically in the subject’s body. This was a groundbreaking concept that played and continues to play a principal role in the foundation of psychiatry. As Gosling reveals, American neurologists used different

terms to refer to neurosis or psychoneurosis, but they had already communicated conceptions that were considerably similar to Freud's theories (Gosling 4-6). Certainly it would seem that Ambrose Bierce possessed an acute awareness of the ability of the mind to translate into somatic problems and dysfunctions, a progressive awareness that would later characterize the more advanced understanding of psychology and that characterized most of his Civil War short stories.

When Searing discovers that his gun is stuck in a position directed toward his face and remembers that he had loaded it prior to the collapse of the building he begins to panic. He becomes consumed with the thought of his loaded gun pointing at him and at times even imagines it moving closer. Thoughts and pleasant memories, which earlier had the ability to soothe him, now stand no chance against his obsession with the threat of his gun. At seeing the gun as more and more sinister he finally cries out in terror: 'He cried out and, startled by something in his own voice—the note of fear—lied to himself in denial: 'if I don't sing out I may stay here till I die'' (41). Bierce intends to show the reader the soldier's anxiety about expressing fear. It is as if Searing feels humiliation at expressing fear. Birnes et al. explain that a significant reason for why mental illness was not acknowledged during the late-nineteenth century had to do with the common tendency to associate psychological disorders with feebleness and cowardice. Henry James and Ambrose Bierce were both devoted to the understanding of the war-traumatized male and they both strove to present this figure against their culture's characterization of maleness. According to Adrian Hunter, '[t]he strategies they devise in their writing in order to disguise the presence of the hysterical man reveal the impact the war had on late-nineteenth century versions of American manhood' (Hunter 280). Both Bierce and James expressed profound interest in the dynamics of male relationships, and especially in how aspects of male anxiety challenged or endangered the masculinity of these men in society.

As the story progresses, Searing's panic and desperation intensifies. As he spends more time under the influence of his terror about his gun, he begins to show signs of anxiety. Bierce writes:

now [he] made no further attempt to evade the menacing stare of the gun barrel. If he turned away his eyes an instant it was to look for assistance (although he could not see the ground on either side the ruin), and he permitted them to return, obedient to the imperative fascination. If he closed them it was from

weariness and instantly the poignant pain in his forehead—the prophecy and menace of the bullet—forced him to reopen them. (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 41)

Searing is clearly consumed by fear. The more time he spends under the influence of his stress and fear, the more intense his psychological distress and physical pain become: ‘The tension of nerve and brain was too severe; nature came to his relief with intervals of unconsciousness’ (41-42). His head starts to hurt with increasing and nagging pain, especially when he closes his eyes and is forced to become immersed in his thoughts with no external distractions. Every time he closes his eyes, his headache becomes more and more unbearable:

It seemed to throb with a slow, regular recurrence, each pulsation sharper than the preceding, and sometimes he cried out, thinking he felt the fatal bullet. No thoughts of home, of wife and children, of country, of glory. The whole record of memory was effaced. The world had passed away—not a vestige remained. Here in this confusion of timbers and boards is the sole universe. Here is immortality in time—each pain was everlasting light. The throbs tick off eternities. (42)

According to Burns, many patients of shellshock suffered from amnesias and could remember nothing of the events leading up to their breakdown. Most were terrified and aroused, troubled by nightmares and unable to rest, eat or sleep (8). Searing exhibits such symptoms of shellshock, ultimately lapsing into total mental distress, where he loses all memory and becomes consumed in the world of his present terror. It is also very important to note Bierce’s insertion of certain phrases, such as ‘the tension of nerve and brain was too severe,’ to insist on expressing that Searing’s pain or injury should not be mistaken for anything other than psychological and also to convince the reader that Searing’s somatic failing originated from his mental tension.

Moreover, Bierce’s narrator intentionally sets Searing’s psychological anguish against his initial brave, manly, and composed character:

Jerome Searing, the man of courage, the formidable enemy, the strong, the resolute warrior, was as pale as a ghost. His jaw was fallen; his eyes protruded;

he trembled in every fiber; cold sweat bathed his entire body; he screamed with fear. He was not insane—he was terrified. (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 43)

The narrator employs this contrast to criticize the notions which suggested a feminine aspect to male stress and anxiety. As revealed by John Starrett Hughes, mental illnesses were a source of shame in the nineteenth century, especially for soldiers raised according to Victorian notions of masculinity and valor (Carnes and Griffen 55-56). Bierce, in this part of his story, highlights the manly qualities of his protagonist to argue that even the most composed and resolute of men can collapse under mental distress. Another intention that Bierce may have had in the employment of such a contrast is a possible implication that neurasthenia or nervousness is etiological rather than ontological, and that it should be understood as circumstantial rather than an organically feminine predisposition. Thus, it can be suggested that Bierce did have a more accurate and progressive understanding of neurasthenia, as opposed to the more common understanding of it. Burns reveals that the most conspicuous symptom of shellshock was tremors. It is unquestionable that Bierce, having been a Civil War soldier, witnessed this symptom in traumatized soldiers, and brought it out powerfully in his protagonist.

Searing is now too consumed by his terror to deny his fear or to care for preserving his image or reputation of 'masculinity'. Bierce shows the tragic mental decline of this once very stable soldier. It is important to note how, once again, Bierce interrupts the story with the narrator's voice clarifying that Searing was terrified and not insane. This is an indication that Bierce was aware of the necessity to distinguish psychological trauma or distress from insanity, or rather to use more accurate terminology to refer to nervousness, anxiety, or traumatic stress. John Talbott (1964) explains: 'The Union army had no label like shell shock, battle fatigue or post-traumatic stress disorder to help explain and legitimize a mysterious condition, no category short of lunacy to account for peculiar behavior' (qtd. in Hunter 41). He also reveals that the men or soldiers who would have probably been diagnosed with combat trauma by medical officers in World War I, World War II or the Vietnam War were severely and inhumanely treated during the Civil War, some of them actually being hanged or shot to death. He clarifies that although the human reactions to tension were the same between the Civil War and the Vietnam War, the understanding and interpretation of such

reactions were significantly different and had transformed by the time of the Vietnam War (Hunter 41).

In this short story, Bierce exhibits a remarkable revolutionary understanding of the human mind under stress, specifically that of the American Civil War soldiers. But he also wants to emphasize and ridicule the ideologies of the time, which condemned men for their nervousness. Bierce, through his corrective tone, clearly sees the injustice in the pressures put upon Civil War soldiers of his time. He effectively expresses his desire to correct the way these soldiers were perceived and accordingly treated.

It should be noted that Bierce was a significant representative of Civil War soldiers since he was himself a soldier, in addition to his career as an author and a journalist. His war narratives and journalistic accounts served as records of what occurred during combat and thus possibly helped provide a better understanding of peculiar behaviors that manifested in soldiers during or after their war experiences. They may have also possibly stirred the motivation in psychologists and neurologists to explore these war-related behaviors in an attempt to better understand them. During the Civil War, Silas Weir Mitchell described symptoms of lethargy, withdrawal and fits of hysterics with excessive emotionality as what later became recognized symptoms of PTSD. For a number of authors, this account is the first medical reference in the observation of post-traumatic disorders in soldiers and civilians' (Birmes et al. 2003). Janet defines the concept of 'misere psychologique' as a 'degrading of the psychic functioning particularly observable in the wake of emotionally draining traumatic experiences' (Birmes et al. 2003).

Toward the end of his struggle, Searing makes a vigorous attempt to push his gun away from the direction of his face. When he succeeds in doing so, Bierce reveals: 'There was no explosion; the rifle had been discharged as it dropped from his hand when the building fell. But it did its work/ Jerome Searing was dead' (Bierce, *Devil's Dictionary* 44). Bierce seems to use this part of the story to leave no room for doubt that this whole traumatic occurrence was primarily psychological. The comment that the gun, despite having no bullets, did its work, also emphasizes that the terror it has caused Searing resulted in the same effect it would have had if loaded, Searing's death. This comment is a powerful reflection of Bierce's awareness of the significant and detrimental effects of psychological trauma and its ability to produce somatic dysfunction even as severe as death.

The story ends when Lieutenant Adrian Searing notices his brother's dead, unrecognizable body as he passes by the fallen building:

Its face is yellowish white; the cheeks are fallen in, the temples sunken too, with sharp ridges about them, making the forehead forbiddingly narrow; the upper lip, slightly lifted, shows the white teeth, rigidly clenched. The hair is heavy with moisture, the face as wet as the dewy grass all about. (44-45)

The narrator's description of Searing's disfigured face expresses the intensity of Searing's agony that led to his death. Once again, to translate the power of psychological distress Bierce recognizes that he must resort to the language of the body as he did with the traumatized child in 'Chickamauga.' Bierce was aware that language alone could not capture the psychological trauma of his characters. According to Monika Elbert, in *Transnational Gothic: Literary and Social Exchanges in the Long Nineteenth Century* (2016), damage to the face and particularly the mouth are frequently depicted in war literature as illustrations of the worst kind of wound precisely because of their powerful dehumanizing effect on the victim. She notes that 'they turn human faces into uncanny masks, and they deprive their victims of the ability to speak and reassert their humanity through language' (177). This idea of 'uncanny' faces recurs in Bierce's Civil War fiction, 'Chickamauga' being one example, where soldiers climb back from war with disfigured and clown-like faces and the protagonist's mother's face is mutilated by the explosion of a shell. Elbert's notion of traumatized victims being deprived of their ability to speak and 'reassert their human dignity through language' also strongly resonates with the ways in which these characters try to express their terror, through terrified shrieks of animal-like sounds. To Bierce, injury, especially that caused by war, is not only physical but also psychological. Thus, his attribution of an uncannily disfigured and dehumanized face to Searing at the end of the story reflects his desire to show that psychological injury is just as disabling and debilitating as physical injury. By intentionally highlighting Searing's purely psychological trauma and then giving him a dehumanizing mask as a face (one with false indications about his death), Bierce is able to powerfully express his view that both mental and physical trauma are equally incapacitating and devastating injuries.

According to Joshi, Schultz and Berkove, 'Bierce was a thinking writer who wrote for thinking readers' (Bierce et al. xx). This is, in my opinion an accurate

description of such a pioneering author who was fascinatingly ahead of his time. Bierce refused to swallow ideas that were fed to the public. He rather questioned, analyzed, and proposed reforms. The most important of the ideas that he revised and refuted were those of heroism and patriotism. To Bierce, who thought for himself and refused to flow with the ideological currents of his time, the invalid idea of heroism was a lie designed to blind citizens into risking their lives for a political cause. Another truth that the reflective and cogitative author was aware of was the reality of the psychological injuries caused by war. Bierce refused to miss the chance of expressing and revealing these truths through his fiction, and for that he is an exceptional author who deserves recognition for his innovative knowledge of the traumatized mind.

CHAPTER 2: Re-evaluating Women's Psychological Constitution: Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1892)

Just as the Civil War and the horrors that came with it allowed for a more nuanced understanding of trauma, so the struggles, injustices and erroneous medical treatments endured by women in the late-nineteenth century impelled a re-evaluation in the understanding of women's psychological conditions. Within this framework, Chapter 2 will explore the aspiration and active resolution of Charlotte Perkins Gilman to present a more nuanced understanding of women's psychological constitution in her fiction. In 'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1892), she examines the psychological struggles endured by women in the late-nineteenth century, and exposes the imprecision and violation in the diagnoses and treatments that were associated with these ailments at the time. Whereas Bierce's stories offered insights into the horrors endured by American Civil War soldiers, Gilman offers insights into the lives of real women and the suffering they endured within suffocating patriarchal contexts. This chapter will explore Gilman's understanding and presentation of the causes of the psychological suffering of late-nineteenth century American women. Her works express her determination to reveal that women's psychological ailments resulted from their oppression and inhibition within a patriarchal and androcentric culture, and her insistence upon changing the misunderstandings and subsequent mistreatments of such illnesses. As the writings of Ambrose Bierce influenced what would become the notion of trauma, the writings of Gilman offer significant insight into the world of women's psychology and, as I will show, can also be seen to have influenced the development of a more nuanced understanding of women's psychological composition.

The Woman in Late-Nineteenth Century America

To introduce the struggles of late-nineteenth century American women, it is essential to look into the context of the period, specifically the androcentric understanding and interpretation of womanhood and women's psychological illnesses at the time. Many women in the 1890s struggled with the expectations of femininity and womanly roles that were imposed on them by a dominant patriarchal culture, promoted by the dominant discourse of the time. Barbara Welter describes the antebellum decades as a time where the manifestations of sexual stereotypes were prominent. It was a time, she

explains, that gave rise to the idea of ‘the cult of true womanhood’ or ‘the cult of domesticity’ (1). This cult of femininity required and promoted docile, domestic, obedient, ‘pure’, and house-bound women. In ‘The Cult of True Womanhood’ (1966), Barbara Welter reveals that submission was the ‘most feminine virtue expected of women’ (qtd. in Maddox 50) and that while men were the ‘doers’ and ‘actors’, women were expected to be the passive, submissive ‘responders’ (51). She reveals that the belief promoted at the time was that there was ‘an order of dialogue’ that ‘was fixed in Heaven:’ man was superior to woman by God’s appointment (51), and not complying with this order would be messing with the order of the universe (51). *The Young Lady’s Book* (1830), for example, concluded: ‘It is...certain, that in whatever situation of life a woman is placed from her cradle to her grave, a spirit of obedience and submission, pliability of temper, and humility of mind, are required of her’ (qtd. in Maddox 51). Through such dominant discourse, women were drawn into believing that their virtue lay in submission, and were thus manipulated into remaining inactive and lacking in voice or identity.

Moreover, religion in this period was used to control and contain women, promoting the idea that women who were independent or interested in intellectuality were sinful or irreligious. The dominant post-bellum discourse reflected a cultural desire to idealize women who behaved like ‘angels’ of the household and demonize women who were hot-tempered, loquacious, or perhaps even brilliant. Rhetorical submissiveness was perceived as true womanhood. For example, Welter presents the account of a woman called Fanny Wright, a free thinking feminist and social reformist, who was considered ‘no woman, mother though she be’ because she was irreligious and piety was seen as the ‘core of woman’s virtue’ (2). Women were warned not to allow their intellectual pursuits to distance them from God. Sarah Josepha Hale, an influential American writer and editor, spoke forebodingly of women like Margaret Fuller who gave up the ‘One True Book’—the bible—for other books which introduced error (Welter 2). Fuller was a prominent American journalist and critic. A significant part of the transcendentalist movement, she was the first editor of *The Dial* and later worked with *New York Tribune*, both Transcendentalist newspapers. She was a suffragist and social reformer who believed in the equality of men and women, asserting women’s rights for education and employment. Her book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1843), is known as America’s first major feminist work (Bailey, Viens and Wright 2).

Hale used Fuller as an example that ‘the greater the intellectual force, the greater and more fatal the errors into which women fall who wander from the Rock of Salvation, Christ the Saviour...’ (qtd. in Welter 2). Obviously, whether intentionally or not, the cultural attitude manipulated and scared some women away from intellectuality, keeping them submissive to and dependent upon men. Welter reveals the dehumanizing dialogue of the post-bellum period, which stripped women of any independent identity or value: ‘The marriage night was the single great event in a woman’s life, when she bestowed her greatest treasure upon her husband, and from that time on was completely dependent upon him, an empty vessel, without legal or emotional existence of her own’ (qtd. in Welter 3). The phrase ‘empty vessel’ in this passage is powerfully revealing of the way women were objectified and denied an existence or identity independent of their husbands.

Medicine was yet another area that contributed to the incapacitation of post-bellum American women. Women who did dare to exhibit intellectual interests were considered unfeminine and undesirable for marriage, because it was believed and expressed at the time that intellectuality in women negatively affected their ovaries. There was a belief that too much brain effort or activity would reduce the blood flow to the ovaries and thus make women less fertile (Studd 2). For example Robert Tait, a gynecologist known for his outstanding intellectual and surgical ability supported this observation, suggesting that ‘young girls should not play music or read serious books because it makes much mischief with their menstrual cycle and intellect’ (qtd. in Studd 3). Henry Maudsley confirmed such a belief in his article, ‘Sex in Mind and Education’ (1884): ‘when nature spends in one direction, she must economize in another’ (3). He warned that ‘she does not easily regain the vital energy that was recklessly spent on learning... if a woman attempts to achieve the educational standards of men... she will lack the energy necessary for childbearing and rearing’ (qtd. in Studd 4).

Being unfit for marriage or motherhood at the time was considered something very serious since that was the only value and identity women were given. Thus, doing anything to threaten a woman’s fertility must have been unfathomable. The prevalence of such an ideology was powerful in scaring women from participating in intellectually stimulating activities. I will demonstrate in this chapter that it was this crippling of women (established through the misleading androcentric discourse of the time) that contributed to their psychological distress. I will also illustrate that Gilman was very

much aware of such disabling discourse and passionately opposed it through her literary work.

Prevailing attitudes, medical misunderstanding, and stereotypical attitudes toward women in the latter decades of the nineteenth century were not only responsible for incapacitating women socially and intellectually, but more dangerously, for enabling medical and psychological malpractice and misdiagnoses. Edward Shorter reveals that during the late 1800s American gynecologists performed Battey operations (ovary removal surgery) for decades due to misunderstandings and gender-based stereotypes in medicine and psychology (Shorter 77). This operation became prevalent in the latter half of the century; doctors suggested it for just about any behavioral ‘problem’ (77). By 1884 small-town surgeons, such as Doctor Barss from Massachusetts, were removing young women’s ovaries for what they identified as hysteria. In 1888, J. Taber Johnson from Washington D.C. removed the ovaries of a 28-year-old woman for what he identified as nymphomania. In 1895, Robert Edde, a staff physician at the Adams Nervine Asylum, which was founded in 1880 in Boston, reported that among recent female patients admitted to the asylum, twenty-seven at some point before admission had had both ovaries removed for the relief of nervous symptoms (77).

Frank Billings, a notable Chicago physician complained, in 1904, that many ovaries were removed with no valid reason, and he cited many examples. One example that he recalled was a young neurasthenic woman from Wisconsin who visited him in 1892 for what she explained as pain in her organs. Billings could find nothing wrong with her but another physician in New York did remove her ovaries, to no avail according to Billings. He remarked that ‘there was no more reason, in my opinion, for removing her ovaries than removing her ears’ (qtd. in Shorter 77). Such was the case with many other women at the time. Ironically, the medical procedures that were employed to supposedly cure a woman’s supposed illnesses were clearly, instead, contributors to the problems or to the exacerbation of any present distress. In this chapter, I will demonstrate how Gilman rejects such faulty in ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’ and offers a more nuanced and informed way of understanding women’s mental ailments as resulting from their social and domestic oppression.

Nancy Theriot explains in ‘Diagnosing Unnatural Motherhood’ (1989) that puerperal insanity (believed as insanity in women caused by their reproductive stages) can in fact be understood as a socially constructed disease that reflected the gender restrictions of the nineteenth century. She suggests that male physicians generated this

idea of 'insanity' (71) based on the limited and patriarchal understanding and definition of proper or even 'normal' womanly behavior. So, for example, to some nineteenth-century men, a woman who neglected her children, abandoned her duties in the home, showed no interest in her physical appearance, or used obscene language was likely to be 'insane', and tragically treated accordingly (as previously mentioned, through ovary removal operations). Significant evidence of this understanding exists in the medical literature of the period. For example, Dr. R.M. Wigginton, assistant and superintendent at the State Hospital for the insane, near Madison, Wisconsin, in 1884, expressed great concern about a woman suffering from what he diagnosed as puerperal insanity: 'the loving and affectionate mother, who has so recently had charge of her household, has suddenly been deprived of her reason; and instead of being able to throw around her family that halo of former love, she is now a violent maniac, and feared by all' (qtd. in Leavitt 409).

Physicians classified a woman as insane based on certain behaviors, like 'letting herself go' or being 'indifferent to cleanliness', which today would not indicate a psychological or psychiatric disorder. This problematic classification of such behaviors under the disorder of hysteria was enabled because of the fluid understanding of hysteria and the attribution of hysterical tendencies to behaviors that negated the patriarchal perception of how a 'proper' woman should behave. Theriot reveals, however, that case studies of puerperal insanity indicate that many women expressed melancholic or maniacal behavior as a result of situations that were intolerable to them rather than a female tendency. Medical case studies revealed causes such as illegitimacy, fear in first pregnancies, distressing birth experiences or stillborn babies, post-natal infections, and extreme brutality of husbands (Theriot 80). One example is a woman who developed symptoms of insanity after her newborn baby died a few days after birth. Another woman behaved maniacally when she suffered a traumatic and physically damaging birth and had her baby removed with forceps. A woman labeled insane for disowning her baby and hitting her husband whenever he approached was later discovered to have been constantly beaten by her husband during her pregnancy and to have lost a child two months earlier (80). Thus, even if some women did experience depression or other mental ailments, it was often due to the demeaning and traumatic conditions they were forced to live under rather than their alleged natural nervous or hysterical tendency. This misdiagnosis/misunderstanding is something that Gilman was determined to clarify and change.

As previously mentioned, this loose usage of hysteria as a diagnosis resulted from a combination of ignorance and the cultural belief that women were better when subdued. For example, between 1850 and 1900, many women were committed to mental institutions for exhibiting ‘unwomanly’ behaviors such as excessive sexual interest, lack of religious belief, laziness, obscene language, and expression of opinion, all qualities undesirable to the cultural attitudes and values of the time. Asylums for ‘hysterical’ women in the nineteenth century seemed to be the solution for saving women and their families from social judgment for their ‘inappropriate’ and ‘scandalous’ behavior. Being labeled insane and admitted to an asylum was socially more acceptable than being considered immoral. Therefore, women who did not behave with absolute respect for the social norms of the time could be considered insane. Asylum admittance and diagnoses of mental illnesses helped in maintaining the reputations of ‘unorthodox’ women and their families, something that was crucial at the time. One known example of an unfair asylum admission in 1860 is that of Elizabeth Parsons Ware Packard. She was the wife of Reverend Theophilus Packard, an extreme Calvinist. Because she started to question his extreme religiosity, the Reverend admitted his wife to an Illinois state hospital, Jacksonville Insane Asylum, on June 18, 1860, for not conforming to her role as a wife and for questioning Calvinist ideas. At that time Illinois law allowed for such admittance without requiring evidence of mental illness and Packard was confined along with the insane.

Her imprisonment lasted for three years before she was able to prove that she was in fact sane. Upon her arrival home, Packard’s husband confined her in a room for a year until a neighbor found a letter she had dropped out of the window. This neighbor took the letter to Judge Charles Starr who called for a court hearing, which very quickly proved Elizabeth sane. Elizabeth Packard then became a woman’s rights activist and an advocate for the rights of mental health patients (Himelhoch and Shaffer 350). During the period of her confinement she wrote as much as was possible, which was very difficult, since she was not allowed to have any personal belongings, and the books and paper she tried to sneak in were taken away from her by her doctor. Her writings described the terrors that took place in the asylum including the female suicides that resulted from prolonged harassment, solitude and desolation (Chesler 10-11).

By the end of the century, some physicians began to recognize the devastating errors in the treatment of women. By the 1890s there was controversy about the surgical treatments with some practising physicians even condemning the practice as

‘mischievous operative interference’ (Leavitt 412) and some concluding that only physical symptoms should indicate surgical necessity. Interestingly, even gynecologists who passionately fought for surgical treatment, after gaining access to asylums and being exposed to empirical studies, produced significant evidence against such a practice (412). By the end of the century, the majority of gynecologists no longer believed that women’s defective (or otherwise) reproductive organs were the underlying cause of insanity and the concept of puerperal insanity was gradually abandoned.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman: A Woman of Reform

It is clear that Gilman wrote with the purpose of improving women’s social and political situation, and to do this she knew that she needed to modify the discourse of the time and to expose the ignorance within the dominant patriarchal discourse. In *Our Androcentric Culture: or The Man-Made World* (1893) Gilman stated that writing should function to represent reality. Her main interest was in representing women and she argued that ‘fiction under our androcentric culture, had not given any true picture of woman’s life, very little of human life, and a disproportioned section of man’s life’ (102). She criticized how the androcentric literature of her time erased women’s existence by not portraying the truth about how women really lived.

The inclusion of female doctors in the field of medicine and psychology was not permitted until 1847 when Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to graduate from medical school in the United States, joined the profession (Showalter 127). So, for the first half of the century, women were treated exclusively by men. The profession of psychiatry was controlled completely by men until the very end of the nineteenth century; it was not until 1894 that female doctors were allowed to join the Medico-Psychological Association (127). It is logical to suggest then that women’s later involvement in medicine toward the end of the century changed and shaped a more advanced scientific understanding of women’s mental illnesses, even if this only changed perceptions gradually. Moreover, as will be discussed further on, women’s expressions of their experiences and perceptions in literature, and the production of their works to actively rebel against the mistreatment of women, played a crucial role in the development of a more accurate understanding of women’s lives. And women’s writing played an important role in the transformation in the diagnoses and treatments pertaining to women’s mental health.

It can be argued that feminist movements paved the way for the inclusion of women in the medical field and contributed to the achievement of a better medical understanding of women's mental health. According to Richard Shryrock, 'feminists at large saw in the admittance of women to medicine a dramatic test case for their whole movement, and encouraged it at every opportunity' (qtd. in Rudd and Gough 45). The introduction of women to the medical field was linked to a strong feminist movement. As Mary Roth Walsh explains 'a female physician could not have functioned autonomously in nineteenth-century America' without the support of feminist movements (qtd. in Rudd and Gough 45), and Gilman was a key feminist involved in this interrelationship between feminism and women's medical activity. Frederick Wegener observes that:

Few cultural figures at the time would have been better situated to observe this crucial interrelationship between feminism and the women's medical movement, or to grasp its importance, than Charlotte Perkins Gilman, whose emergence coincides with the rise of American women as officially accredited doctors and whose concerns and convictions would have made her peculiarly responsive to such a phenomenon. (qtd. in Rudd and Gough 45)

Gilman repeatedly expressed her admiration for and her connection to the female doctors of her time. She recalls her admiration for Dr. Studley, a woman physician who visited her school in Rhode Island when she was a teenager. Dr. Studley lectured students about hygiene and Gilman was greatly impressed by her. She remarked Studley 'made an indelible impression on [her] eager mind' (Gilman, *The Living* 28). She also documented in her diaries the friendship that she developed with Dr. Elizabeth Keller, a leader of New England Hospital for Women and Children after attending a lecture she gave in Providence, Rhode Island in 1883 (*Diaries* 173). Moreover, soon after the publication of 'Why Women Do Not Reform Their Dress' (1886), Gilman exchanged ideas with Dr. Mary Edwards, a female physician who herself practised a more liberal dress code (*Diaries* 355-356, 358). By 1888, Gilman was acquainted with many female physicians including Charlotte Blake Brown (founder of the Woman's and Children's Hospital in San Francisco) Dr. Elizabeth A. Follansbee (a leading physician in Los Angeles) and Dr. Rose Bullard (an esteemed Los Angeles surgeon and chairperson of public health for the Los Angeles district) (Gough 46).

According to Gough, ‘perhaps inevitably, the women doctors whom she met and befriended were apt to share Gilman’s own beliefs and enthusiasms and to be involved along with her in many of the same activities’ (46). It is thus clear that Gilman was familiar with and even shared the ideas and contributions of the women doctors with whom she interacted. However, it is also very probable that their interactions were bidirectional, and that these physicians also received Gilman’s thoughts and ideas since she did demonstrate a keen awareness of women’s psychological processes under stressful or traumatic conditions. I argue, in this chapter, that Gilman recognized and expressed a more informed understanding of the origins of women’s mental ailments. According to Gilman, if women were in fact more likely to experience psychological disorders, it was the result of their oppressive and suppressive contexts rather than their inherent nervous or ‘hysterical’ nature.

Gilman experienced, first hand, the complications of the rest cure, Silas Weir Mitchell’s erroneous treatment for women who were mentally distressed. After giving birth to her daughter Katherine in 1885, Gilman found herself significantly depressed and confessed that even motherhood did not bring her joy (Kessler 22). Because her condition would often relapse after some improvement, Gilman turned to the professional help of Dr. Weir Mitchell. Mitchell was a chief psychiatric doctor of the time and the President of the Association of American Physicians in the 1880s, his specialization being women’s nervous and hysterical habits. Mitchell advised her to live as domestically as possible and to avoid intellectual activity (*The Living* 90). In *Fat and Blood: And How to Make Them*, Mitchell introduced his method of curing ‘chiefly women’ (Mitchell 9) who, as he described them, were ‘invalids unable to attend to the duties of life, and sources alike discomfort to themselves and anxiety to others’ (10):

for some years I have been using with success, in private and in hospital practice, certain methods of renewing the vitality of feeble people by a combination of entire rest and excessive feeding, made possible by passive exercise obtained through the steady use of massage and electricity.’ (Mitchell 9)

Gilman heeded his recommendation for several months yet found no improvement at all. She then decided to abandon his advised treatment method. When Gilman resumed her writing and physical activity, she improved significantly. This experience was the

foundation of Gilman's criticism of the treatments prescribed by male physicians to middle class women. She believed that the treatments of male physicians were based on bias and gender stereotypes.

For example, although Mitchell did have positive interactions with women, he was considerably more sympathetic toward the nervous men he treated (Stiles 3). While Mitchell treated anxious women by confining them to their beds, he gave his male patients the choice to either rest or travel west. 'The West Cure' which was suggested for nervous men, involved 'cattle roping, rough riding, hunting, and bonding with other men in rugged frontier locations' (Stiles 6-7). These activities were seen to offer rehabilitation to neurasthenic men to allow them to return to their businesses and intellectual pursuits more successful and recharged; in short, this cure was a kind of holiday. So-called 'West Cure' patients usually enjoyed their treatment, and many patients of this cure were reported to return revived and improved (7). This cure greatly contrasted with the rest cure imposed on women. Many women on rest cure deteriorated, fell deeper into hysteria and insanity, and some even died. A good example of another woman who suffered from the rest cure during Gilman's time is Alice James, sister of Henry and William James. Alice was forced to endure constraint and a bed-ridden life, unlike her active and liberated brothers who shared similar illnesses (Halliwell 111). Halliwell, ironically, observes that although William James 'emphasized energy, expansiveness, potential selves, and the possibilities of living in a pluralistic universe' (111), he enforced the opposite treatment on Alice.¹ Alice's life is a valuable example of the ways in which women were distinguished from men under the diagnoses of patriarchal psychiatry. Gilman, outraged by such bias and injustice, was determined to expose Mitchell's untoward understanding and treatment of women in 'The Yellow Wallpaper,' and ensure that women be saved from such devastating mistreatment.

In 'Why I Wrote "The Yellow Wallpaper"' (1913), Gilman claims that she wrote the story in order to save people from being pushed into insanity, as she was, by following the rest cure (52). As Gilman was aware, her suffering from the rest cure was not an isolated case; it was in fact a widespread phenomenon. In discussing the details related to the publication of 'The Yellow Wallpaper', for example, George Monteiro reveals that when Gilman first tried to submit her story to the *Atlantic Monthly*, Horace

Elisha Scudder, editor of the magazine, rejected it because it was too ‘miserable’ to impose on the readers of his magazine. William Dean Howells, however, was successful in helping to get the story published in the *New England Magazine* in 1892. His 26 year-old daughter had also been a victim of Mitchell’s rest cure, having recently died as a result of this treatment, leaving Howells to suffer an immense and painful sense of guilt (Monteiro 42). Aware of the dangers of misdiagnosis and the maltreatment of women’s illnesses, Howells understood and encouraged Gilman’s interest in exposing and preventing such dangerous errors. Gilman also sent a copy of her story to Mitchell himself in the hope that it would cause him to discontinue his prescription of the rest cure. Although he did not acknowledge his error, he did, she claimed, end up changing this prescription (Dock 23). In considering these interactions, it is reasonable to argue that Gilman did in fact impose palpable changes and influences in the treatment of women who suffered from psychological disorders in the late-nineteenth century American context.

Gilman also makes clear that those prescriptions were in fact fundamentally proscriptions against the professional and intellectual activity of women (Monteiro 43). Gilman was insightful about the misinterpretations of women’s behaviors and subsequent psychiatric misdiagnoses. She was also aware of the complex interrelationship between the limited understandings of women, their behaviors and treatments prescribed to them, and the misleading and immobilizing dominant androcentric woman-related discourse of the late 1900s. Conrad Shumaker reveals, in *Too Terribly Good to be Printed*, that Gilman told Howells that she did not consider her work to be literature at all. She stated that everything she wrote had a purpose and, in the case of ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’, it was to make known the dangers of certain medical cures (Shumaker 589). Aware of the dangers and ignorance that resulted from these gender-based treatments, Gilman was disdainful of male physicians’ diagnoses. For example, she was very scornful of Freud’s psychoanalytical notions that focused on penis envy, the castration complex, and women’s supposed inferiority to men due to their biological make up. She was highly critical of the psychoanalytical movement in general and considered it misleading, seeing his phallocentric theories as a threat to the progress of women and humanity in general. Although Freud and Joseph Breuer did take the understanding of hysteria a step forward, arguing that it was not related to women’s sexual organs, but rather women’s repressed traumatic memories (particularly sexual ones), this study still sexualized hysteria. Gilman was fervently against

sexualizing hysteria or psychological problems in general, because to her this was yet another way to keep women passive and relational to men. In *Charlotte Perkins Gilman and her Contemporaries*, Cynthia Davis and Denise Knight observe:

[Gilman's] appraisal rests on her foresight and realization that Freudian thinking was the most threatening paradigmatic challenge to her gynaecocentric evolutionary theory of the human race. Gilman clearly realizes that Freud's theories presented a new rationale to keep women from achieving full humanness. (194)

Gilman endeavored to bring her apprehensions about Freudianism to the fore. Her main concerns about Freud's phallogocentric thinking were that it would negatively affect women's evolution toward equality and financial independence and thus negatively affect their mental state. Most of Gilman's work was written prior to the importation of Freudian thinking to the United States, and she saw Freudian theories as a countering force to the attempts at achieving more accurate understanding and treatment of women. In light of these efforts, it is clear that Gilman was a very important figure in the progress and transformation of female-related psychiatry (Davis and Knight 203).

Although Gilman never met Freud in person, she was most likely exposed to his ideas, which were circulating widely in the literature of her time. According to F.H. Matthews, the influence of Freud's ideas appeared soon after his visit to the United States in 1909, as I discussed in the introduction. The president of Clark University, G. Stanley Hall, was the forerunner of experimental psychology. He made several references to Freud's theories and by 1908 he was discussing them extensively in his graduate courses at Clark (Matthews 41). Because of his position as a prolific scholarly agent and pioneer in the field of experimental psychology, Hall contributed significantly to the popularization of Freudian thought. Matthews reveals that by 1910 scholarly journals were including considerable numbers of Freudian articles and reviews, and non-specialist journals were featuring expository Freudian pieces. By 1915 there was 'sensational treatment in larger-circulation magazines, when *Good Housekeeping* and *Everybody's* took up Freudian themes' (41). Gilman, being well read and critical of much of the androcentric literature of the time, especially the magazines, which instructed women to be good wives and housekeepers, and also being herself the

editor of her own periodical, *The Forerunner*, was most likely exposed to this proliferation of Freudian ideas.

Gilman not only questioned many male physicians' understanding of women's psychological ailments but also showed great admiration for the ability of female physicians to understand the female mind more accurately. According to Carla Bittel, after her mental decline under Mitchell's rest cure, Gilman entrusted her mental health to Mary Putnam Jacobi, a female physician who became interested in Gilman after reading her story 'The Yellow Wallpaper,' which was written a decade earlier. In 1901, Jacobi offered to help Gilman with her mental ailment. It seems that Gilman's fictional account of her struggle with the rest cure left a significant impression on Jacobi. She was eager to treat Gilman after her public critique of Mitchell's treatment plan. Both women shared many interests, especially their 'deep concerns about the mental health of American women and the social restrictions that caused and exacerbated them' (Chesler 144). Both women were influenced by socialism and 'shared an organic view of society, seeing it as a collective project where all members, including women, contributed to the broader good through their work and education' (145). Jacobi treated Gilman through mental and physical stimulation. She made Gilman start by working her brain through building kindergarten blocks and increased the complexity of the tasks to activities like reading complex books and scientific texts. She also advised Gilman to return to writing her book *Human Work* (1904) and to partake in physical activities like basketball.

American historian, Regina Morantz-Sanchez reveals that Gilman considered Jacobi the most patient and perceptive physician she had met. She praised her ability to understand the mind of the sufferer and her originality and individuality in treating women outside the realm of customary methods (Morantz-Sanchez 214). However, Gilman was as much help to Jacobi as Jacobi was to Gilman; Jacobi told Gilman that she was quite interested in neurasthenia and that she had originated a treatment system for it that she wanted to try but was not given the opportunity to do so. Gilman was happy to allow Jacobi to test her system on her (214). This evidence is substantial in supporting my suggestion that Gilman's fictional critique of the misinformation of women's mental ailments did in fact contribute to the more informed expression and understanding of these ailments.

To support the contention that the introduction of female opinions and views in the medical field led to more accurate treatments and understandings in psychology,

and to show the striking similarity between Gilman's insights and those of Jacobi, it is important to elaborate more on Jacobi's ideas on women's psychology. She addressed female nervousness in her *Essay on Hysteria* (1888). She argued that to stop and cure hysteria, 'social conditions for women must be positive and their intellect normally active; to Jacobi, as to Gilman, lack of activity led to psychological and nutritional breakdowns, for it sapped women of their vitality and creativity' (Bittel 140). To support her contention Jacobi quoted the German neurologist Albert Eulenberg in her *Essays on Hysteria* (1888):

The predominance of hysteria among women depends, ultimately, far more upon the social conditions to which they are subjected than upon uterine catarrhs and erosions. These conditions combine to arrest energy of will and independence of thought in women; to suppress impartial comparison of their own individuality with external objects; to restrain or suspiciously supervise all impulses to free action; and especially to obstruct and oppose any attempt at emancipation from the limit of a narrow and trivial existence. To these circumstances are due precisely the most severe, extended, and incurable cases of hysteria. (Jacobi 66)

Jacobi critiqued the 'triviality' of middle class life for women and its social limitations. She believed that the effective treatment for women's hysteria was exercise, a change in scenery and the stimulation of motor activity. Her ideas bear striking similarity to those of Gilman. This of course most probably resulted from the bidirectional communication they shared about women's mental conditions.

Contrary to the general belief that writing and intellectuality caused women mental illness, Gilman knew that the opposite was true. Along with other feminists and female physicians of her time, she believed that writing improved mental health. Female mind curists actually prescribed writing to women who suffered with mental ailments. For example, Harriot K. Hunt, one of the first female physicians in the U.S., wrote in her autobiography, *Glances and Glimpses* (1856), that her treatment of women consisted of 'telling [them] to throw away their medicines and begin a diary' (qtd. in Herndl 127).

Gilman saw herself as an enlightening figure and thought of her works as didactic. She wrote to promote change. She saw herself as a philosopher and explicitly

states in her autobiography: 'I was not a reformer but a philosopher... I worked for various reforms, as Socrates went to war when Athens needed his services, but we do not remember him as a soldier. My business was to find out what ailed society, and how most easily and naturally to improve it' (*The Living* 182).

One of the ways Gilman hoped that she could solve the problems of society was by pushing for women's education. Gilman criticized the kind of informal education which women received as opposed to the real education offered to men. She believed that for society to progress, it needed to be reformed 'without the domestication of women' (Waithe 51). Throughout her fifty-year career, she produced piercing critiques of the modern society's central institutions: the household, maternity, the family, work, and religion. 'Through her work, she hoped to edge the world toward, not a man-made culture,' notes Waithe, 'but a culture of free human beings with a sense of purpose, and an ethic for the advancement of humanity' (51). Gilman believed that developing an educational system that deemphasized gender differences would allow women to be active and equal members of society. She suggested that if women were educated and trained in the same way as men, they would be able to assume new and important roles in society and become socially active, intellectually motivating, financially independent, civilly responsible and brave individuals (Gough 146). In 'Concerning Children' (1900) Gilman suggested that 'the underlying purpose of all organisms is growth, and that learning is a natural function whereby children grow' (Chambliss 240). She proposed that, children from their early years, should be educated by specialists in an environment that is safe and suitable for their sizes and needs. In this way, she believed, children would be able to safely follow their curiosity and eventually engage in real learning (Chambliss 240).

In addition to writing many works, all of which had an educational and social purpose, Gilman was also very actively involved in social reformist activities. For example, during her stay in California in 1892, she was involved in women's academic and socialist organizations. Some of these organizations included the Pacific Coast Women's Press Association, The Ebell Society, The Women's Alliance, The Economic Club, The Parent's Association, The State Council of Women and others. She delivered a speech at the convention of the National American Women's Suffrage Association in 1896 and represented California at the International Socialist and Labor Congress (Davis and Night 215).

According to Gilman, acknowledging the consequences of the conditions imposed upon women would help prevent many psychological breakdowns. Gilman believed that confining women to the home to raise their children, rather than allowing them to work outside the home, was a form of oppression that needed to be eradicated (Dreiser 57). She believed that society needed to accept the idea of women, even mothers, having paid careers, and she helped pave the way for such radical change. For example, some of her fellow feminists were able to materialize her vision and in 1915, after a lobbying campaign by the Feminist Alliance, the schools of New York City changed their systems to allow women to return to continue after marriage and even after becoming mothers (57). This indicates Gilman's awareness of the ways in which women would be psychologically healthier if offered less oppressive conditions.

Gilman's reformative endeavors also included battling the misleading 'truths' offered by yellow presses, particularly those related to Hearst. She reasoned that the success behind the journalism of Hearst and the like was because:

[It] frankly plays on the lowest, commonest of its traits; tickling it with salacious details, harping on those themes which unlettered peasants find attractive, and for which most people retain an unadmitted weakness. This is the secret of our 'yellow press'; and of the strange prominence given to unimportant stories of vice even in the mildly cream colored varieties. ('Newspapers' 315)

Gilman was herself a victim of such 'salacious' reporting. During the period of her divorce from her first husband, Charles Walter Stetson, a reporter visited Gilman from the *San Francisco Examiner* (a Hearst-owned publication) in the fall of 1892. They asked for details about the divorce suit that Stetson filed on the grounds of desertion. Still inexperienced at the time and thinking that reporters were 'men and women like the rest of us, governed by similar instincts of decency and kindness,' (Gilman, *Living* 142-43), Gilman gave the reporter the details related to the separation, requesting that he 'please not spread it about,' since she wished to spare her dying mother more grief (142-43). Disregarding her request however, the *Examiner* published a full-page story on Gilman's separation with her husband causing her mother great anxiety and causing Gilman's name to become 'a football for all the papers on the coast' (143). From then Gilman refused to cooperate with any Hearst publication, whether for interviews or for publishing articles. Determined to 'express important truths', Gilman rather published

her own monthly magazine, *The Forerunner*, where she could uphold an ethical ideal in journalism and educate the public about the corruption of yellow journalism (Davis and Knight 48).

'The Yellow Wallpaper' (1892): Gilman's Proscription against Androcentric Psychiatry

'The Yellow Wallpaper' is the story of a woman who, after undergoing the rest cure, descends from what seems to be mild stress into a form of psychosis. Because of her depression, she is advised by her husband and brother (both physicians) to remain in bed in an isolated room, avoiding any kind of mental or physical activity. The woman dislikes the room that she is forced to stay in; the yellow wallpaper in this room disturbs her and makes her uncomfortable. Despite her pleas to change the room, her husband refuses to listen to her and keeps her locked up in it, forbidding her to write or partake in any social or intellectual activities lest it impose more mental strain upon her. However, when she does write secretly, in spite of him, she is tormented with guilt about her disobedience and eventually stops writing. Alone in her room and in her thoughts she falls more and more deeply into mental distress, believing that there is a woman trapped inside the wallpaper that she needs to save. The story ends with her total descent into insanity, tearing down the wallpaper to supposedly set this imagined woman free.

Although much has been written on 'The Yellow Wallpaper' in light of psychological analysis and Gilman's determination to bring to the fore the detrimental psychological consequences of patriarchal oppression, I am specifically interested in the story's resonance with the ideas of double-consciousness, or the splitting of consciousness that can occur during trauma induced dissociation. The parallels in the dual consciousness that Gilman's protagonist exhibits under traumatic conditions and Janet's theory of double consciousness during dissociation, makes 'The Yellow Wallpaper' a valuable text within the larger focus of my thesis. Such parallels indicate that Gilman, as a late-nineteenth century writer, was advanced in her understanding of nineteenth-century women's mental maladies, and has an important place alongside the other authors of the time who progressively understood trauma in a twentieth-century sense. She recognized symptoms and characteristics in what was called 'hysteria' which

would later be understood in relation to trauma and trauma-related psychological disorders. My contention about Gilman's advanced understanding of trauma-related dissociation and dual consciousness converges with scholars like Helen Pinsent who also argues in 'Changing Janes' that Gilman may have been, without realizing it, presenting an early conception of Dissociative Identity Disorder (63). Although Pinsent regards Gilman's protagonist's splitting of consciousness as a means of liberation from oppression, my analysis is more in line with Jennifer Fleissner's nuanced understanding of determinism as a form of psychological 'stuck-ness' (Fleissner 37).

Gilman begins this novella by introducing the oppression of her female protagonist in order to demonstrate that her eventual mental decline is a product of her domestic environment of oppression and defeasance. In order to establish this oppression, she first strips her protagonist of an independent and significant identity within her domestic realm. For example, she is not given a name in the story. Her only identifications are those that are given to her by her husband. Even more interestingly, these identifications are never indicative of a woman who is entitled to an opinion or a woman with an independent identity. Her husband, John, refers to her with terms such as 'blessed little goose' (*The Yellow Wallpaper* 6) or his 'little darling' or 'little girl' (10), but not once does he refer to her with a name or with terms that reflect a strong, able or individual identity. It is also worth noting that the first title compares her to an animal, a goose in particular, which is an animal that usually has the life wrung out of it or is easily frightened. It is also interesting that he uses the word 'blessed' with such a description. This combination of terms reveals Gilman's criticism of the commonly promoted notion at the time that a proper, 'holy' or 'angelic' woman was one who was voiceless and satisfied with nullification. The other titles compare the protagonist to property or a child. She is 'his' and that should be her sole purpose. Also, the use of the word 'little' indicates his perception that she is like a child and therefore incapable of making adult decisions. Gilman uses these terms as a reflection and critique of how women were perceived as mere extensions of men rather than cognitive beings in their own right.

Moreover, although the character in this story possesses a strong mind, reasonable opinions and a solid, rational voice, she is silenced and ridiculed by the men in her life for her alleged naivety or childishness. When her husband, John, decides on the house that they will rent for the summer, he does so without involving his wife in the decision or choice. When she does try to give her opinion, she has valid arguments.

For example, when she tells John that something about the house does not feel right, she gives quite rational reasons; she suggests that because it is being let for such a low price and it has not been lived in for a very long time, this must indicate that something is undesirable in the house. Also, although she mentions that John laughs at her, she still strongly maintains her opinion: 'Still I will proudly declare that there is something queer about it' (3). The use of the word 'of course,' along with her statement that John laughs at her, reveals the narrator's criticism of his inability to consider her opinion of any value. This shows that, although invalidated, she is aware of how things work in a patriarchal culture, and that she does not agree with it but rather questions it. Gilman gives her protagonist a scornful tone here in order to reveal that this woman is aware of and rebellious against the limitations of her patriarchal culture. Gilman finds it necessary to show her character's rebellious mind and independent insight because it is this kind of woman (like herself) who struggled most under the suffocations of patriarchy.

Her husband, John, also gives her no choice about the room in which she will sleep. When she expresses to him her preference for another room, she tells the reader, 'John would not hear it' (4). Further on in the story, as she reveals her illness to the reader, she displays great wisdom and is quite confident about her personal belief about her situation. She reveals that John and her brother (also a renowned physician) warned her against ever writing in order to recover, but she confesses: 'Personally I disagree with their ideas' (3) ... 'Personally, I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good. But what is one to do?' (3). Again, in the repetition of 'personally', Gilman is determined to accentuate her protagonist's independent mind and her awareness of the flaws, naiveties and injustices of the dominant male opinions. She does this to clarify that women do have a voice, and are rational and intelligent individuals who can think clearly and make decisions for themselves—not mere appendages whose existence depends on that of the men in their lives. She also establishes an initially independently thinking woman to reveal the detrimental mental repercussions of domestic oppression.

Gilman presents an intelligent woman who knows what is best for herself, and for women in general. This woman, although subdued, is conscious that men dominate the medical field and impose treatments according to their ill-informed understanding of women, thus providing ineffective medical help. She is aware that she (and women like her) cannot be effectively cured of their mental struggles, or may even develop

mental ailments, as long as men continue to impose their limited understanding and treatments upon them. However, she is also aware that, as a woman, her voice and opinions will inevitably be silenced and suffocated by the dominant men in her life and the dominant androcentric culture, and that there is nothing that she can do about it. She confesses to the reader:

John is a physician, and *perhaps*—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—**PERHAPS** that is one reason I do not get well faster. You see he does not believe I am sick! And what can one do? (3)

As previously mentioned, the fact that women were not allowed into the medical profession until the very end of the century affected the way women's issues were presented, understood, and diagnosed. Gilman uses her protagonist in this story as a universal example of this tragic reality of her time. The suffering protagonist secretly admits that her husband's refusal to listen to her opinion about her health is what hinders her improvement, reflecting Gilman's belief that a gender-based understanding of women's psychology is problematic. Gilman's larger point in this novella is that the silencing of women impedes the progress of the medical field and of society in general. Gilman initially introduces her protagonist with a strong, rational voice before later incapacitating her in order to illustrate an emotional and psychological decline. She creates this shift to criticize and reverse the nineteenth-century androcentric cultural perception that women have a natural tendency for hysteria, and to emphasize that women's mental destabilization is in fact aetiological—engendered by their contextual oppression.

The word 'PERHAPS' in capital letters in this passage allows Gilman to express great caution in her character as she dares to express contradictory opinions to those of her husband and brother. The capitalized word suggests a defensive tone, the need to emphasize that she is merely suggesting that just maybe they may be wrong. This caution that comes with the protagonist's expressions of her opinion allows Gilman to establish the idea that women in her time period had to suppress their opinions despite having them. To Gilman, such suppression imposed dangerous consequences on women's mental health. This danger is illustrated as her protagonist ultimately suffers the mental consequences of suppression.

Along with her subdued voice and individuality, Gilman's protagonist also suffers under the pressures of domesticity, which to Gilman were core contributors to women's distress and mental ailments. The protagonist is discontentedly aware that her job as a wife is solely to serve her husband and her household. For example, in expressing her guilt for being unwell, the suffering wife explains: 'I meant to be such a help to John, such a real rest and comfort, and here I am a comparative burden already' (5). She is aware that her role as a wife is to provide help and comfort to her husband—an appendage to his existence. Again, through this confession, Gilman reinforces the idea that the sole purpose of her protagonist—and women of her time in general—was to accommodate their husbands and exist to please and comfort them. The tragedy is that this woman feels guilty about her inability to fulfill that role. Despite her own distress, she struggles further under the pressures of the social expectations of women and suffers from her inability to conform to the 'cult of true womanhood', the requirement to be obedient, submissive and homebound. She expresses shame about her inability to be like other women who fall gracefully into their expected wifely roles. She expresses agony about the conflict between her natural inclination and the pressures of imposed domesticity. She admits, "Nobody would believe what effort it is to do what little I am able,—to dress and entertain, and order things. It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby. Such a dear baby! And yet I cannot be with him, it makes me so nervous" (5). Her guilt at not being able to fulfill her social and marital role weighs her down, exacerbating her nervousness. Because of the dominant belief system of the time that women's normalcy involved futile domestic occupations, women like this protagonist and Gilman herself were caused to feel abnormal because they wanted to be more than just muted and spiritless housewives.

Peter Dreier reveals Gilman's indignation at the generally accepted idea that 'the ideal woman was not only assigned a social role that locked her into her home, but she was also expected to like it, to be cheerful and gay, smiling and good humored' (57). Gilman knew that this was difficult and unnatural; she argued that 'maternal skills were not natural and that women needed training to be good mothers' (qtd. in Dreier 57). This statement suggests Gilman's disapproval of the fact that women in her era had to survive through both oppression and suppression. Not only were they expected to handle unbearable conditions, they were also expected to do so with happiness, suppressing any feelings of opposition or unhappiness. This, to Gilman, would inevitably result in illness. Her protagonist in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' only falls

dangerously ill when she is forced to suppress or deny her desire for intellectual and social stimulation, and her unhappiness or disagreement with the situation. She demonstrates the struggle between women's natural instinct to thrive and the conflicting social expectations of them, which causes them great grief.

Freud argued, in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), that it is the conflict between one's natural constitution and the expectations of civilization that is responsible for man's greatest unhappiness. Gilman was acutely aware of this conflict, even though she was writing many years before (and later against) Freud. The protagonist confesses that her wifely and motherly duties are too much for her to handle, possibly being the reason for her current nervousness and lack of well-being. Ironically, also as previously mentioned, it was a woman's ability to be a good housewife and mother that classified her as healthy and normal. Thus, by displaying her protagonist as a woman who struggles to conform to her domestic duties and expectations, Gilman expresses, in similarity with Freud's ideas in *Civilization and its Discontents*, her recognition that social conventions and mores pose great pressure on one's well-being. The pressure results from a forced inhibition of one's natural inclinations. This analysis can be supported by Gilman's argument in *Women and Economics* (1898). In this book, she reveals the lengths to which people are wrongly willing to go to conform to cultural expectations:

In spite of the power of the individual will to struggle against conditions, to resist them for a while, and sometimes to overcome them, it remains true that the human creature is affected by his environment, as is every other living thing. The power of the individual will to resist natural law is well proven by the life and death of the ascetic. In any one of those suicidal martyrs may be seen the will misdirected by the ill-informed intelligence, forcing the body to defy every natural impulse—even to the door of death, and through it. (Gilman, *Women and Economics* 1).

This passage is crucial for the understanding of Gilman's intention to allow her protagonist to collapse under the oppression that unnaturally conflicted with women's well-being during her era. To Gilman, silencing one's natural instinct in order to conform to social laws can lead people to their own death. Gilman's conviction here

explains her intention to allow her protagonist to fall ill when she silences her natural inclinations as an intelligent woman who needs social and mental stimulation.

The protagonist in this story is a typical example of the nineteenth-century 'hysterical' woman. Her inability to tend to her infant and her struggle to fulfill what at the time were considered wifely duties, were some symptoms that doctors perceived as indicators of hysteria in women (as discussed earlier in the chapter). Gilman was determined to challenge this idea, however, and establishes in her protagonist symptoms of 'hysteria' only after she is confined and oppressed by her husband. Gilman does this to reject the nineteenth-century understanding of 'hysteria,' and to reevaluate the causes behind the prevalence of women's mental illnesses during this period. She knew that the detrimental effects of androcentric oppression generated these ailments.

After having effectively constructed her protagonist as a thoughtful woman with a mind and voice of her own, and someone who struggled to conform to the oppressive patriarchal cultural expectations of women, she then skillfully illustrates her gradual demise that results from the suppression of her individuality. She makes it a point to establish this eventual mental decline in order to emphasize to the reader that this degeneration is environmentally conditioned and not organic. Gilman was conscious that, unfortunately, the women who did have an independent character and an individual mind and dared to reveal it were bound to encounter great struggle because to do so would be opposing ingrained social norms and values, thus proving 'abnormal'. Gilman presents such a struggle within her protagonist who starts off by trying to resist the burdensome and unhealthy impositions upon her only to end up falling increasingly deeper into suppression and eventual mental illness. Gilman was painfully aware that the overpowering male voices that dominated her culture drowned the individual whispers of women, eventually exhausting and silencing them. Her protagonist in this story is an excellent embodiment of such tragic silencing. She reveals her hopelessness about being heard: 'If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?' (3) She is aware that she can do nothing to resist the dominant opinion about her condition despite her certainty that the male physicians in her life are mistaken. Eventually, the obligatory suppression of her voice takes a toll on the protagonist, leaving her consumed, disillusioned, mentally drained, and distressed.

Gilman's determination to trace her protagonist's mental decline to her suppression demonstrates a clear parallel between her thoughts and those of Joseph Breuer in *Studies of Hysteria* (1895). In Freud's first lecture of *Five Lectures of Psychoanalysis* (1910), he related Breuer's observation of the link between illness and suppression. He uses the case of Bertha Pappenheim, known as Anna O, to explain the link between suppression and hysteria. Anna experienced pathogenic episodes, which almost all resulted from her obligation to 'suppress a powerful emotion instead of allowing its discharge in the appropriate signs of emotion, words or actions' (Freud, *Five Lectures* 17). Breuer's patient, Freud recounted, 'exhibited alongside of her normal state, a number of mental peculiarities: conditions of "*absence*", confusion, and alterations of character' (19). Freud writes:

The study of hypnotic phenomena has accustomed us to what was at first a bewildering realization that in one and the same individual there can be several mental groupings, which can remain more or less independent of one another, which can 'know nothing' of one another and which can alternate with one another in their hold upon consciousness. Cases of this kind, too, occasionally appear spontaneously and are then described as examples of 'double consciousness.' If where a splitting of the personality such as this has occurred, consciousness remains attached regularly to one of the two states, we call it the *conscious* mental state and the other, which is detached from it, the *unconscious* one. (*Five Lectures* 1)

As I will demonstrate later, the woman in the story ends up exhibiting signs of such spontaneous splitting as a result of repression. Although, Freud and Breuer later parted due to Freud's insistence that such pathogenic states were exclusively related to repressed childhood sexual trauma, Breuer's case study of Anna O was the foundation of psychoanalysis.² Breuer remained convinced, however, that such states could result from various types of traumatic experiences (Freud, *Five Lectures* 40). For this reason, Breuer's theory is essential for the analysis of Gilman's protagonist and her eventual

² In his fourth lecture, Freud reveals that he deviates in his perceptions about hysteria from Breuer who believed that hysterical illnesses could occur as a result of a variety of traumatic experiences. See Sigmund Freud. *Five Lectures on Psycho-analysis, Leonardo Da Vinci, and Other Works*. 1910. Translated by James Strachey in Collaboration with Anna Freud, vol. XI, The Hogarth Press, 1957, p.40.

mental illness. Gilman herself was a strong believer that women's mental ailments were generated by environmental factors like the oppressive conditions in which they lived; her protagonist falls ill because of her oppression and not because she experienced sexual abuse during her childhood, as Freud would later theorize. This can explain Gilman's resentment for Freud's ideas, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. She considered his ideas as a threat to the progress that she was trying to accomplish for women and their mental health. Freud's insistence on disregarding the possibility of a variety of traumatic experiences in relation to 'hysteria' was understandably unpalatable to Gilman, who was determined to expose the detrimental effects of patriarchal oppression on women.

As the character continues to suppress her personal voice, she becomes less certain, more critical of herself and her own rationality. Gilman presents the contrast in her protagonist's initial state and later state to emphasize to the reader that her mental decline is purely a product of a socio-cultural oppression and not 'a slight hysterical tendency' (3), as her husband claims. Before her decline, the woman recognizes the naivety in her husband's philosophies and beliefs and even subtly criticizes his rigidity, his limitations, and his narrow-minded thinking. For example, she criticizes his lack of flexibility in thought: 'John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures' (3). She poses this as a limitation, somewhat pitying him for his near-sightedness, and for being intellectually inflexible. She also secretly opposes her husband's recommendation and writes behind his back because she is confident that this will help her, despite her husband's insistence to the contrary. She does this even though, she reveals, John hates to see her write a word. Her reaction to her situation at this point still depicts a woman who has not yet been defeated and silenced.

She explains that writing in secret exhausts her not because of the writing itself but because of the opposition she'd have to face if her husband, or those who watch over her, were to find out, therefore giving up her most valuable form of expression and relief. The more she submits to her husband's orders and suppresses her own needs, the more she becomes convinced that her husband is in fact right and she begins to question herself and her own thoughts instead. For example, when she does at times momentarily question her husband's reasoning, she quickly interrupts her thoughts and admits that she may be wrong and that her husband has proven to be right. She admits: 'I

sometimes fancy that in my condition if I had less opposition and more society and stimulus—but John says the very worst thing I can do is to think about my condition, and I confess it always makes me feel bad’ (3).

Gilman inserts an em-dash right in the middle of her protagonist’s expression of her own opinion to demonstrate that she now stops herself from questioning her husband, pushing herself to agree and obey. The dash here symbolizes the character’s conscious suppression of her curiosity, opinions and emotions. She does this as a kind of defense mechanism against the exhaustion of opposition and frustration with the futility of her own appeals. As soon as she begins to express doubt about the situation and question her husband’s reasoning, she immediately suppresses her thoughts and convinces herself of her husband’s wisdom because she knows that there is nothing she can do about it. The most feasible solution in this case is to convince herself that her husband is right and reject her own thoughts.

Tragically, however, and as Breuer had recognized, prolonged suppression can lead to illness. According to Breuer, ‘illness occurred because the affects generated in the pathogenic situations had their outlet blocked, and the essence of illness lay in the fact that these ‘strangled affects were then put to abnormal use’ (*Five Lectures* 18). Gilman’s awareness of suppression as a defence mechanism, which inevitably releases itself in pathogenic form, is conveyed clearly in her protagonist’s illness that entails from the suppression of her feelings. Aware of her incapacity to change her situation, or her inability to reject her husband’s commands, Gilman’s protagonist suppresses her need for freedom since recognizing it could only lead to frustration and disappointment. In ‘Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness’ (1908), Freud classifies neurotics as ‘the class of people; naturally rebellious, with whom the pressure of cultural demands succeeds only in an apparent suppression of their instincts’ (Freud, *Psychology of Love* 19). The suppression, however, he explains, becomes unfeasible with time, making it very difficult to adapt or maintain healthy functioning in a civilized community. This means that these individuals must undergo excessive loss of energy to cope. This causes intense exhaustion and at times they cannot keep it up; ‘these are their periods of illness’ (19). The protagonist in this story perfectly matches this description.

In parallel with Freud’s idea here and Breuer’s ideas above, Gilman’s character becomes ill under the effect of the prolonged suppression of her own voice and opinions. Gilman’s decision to allow her character to become mentally ill after prolonged suppression reveals her prescient acknowledgement of the effects of

suppression on one's mental health and the true causes of women's psychological ailments in the androcentric nineteenth-century American culture. It also reflects Gilman's difference to Freud in her broader understanding of psychological disorders and her determination to attribute the possibility of their occurrence to various environmental causes. She evidently, like Breuer, recognized that illness can surface as a result of various distressing conditions, and that it was not exclusive to childhood sexual trauma.

In this story, the woman's suppression ultimately catches up with her, leading to her psychological deterioration. As time passes under her oppression and under the imposed rest cure, Gilman's character now comes to question her own thoughts and behaviors while qualifying those of her husband. When she complains to John about an odd feeling from the room she is staying in, he silences her each time. When this causes her to feel frustration she faults herself. Gilman writes:

I get unreasonably angry with John sometimes. I'm sure I never used to be so sensitive. I think it is due to this nervous condition. But John says if I feel so, I shall neglect proper self-control; so I take pains to control myself—before him, at least, and that makes me very tired. (4)

The last sentence in this passage is of great importance. It reinforces my conviction that Gilman recognized the energy consumed and the pain involved in the suppression of one's nature, and her awareness, like Freud (as mentioned earlier), that prolonged suppression becomes unfeasible due to the great demand of energy involved.

What is interesting is that after the protagonist expresses the exhaustion and pain that she endures in controlling herself, the reader notices the complete dissolution of her voice. The presence of her voice up to this point in the story indicates consciousness. Although before the silencing of her voice she did express the need to reject her inclinations to question and oppose John, she did so with awareness and intention. After her statement above, the reader can notice a transformation in the woman. She has been defeated, molded by her husband's voice. Her voice has been erased and replaced by the overshadowing androcentric voice that surrounds her and swallows what was once a separate voice. She increasingly submits to her subjugation and even agrees with it. She now sees her husband's domination as love, and her discomfort with it as ungrateful. She commends her husband for what she now calls his care. Gilman writes:

He is very careful and loving, and hardly lets me stir without special direction. I have a schedule prescription for each hour in the day; he takes all care from me, and so I feel basely ungrateful not to value it more. (4)

It is noticeable here that Gilman's protagonist starts to lose her initial questioning and doubt toward her husband and his decisions. She now expresses self-criticism instead. If she cannot appreciate the care that he provides her, she reasons, she is 'ungrateful'. This tone contrasts greatly with her initial skepticism towards her husband's way of caring and understanding of what is better for her and her insistence that she does not agree with his ways. Her suppression has become ingrained in her; it is as if she has forgotten her initial opinions and desires, and forgotten that she has suppressed them, accepting her husband's opinions as correct. What was initially a conscious decision to suppress her voice because it conflicted with her situation, now becomes unconscious repressed material.³

According to Simon Boag, repression can begin with an intentional activity (166). Breuer and Freud suggested that repression involves 'a question of things which the patient wished to forget, and therefore intentionally repressed from his conscious thought and inhibited and suppressed' (Breuer and Freud, *Studies* 10). In discussing the mechanism of 'hysterical conversion', Freud wrote: 'I cannot, I confess, give any hint of how a conversion of this kind is brought about. It is obviously not carried out in the same way as an intentional and voluntary action. It is a process which occurs under the pressure of the motive defense' (Breuer and Freud, *Studies* 166). This statement indicates that there is at some point in the process of conversion, moments of consciousness or intention. Although the state of repression is not itself voluntary, it seems, according to Freud's claim in the passage, that repression occurs under the pressure of what is initially a conscious desire to remove painful thoughts or ideas from consciousness.

³ See Simon Boag. 'Repression, Suppression and Conscious Awareness.' *Psychoanalytic Psychology*, vol. 27, no. 2, 2010, p. 164.

This reading—the transformation of suppression into repressed content—can be validated through reference to Simon Boag, researcher in psychodynamic theory, personality dynamics and personality changes. Boag refuses the alleged boundary that separates the conscious from the unconscious, thus blurring the line between the concepts of suppression and repression. To Boag, along with other psychologists like Erdelyi and Macmillan, there is evidence that suggests that Freud himself did not give a clear distinction between the two, especially in his early works (Boag 165). See *Studies in Hysteria* (Breuer and Freud, *Studies* 10)

Both Matthew Erdelyi and Malcolm Macmillan use the early case of Lucy R. as evidence to justify their conviction that there is initially a conscious intention to remove distressing ideas from consciousness and that as they put it, 'repression is initiated by an act of will' (Erdelyi 13; Macmillan 102-3). In *Studies* Breuer and Freud present the case of Lucy R. who, they claim, appeared initially to have been aware of her desire for her employer but 'decided to banish the whole business from her mind' because it was unacceptable (118). Lucy explained: 'I wanted to drive it out of my head and not think of it again; and I believe latterly I have succeeded' (qtd. in Breuer and Freud, *Studies* 117). Lucy's confession indicates a clear intention to remove her unacceptable desires from her mind. Her comment about finding that she had succeeding in doing so suggests that she hadn't remembered the suppression of these desires until they were brought back during hypnosis. Gilman's protagonist seems to experience the same process. Although she initially intentionally suppresses her opposition to her husband, she later seems to forget that these feelings were suppressed and they end up manifesting in the form of another consciousness.

The protagonist's repressed material releases itself in pathogenic form as she begins to imagine a woman trapped behind the wallpaper and struggling to escape. The wallpaper is initially just ugly and uncomfortable to the woman. She describes it as having 'sprawling outlines' that 'run off in great slanting waves of optic horror, like a lot of wallowing sea weeds in full chase' (8). However, as she spends more time in oppression and her desires become repressed she begins to show signs of mental illness through the manifestation of a double-consciousness. She reveals: 'I didn't realize for a long time what the thing was that showed behind, that dim sub-pattern, but now I am quite sure it is a woman' (11). She becomes consumed by this imagined woman trapped in the wallpaper and is determined to set her free. She explains: 'The front pattern does move—and no wonder! The woman behind shakes it! Sometimes I think there are a great many women behind, and sometimes only one, and she crawls around fast, and her crawling shakes it all over' (11).

Clearly, the character's attempt at the defence mechanism of suppression is unsuccessful and what becomes her unconscious repressed material finds an outlet in pathogenic expression. It seems as if the woman's initial, individual personality that has been repressed and somehow forgotten (removed to her unconscious) returns in the form of a new personality. Freud expressed in one of his earlier papers, 'Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defense' (1938), that if a person's attempt at defence (the

removal of the intolerable experience from consciousness) is not successful, then ‘what had been expelled pursued its activities in what was now an unconscious state and found its way back to consciousness by means of symptoms’ (481). Much earlier than that, however, Gilman demonstrated the effects of repression in ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’. Her protagonist can be seen to undergo splitting of consciousness after prolonged suppression.

Her cognizance of the link between repression and illness also corresponds with Pierre Janet’s theory of hysteria. In 1889, Janet published *L'Automatisme Psychologique* in which he described the phenomenon of splitting of consciousness:

when a person experiences emotions which overwhelm his capacity to take appropriate action, the memory of this traumatic experience cannot be properly digested: it is split off from consciousness and dissociated, to return later as fragmentary reliving of the trauma, as emotional conditions, somatic states, visual images, or behavioral reenact-ments. (qtd. in Van der Kolk et al. 366).

According to Van der Kolk et al., Janet was the first to identify dissociation as the crucial psychological mechanism involved in the genesis of a wide variety of post-traumatic symptoms (qtd. in Van der Kolk et al. 366). Interestingly, Gilman was expressing similar awareness in her fiction. However although Gilman, like Janet, believed in the link between traumatic experiences and mental illness or dissociative states, she differed from him in that she refused the idea that mental ailments afflicted people who were inherently mentally frail. In his second lecture in *Five Lectures of Psychoanalysis* Freud relates Janet’s understanding of hysteria:

According to him, hysteria is a form of degenerate modification of the nervous system, which shows itself in an innate weakness in the power of psychical synthesis. Hysterical patients, he believes, are inherently incapable of holding together the multiplicity of mental processes into unity, and hence arises the tendency to mental dissociation. (Freud, *Five Lectures* 21)

Gilman, however, deliberately introduces her protagonist with a strong mind and an independent voice and allows her to collapse into mental dissociation or splitting only

after she is forced to suppress her individual needs to the point of mental exhaustion. In establishing this contrast, Gilman defies notions of inherent degeneracy and particularly those attributed to 'hysterical' women in her era.

To establish a clear possibility of the protagonist's splitting of consciousness, Gilman alternates between the third person point of view and first person point of view in referring to the trapped woman. Initially she recognizes this woman as a woman distinct from herself. She sees her as a trapped woman and tries to free her from the wallpaper that entraps her: 'I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had pulled off yards of that paper' (15). At this point she describes their exchange as that between two different people. However, as she spends more time focused on freeing the trapped woman, she refers to the woman as herself: 'I suppose I have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night and that is hard' (16). Finally, when she frees the woman (who at this point she imagines to be herself), she triumphantly tells John: 'I've got out at last, in spite of you and Jane! And I've pulled off most of the paper so you can't put me back!' (16). The protagonist clearly experiences different states of consciousness, as her identity alternates between that of the oppressed woman and that of herself (or her dominant personality).

Gilman juxtaposes the two identities or two states of consciousness in a way to shatter the once integrated identity of her protagonist and demonstrate the coexistence of different states of consciousness (a phenomenon associated with what Janet identified as dissociative splitting). For example, as she plans to free the trapped woman, she states: 'If that woman does get out, and tries to get away, I can tie her' (15). She refers to the trapped woman as another person here. Only a few lines later, however, and in the same event, she refers to the trapped woman as herself: 'I wonder if they all come out of that wallpaper as I did? But I am securely fastened now by my well-hidden rope—you don't get me out in the road there' (16). Gilman creates these alternate personality states or states of consciousness as a result of her trauma. The woman who fights to escape the wallpaper (androcentric culture) can be seen as the insubordinate personality that the protagonist had repressed in order to cope. However, due to overwhelming conditions, her repressed thoughts fragment into a separate consciousness and control her behavior.

Janet expanded on the link between traumatic memories and dissociation to explain symptoms of hysteria. Janet argued that traumatic experiences and the 'vehement emotions' which they induced could not be mentally and emotionally integrated into consciousness; as a result, they became detached from ordinary consciousness and 'operated subconsciously and autonomously: things happen as if an idea, a partial system of thoughts emancipated itself, became independent and developed itself on its own account' (Janet 42). This is the case with Gilman's protagonist. She represses her feelings of frustration and anger until they take over as a consciousness and personality of their own. The fascinating parallel between Gilman's protagonist's dissociative splitting in 'The Yellow Wallpaper' and Janet's ideas in *L'Automatisme Psychologique*, suggest that Gilman was well ahead of her time in the understanding of traumatic dissociation.

By the end of the story, John has succeeded in completely depleting and destroying his wife who was initially introduced with a healthy mind that questions and thinks independently. She reaches a point where she has been completely and utterly invalidated that she no longer has the mind to oppose her imprisonment. Tragically, she now finds her confinement comfortable and no longer desires or esteems the outside world as she once did. She confesses that she does not even like to look out of the window anymore and prefers her room over the outdoors:

It is so pleasant to be out in the great room and creep around as I please! I don't want to go outside. I won't, even if Jennie asks me to. For outside you have to creep on the ground and everything is green instead of yellow. But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in the long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way. (16)

The woman's adaptation to her own misery and her newly acquired comfort with it can be read as Gilman's protest against tragic silencing of nineteenth-century women who were psychologically abused and manipulated until pacified into submission and annulment.

Projecting the female voice in the dominantly androcentric discourse and literature of the nineteenth century was a significant concern and objective for Gilman. She believed that only when women could exert their own voices in the literature of the time, would there exist the true representation of and thus understanding of women and

women's lives. Gilman does project her female voice in the generally androcentric literature of her context and by doing this, presents the complete and accurate truth about women, their lives and their health, and how these elements are interrelated and interdependent. In *The Man-Made World* (1911), Gilman criticizes the literature of her time for arbitrarily selecting 'one emotion, one process, one experience, mainly of one sex' (54)—the male sex. Because of this, she believes, women and their lives are misrepresented and misunderstood.

In this book, she also notes a new wave of fiction at the end of the nineteenth century, which began to appear with women writers, a fiction which humanizes women. To her, this fiction gives a more authentic representation of life, 'longer, wider, deeper, richer' and less monotonous, as opposed to the earlier primitive androcentric fiction (Gilman, *The Man Made World* 42). According to Gilman, this fiction, unlike the tedious fiction that presents women as perfect and obedient housewives and mothers, presents more real and multi-faceted women who have human feelings such as disappointment and resentment. It portrays women who resent giving up their careers for marriage, who feel discontent about being socially starved, who experience disappointments and dramatic relationships with their children. This fiction presents women who have needs in life other than the love of their men, business needs, intellectual needs, and individual needs. In other words, Gilman did believe that breaking free from the androcentric literature of her period would do more justice to the representation of women and their reality. By producing fictional possibilities of a healthier life for women, Gilman expressed an advanced understanding of women's psychological health as linked to healthier and less oppressive conditions.

As Ambrose Bierce offered late-nineteenth century readers through his short fiction the missing literature of war and its representation of the resulting psychological trauma, Gilman presents readers with the missing literature of women. By filling the gaps in the missing literature of their time, both short fiction writers were able to present more comprehensive and thorough understandings of psychological suffering and trauma and thus facilitate the evolution and more complex understanding of trauma as a psychological notion that applies to both men and women.

CHAPTER 3: Homosexual Love in Henry James's 'The Author of Beltraffio' (1884) and 'The Pupil' (1891)

In order to develop the argument that a given group of American authors in the late-nineteenth century in the U.S. offered, through their short fiction, a nuanced understanding of psychological trauma, this chapter will address the relationship between homosexuality and psychological travails in this context. Several authors of this period seemed to have been familiar with the struggles related to 'deviant' sexual natures. In this chapter, Henry James's 'The Author of Beltraffio' (1884) and 'The Pupil' (1891) will be explored with the intention to demonstrate how James, allegedly himself someone who enjoyed romantic male friendships, expressed his progressive understanding of the psychological processes of individuals with homosexual impulses.¹ In order to substantiate this premise, I will start by introducing the way in which homosexuality was perceived and received in the late-nineteenth century American context. I will also introduce biographical information about James to illustrate his identification with same-sex desire and its respective struggles. I will then provide an analysis of 'The Author of Beltraffio' and 'The Pupil' to elaborate on how he introduced, through his short fiction, the psychological phenomena in individuals with homoerotic impulses. The ideas evident in these two pieces by James, which later became recognized psychological theories, are the ideas of homosexual panic, later introduced by the psychiatrist Edward Kempf in 1920, as well as reaction-formation, sublimation, and scopophilia later introduced by Sigmund Freud. The psychological ideas pertaining to homosexuality in James's fiction offered readers a different perspective on gay men than those offered by other popular and medical accounts. Introducing the ways in which these men struggled to repress and sublimate their 'unacceptable' desires, James was able to express the humanity in these men and to show the ways in which they suffered the blows of criminalization and alienation. Furthermore, James can be seen to have anticipated psychiatric understandings of sexual repression, as revealed through his exploration of such ideas in his writing.

¹ Fred Kaplan. *Henry James: The Imagination of Genius, A Biography*. Open Road Media, 2013.
Leland S. Person. *Henry James and the Suspense of Masculinity*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

‘Deviant’ Desire as Transgressive Evil in Late Nineteenth-Century America

The change in perceptions and values pertaining to sexuality, marriage and reproduction was another unsettling transformation that emerged in the U.S. from around the 1830s. Bachelors had been a source of cultural anxiety in America since its Puritan days, but toward the middle of the nineteenth century, such anxiety intensified. Axel Nissen refers to Vincent J. Bertolini, who revealed that by the middle of the nineteenth century the American bachelor was seen as a significant social threat. This was because of the general association of the bachelor with the potential for ‘anarchic sexual possibilities of solo masculinity’ (Nissen 103). The bachelor, Nissen explains, was considered dangerous because he represented a deviance from or defiance of the prevailing culturally encouraged domesticity. Nissen writes, ‘in his solitary and unmonitored status as an autonomous unmarried adult male, the bachelor represented the transgressive triple threat of masturbation, whoremongering, and that nameless horror—homosexual sex’ (103). Such a negative and discriminating regard for bachelors and homosexual men inevitably created significant and sometimes unnecessary anxiety among bachelors and those with diverse sexual orientations during this era in the U.S.

Moreover, in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, American medical texts started to show increased preoccupation with the issue of ‘sexual inversion’, and this obsession was significantly noticeable to the American public. The idea of homosexuality as a medical problem infiltrated the popular media of the time, but without it being clearly defined or labeled. By around 1885 homosexuality was given a considerably negative aspect, creating a sense of unease about his potential danger to the American community. For example, Anthony Comstock, head of the Society for Suppression and Vice in New York, remarked that homosexual men should have ‘branded on their foreheads the word ‘unclean’ (qtd. in Minton 24). Around 1892, the term ‘homosexual’ was adopted from Europe. The term was used by Dr. James Kiernan, in *The Chicago Medical Journal*; he defined the ‘homosexual’ man as ‘one whose general mental state is that of the opposite sex’ (qtd. in Katz 234).

By the end of the century, however, there was a transformation in the perception of romantic friendships. The nineteenth-century ‘homosexual’ man was stereotyped as an unmanly, meager, and sullen individual who was depressive by nature. He was considered by some to be sexually abnormal and physically lacking, with perverse

desires and unusual behavior that could lead to violence and insanity. The newly labeled homosexual man was, therefore, a threat to be removed by imprisonment.

Evidence of such criminalizing discourse can be found in a lecture on homosexuality given by Dr. G. Frank Lydston, an American urologist, in 1889. In this lecture he warned the community against what he saw as the threat of homosexuality. He warned:

There is in every community of any size a colony of male sexual perverts; they are usually known to each other, and are likely to congregate together. At times they operate in accordance with some definite concerted plan in quest of subjects warned herewith to gratify their abnormal sexual impulses. (qtd. in Katz 213)

Lydston is one of many examples of medical authorities that contributed to the construction of a 'homosexual conspiracy' myth that had tragic repercussions for many gay people. Such pervasive discourse and excessive anxiety about homosexuality generated large-scale homophobia among the general populace (Fone 612). These medical dialogues, which demonized the homosexual man, created a sense of urgency for social control. For example, in 1898, Dr. Francis Anthony saw the need for doctors to carry out a kind of campaign to control what he called 'sexual perverts'. He urged his audience to take responsibility for 'destroying such a school of vice and perversion', inflicting fear in them that their sons, and the sons of their loved ones, were at constant risk. He implored citizens to cooperate in 'overthrowing' this community of homosexuals without allowing fear, mercy or fear of slander to thwart their fulfillment of this 'duty'. He criminalizes homosexuals and drives the community to do the same: 'Exercise all due charity, have the suspected and accused submitted to a most thorough examination to determine his responsibility, and then have him removed from the community to his proper place, be it asylum or be it prison' (qtd. in Katz 294).

Such dialogues fueled homophobia and formed for the sexually different a negative self-identity, causing many to suffer from guilt, shame, fear, and intolerance. Consequently, many homosexual individuals suffered from resulting psychological distress and ailments. These outlawed individuals not only struggled against the prevalent homophobic attitudes of the time, but they also had to endure severe punishment. Lydston Pratt and others attempted to control homosexuality by advocating

legal punishment (Ordovery 72). While some physicians, like the aforementioned ones, advised that homosexuals be criminally punished, other physicians like Dr. F.E. Daniel advised that they be castrated (Ordovery 77). This is reflective of the attitudes that permeated the late-nineteenth century American public. It is not surprising then, that individuals with homoerotic tendencies would suffer from the repercussions of the new perspective on homosexuality, probably repressing their desires, feeling fearful, ashamed of their desires, and in some cases dehumanized.

Within this penalizing culture, repression was undeniably a common reaction. In *Henry James's Thwarted Love*, Wendy Graham reveals that 'the tension between moral training and romantic inclination, resulting in a sexual stalemate—celibacy—was fairly common in the nineteenth century' (Siegel and Kibbey 78). In 1883 J.C. Shaw and G.N. Ferris published the article, 'Perverted Sexual Instinct' (1883), one of the first articles to present European case studies of homosexuality to an American audience. Several case histories of respectable and talented men were presented. They revealed the patients' intense feeling of disgrace at their failure to subdue their homosexual urges and their equal despair at being unable to indulge in such desires. One case revealed the suffering of a man who frequently desired intercourse with other young men yet suppressed his urges. This patient considered himself a 'complete reprobate' and 'damned for all eternity' (Siegel and Kibbey 78). Another patient was a well-educated man of a very respectable character who endured a severe attack of melancholia due to, as he confessed to his physician, his depraved longings toward his own sex. He recognized his sexual desire as perverted and wished to be cured of it (79). A third patient felt attracted to young, handsome, strong men and desired to please them, and though he never acted upon these desires he could not control his imagination (79). These case studies confirm the link between the common treatment of 'deviant' sexual natures and the necessary repression of the related desires that resulted in psychological ailments.

Henry James: The Traumatized Homosexual Writer

My interest in James for this chapter lies in the fact that he was most likely a repressed gay writer oppressed by his late-nineteenth century American context.² This makes him

² See Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet*. University of California Press, 1990.

and his fictional expressions very valuable for the representation of repression and other psychological ailments endured by the gay community of the period. As David Lodge puts it, 'he represents the redeeming figure of a lost auratic world; the human in crisis, traumatized because he does not fit with the new status quo' (qtd. in Pertusa 1). Thus, James, in a time where the attitude toward homosexuality underwent great change, offers useful case studies in his fiction, which present the trauma endured by repressed homosexual men in the late-nineteenth century.

James is the only writer selected for this thesis who was not settled in the U.S. He spent most of his life travelling between Paris and London. James continuously emphasized the value of European travel for intellectual and artistic growth. He considered the American context poor and lacking in comparison with that of Europe. In 1873 James expressed that there was a 'thinness of American life' (31). He said: 'Our silent past, our deafening present, the constant pressure about us of unlovely conditions, are...void of all that nourishes and prompts and inspires the artist' (qtd. in Blanchard 31).

However, it is also considering his alleged homoerotic tendencies, his inability to settle in the U.S. is explainable. Places like London and Paris were less hostile for homosexual individuals. According to Matt Cook, 'London was a city that was difficult to avoid for those exploring ideas of homosexual selfhood and community, and the place of both within society' (33). For example, Addington Symonds, the writer represented through Mr. Ambient in James's 'The Author of Beltraffio', Cook notes, 'found solace in London as there he was able to locate his Hellenic and pastoral ideal of homosexual relations within this urban context' (Cook 41). Both of James's stories in this chapter were written and published in London; 'The Pupil' was first published in *Longman's Magazine* in 1891 and 'The Author of Beltraffio' by *The English Illustrated Magazine* in 1884.

Hugh Stevens and Wendy Graham observe that a homoerotic imaginary abounds in James's novels, and both use gay, lesbian, and queer theory to analyze the subtle yet powerful implications of several texts. Stevens, for example, claims that even the early James 'was already a gay novelist who created lasting fictions which, ahead of

In Sedwick's essay on 'The Beast in the Jungle' (1903), she refers to James's protagonist as a repressed homosexual.

See Susan Gunter and Steven Jobe. "Dearly Beloved Friends: Henry James's Letters to Younger Men." *Henry James and Homoerotic Desire*, edited by John Bradley, MacMillan Press, 1999, pp. 125-136.

their time, explore the workings of same-sex desire, and the difficulties of admitting such desires, within a cultural formation marked by homosexual prohibition' (115). Graham contends that James had a particular engagement with the concurrent events and publications of his time, and especially in the emergent field of sexology (115). My interest in James, however, involves his ability to recognize and explore in his fiction the taxing psychological repercussions of sexual repression and the marginalization that comes with homosexuality, allowing James to fit in the group of late-nineteenth century authors who understood and anticipated the idea of trauma. In parallel with Graham and Stevens, I believe that James's works abound in homoerotic undercurrents and I add that these themes allow James to expose readers to the detrimental effects of criminalizing homosexuality.

James engaged in romantic male friendships and thus was most probably aware of and familiar with the complications that came with these friendships. The letters that were exchanged between him and his male friends offer insights. One such friendship was the one that he shared with Hendrik Andersen, a young sculptor that James met in Rome in 1899. The letters between them tell us a lot about how intimate James was with other male artists. For example, in one letter to Anderson of 10 August 1904, James starts by writing: 'Every word of you is as soothing as a caress of your hand, and the sense of the whole as sweet to me as being able to lay my own upon you' (James, *Letters* 310). Similarly, he ends the letter with: 'I pat you on the back lovingly, tenderly, tenderly—and I am, with every kindest message to your blessed companions, yours, my Hendrik, always and ever' (James, *Letters* 311). This letter suggests a possible intimacy, even physical intimacy between James and Anderson, one which James seems to miss and long for in Anderson's absence. James's romantic male friendships suggest more than his own homosexual impulses; they reveal his ability to repress these 'forbidden' desires through sublimation. The content of his letters reveals his ability to receive pleasure from words and thoughts—the only possible outlet for his sexual repression. Although James exhibited clear signs of homosexuality, he seemed determined to repress it. This repression can be seen in records of his health. Graham reveals that Dr. Joseph Collins, a New York neurologist treated James for depression and heart disease in 1911 in New York. He described James, in *The Doctor Looks at Biography: Psychological Studies of Life and Letters* (1925), as 'an amalgam of feminine and infantile personality traits' and claimed that 'the great defect in the make-up of Henry James was in the amatory side of his nature' (Siegel and Kibbey 69). James

had confided in Dr. Collins, expressing his frustration at having endured celibacy throughout his life (95). His celibacy has never been clearly explained or understood by James's critics or biographers.

Indication of James's struggle with his sexuality can also be found in his confessions to his friends. John R. Bradley illustrates, in 'Henry James's Permanent Adolescence' (1999) that Hugh Walpole (an English novelist and friend of James's) who received several letters from James, revealed that James had complained to him about his suffering from sexual frustration (288). According to Leon Edel, literary critic and biographer, Walpole also confessed to Stephen Spender that one night in Rye in Sussex he had approached James sexually only to be rejected with the words: 'I can't! I can't!' (qtd. in Bradley 288). Such a response does not reveal a lack of desire but rather a desire suffocated by the fear of punishment or judgment, an eager id struggling under the control of a very strict superego. He says that he 'can't' and not that he does not want to. Even in his writings, as will be demonstrated further on in the chapter, James seemed to struggle with homosexual panic, a feeling of constant panic at letting go and allowing his 'perverted' sexual desires to come free and his nature to be revealed.

Edel sees James as a passive and repressed observer. According to Edel, James harbored homoerotic and somewhat incestuous feelings for his brother, William, and was tormented by his 'fear of womanhood' and his troubled sexuality. He suggests that James was mostly unable to act on or entirely admit his own urges. To Edel, James channeled his eros into art due to his narcissistic sexual nature.³ Richard Hall describes James as 'the old-fashioned masturbating Victorian gentleman who led a narcissistic sexual life' (qtd. in Person 5). He suggests that it was the easiest solution for his conflicted sexuality and the rest of his urges were poured into the eight hours a day he sat at his desk' (5). Edel concluded that he suffered from a confused, weak masculinity and 'troubled sexuality' (James, *Letters* 87). George-Michel Sarotte called him 'passive and feminine' (198), 'a prototypical sissy' (198).

Fred Kaplan, on the other hand, perceived James to have been gay but celibate, which led him to involve himself in a series of unconsummated romantic friendships and channel his sexual urges into his art. Kaplan finds him to have chosen an ideal over marriage and friendship over physical fulfillment that, to him, involved too great a risk.

³ Leland S. Person. *Henry James and the Suspense of Masculinity*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

In 'The Portrait of a Lack', William Veeder depicted James as 'a neutered male with a female consciousness (96). Kaplan notes that James was aware of the physical relationships that exist between men and conscious of his setting. Although homosexual activities were masked and surreptitious, they were quite prevalent. He asserts that James had a faint acknowledgment of his own homoeroticism, and as a man who was aware of his context, he emerged with a 'Victorian need to rescue homosexuality from sin-fulness by associating it with ideal Greek values' (n. pag). I agree with Kaplan's assertions that James, in his works, exhibited a rebellious attitude towards the criminalization of homosexuality and add that James demonstrated this opposition in determination to reveal the adverse psychiatric ramifications of such a cultural attitude. In her analysis of his story 'The Beast in the Jungle' (1903), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick describes James as a closeted gay male writer who, like his heterosexual counterparts, represents 'homosexual panic' and 'heterosexual compulsion' (qtd. in Person 188).

According to Graham, James contributed to the formation of homosexuality toward the end of the nineteenth century. She writes:

His effeminacy anticipated the majority of late-nineteenth century medical, psychiatric, and legal representations of male homosexuality as physical hermaphrodites. James's life exemplifies nineteenth-century sexuality in that it mirrors the turmoil produced and the introspection encouraged by the new scrutiny of marginal identities. (qtd. in Seigel and Kibbey 67).

My contention in this chapter corresponds with those of Graham, Kaplan, and Stevens. James can be seen to have repressed and struggled with his homosexual longings throughout his entire life, and apparently managed his repression by channeling it into his writing. Regardless of the nature of his outlets, however, James probably suffered psychologically due to his different sexual orientation and his expressions of these struggles in his fiction offered an early presentation of the struggles of sexual repression.

To try to more specifically classify James's 'abnormal' sexuality, it would be relevant to consider the idea of scopophilia, a term that Freud introduced in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), as sexual pleasure incited through vision. He explains:

The progressive concealment of the body which goes along with civilization keeps sexual curiosity awake. This curiosity seeks to complete the sexual object by revealing its hidden parts. It can, however, be diverted ('sublimated') in the direction of art, if its interest can be shifted away from the genitals on to the shape of the body as a whole. (156)

Freud believes that if one focuses his thoughts and imagination on the object of lust (the seen), this lust can be projected into art. He explains that such a pleasure (scopophilia) can become a perversion if instead of being introductory to the normal sexual goal, it replaces it (157). This seems to be exactly what James does, and what his fictional characters do. He sublimates his desire for young boys or men into his writing, whether in his nonfictional writing, such as his letters or his fiction works. Across most of his writing, James seems to express a pleasure that follows the sight of a young, handsome male. Considering his desires 'monstrous', as he has admitted on several occasions, his only channel for his sexual desires was in writing. This process is seen recurrently in James's characters, as will be demonstrated of the characters in 'The Author of Beltraffio'. John Bradley, in 'Henry James's Permanent Adolescence', describes James as the sort of man Freud categorized as 'hopelessly introspective', someone who was fixated on adolescent boys (Bradley 49).

'The Author of Beltraffio' (1884) and 'The Pupil' (1891): Homoerotic Desire and Repression

To present an authentic and detailed analysis of 'The Author of Beltraffio', it is important to acknowledge that the story, according to James's biographers, was based on a nonfictional account of the life of Addington Symonds, an English poet with whom James was acquainted. Fred Kaplan asserts in his 1992 biography that James's relationship with Addington Symonds clearly figures behind 'The Author of Beltraffio'—with Symonds providing the 'germ' for Mark Ambient's character (Kaplan 453). Symonds wrote books dealing with homosexuality and admiration for young male beauty, such as *New Italian Sketches* (1884). In these books, he referred to ancient Greek culture to defend male love. Ancient Greek culture socially acknowledged and encouraged erotic relationships between men and younger boys, considering it a type of sexual tutoring. James, who showed obvious infatuation for the beauty of younger boys,

was eager to find someone who understood it and defended it. According to an entry on 26 March 1884 in James's notebooks, Gosse's revelations about Symonds's marital difficulties motivated James to write 'The Author of *Beltraffio*'. Gosse had shared with James facts about Symonds's suffering marriage and his conflicts with his wife who considered his writings 'amoral, pagan, and hyper-aesthetic' (Stevens 91). He also shared with him some details of Symonds's homosexuality which Symonds no longer tried to hide (91).

Bradley notes that James was undoubtedly aware that Symonds was homosexual, and he felt hesitant about how to respond to such knowledge. Although James greatly appreciated it when Gosse sent him Symonds's *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891), his work that defended man to boy love, and praised its spectacular expressions, he (James) refused to write an appreciation for Symonds at his death because of 'his strangely morbid and hysterical side' (Bradley 54). This is despite the fact that in an 1884 letter of praise to Symonds about his book, James wrote: 'it seemed to me the victims of a common passion should sometimes exchange a look' (*The Letters of Henry James* 118). Although he mentioned their shared passion for Italy in this letter, he seemed to indicate a more difficult passion that they shared. This is obvious through his use of the word 'victims' with his acknowledgement of their 'shared passion'. As an explanation for his denial to publicly appreciate Symonds, he stated: 'to do so, with a revealing capital P, 'would be a Problem – a Problem beyond me' (qtd. in Bradley 55). He seems to highlight the gravity of the possible problem by capitalizing the letter 'P' in the word 'problem'. The intensity of his panic was revealed when, during the trial of Oscar Wilde, James returned his copy of Symonds's *A Problem in Modern Ethics* to Edmond Gosse in 1895 in a confidential envelope, expressing extreme caution and self-consciousness: 'These are the days in which one's modesty is, in every direction, much exposed, and one should be thankful for every veil that one can hastily snatch up or that a friendly hand precipitately muffles one withal' (James and James 291). This is significantly suggestive of James's terror at even being associated with gay men, lest his own homosexuality be suspected.

'The Author of *Beltraffio*' is a story of a young man who is infatuated by the author of the novel *Beltraffio*. He travels to Surrey to visit this author and there witnesses his troubled family life. Mark Ambient is disrespected and belittled by his wife, who believes that he and his writings are corrupt. She tries with all her power to keep their son away from him to protect him against the supposedly corrupt ideas and

influence of his father. As the narrator continues to praise the author's work and encourage his wife to read it, the wife becomes more terrified of her husband's putative corruption. Toward the end of the story, the author's beautiful and delicate son, who attracts the attention of the narrator, becomes ill with fever. Rather than following the doctor's advice and giving the child the necessary medication to keep him alive, the mother intentionally allows the child to die to make it impossible for his father to 'tarnish' him.

'The Pupil' is a story about an intelligent young boy, Morgan, who suffers from a heart condition, and is neglected by his parents and pushed on to a poor tutor, Pemberton. Soon after they meet, Pemberton and Morgan grow increasingly attached to each other. Morgan's parents do not pay Pemberton because of their financial troubles but he cannot detach himself from Morgan to search for a more promising occupation. When Morgan's parents' financial difficulties escalate, they ask Pemberton to take Morgan into his care but Pemberton hesitates and declines the request. At realizing Pemberton's hesitation and rejection, Morgan becomes greatly distressed and dies of a heart attack.

In both short stories, James seems to establish two main ideas, the presence of male to male attraction (mostly in the form of man to boy attraction) and the tragic consequences suffered by his characters due to the incompatibility of these attractions within their restrictive contexts. James portrays the development of an intimate relationship between a pupil and his tutor in his 'The Pupil'. The first indication of an intense attachment lies in the fact that Pemberton cannot find it in himself to leave his pupil, despite the fact that he is not being paid. For example, in a conversation with Mrs. Maureen, Morgan's mother, about her inability to pay Pemberton, Pemberton confesses:

I'll stay a little longer. Your calculation's just – I do hate intensely to give him up; I'm fond of him and he thoroughly interests me, in spite of the inconvenience I suffer. You know my situation perfectly. I haven't a penny in the world and, occupied as I am with Morgan, am unable to earn money.
(‘Pupil’ 734)

This is an unusual attachment. Pemberton's attachment to his student exceeds any reasonable explanation. He is willing to live without income to remain with Morgan. Moreover, Morgan also expresses a striking and unusual love for Pemberton. For

example, as they become closer and spend more time together, Morgan points out to Pemberton that his health is getting much better due to their connection. He says: 'I'm stronger and better every year. Haven't you noticed that there hasn't been a doctor near me since you came?' (740) In response to this, Pemberton tells him that he is his doctor while interlocking his arms with those of Morgan: 'I'm your doctor, said the young man, taking his arm and drawing him tenderly on again' (741). Morgan's condition can be seen to resemble or reflect that of James who consulted several doctors for what he felt was a heart problem, only to be assured that it was all in his head. Arguably, James's physical complaints stemmed from his struggling mind, possibly due to his sexual repression. Similarly, Morgan's physical health improves when he is happy and in the company of Pemberton, thus, mentally well.

Pemberton even contemplates the two of them going away and living together. To this, Morgan responds with eagerness, 'I'll go like a shot if you will take me. But I shall punish you by the way I hang on' (740). Pemberton responds to this by warning jokingly, 'look out or I'll poison you' (740). There are two important ideas to note here, first, their striking closeness and intense need to be together and second the resonance of homosexual panic (which will be further developed later in the chapter) in Pemberton's final comment. He seems to panic at the idea of consummating their unacceptable love for each other and jokes about poisoning Morgan if he continues to encourage the consummation of their mutual desire. This may be read as Pemberton's anxiety about his own homosexual urges becoming evident. There is also a strong presence of physical affection between the two. They spend time together watching the sunset while embracing each other. James envelopes their time together in a romantic atmosphere: 'At Nice once, towards evening, as the pair sat resting in the open air after a walk, looking over the sea at the pink western lights, Morgan said suddenly to his companion: "Do you like it—you know, being with us all in this intimate way?"' (722-723). Within this setting Morgan passes his arm into that of Pemberton 'looking off at the sea again and swinging his long thin legs' (723). This is a very intimate way to behave and suggests a mutual homoerotic attachment between the two.

James is determined to expose the traumatizing conditions that accompany homosexual love, however. Even the most discreet expression of feelings, for example, sends Pemberton into panic. He expresses anxiety about what others may think of his connection with Morgan. The narrator reveals that '[d]uring this period and several others Pemberton was quite aware of how he and his comrade might strike people;

wandering languidly through the Jardin des Plantes' (726). James reveals the intensity and frequency of Pemberton's worrying through his protagonist's thoughts: 'He used sometimes to wonder what people would think they were—to fancy they were looked askance at, as if it might be a suspected case of kidnapping' (726). What is important to note here is that James presents Pemberton's anxiety alongside his closeness to Morgan. He does this possibly to bring out the psychological struggles that come with homosexual love within an unforgiving context. Pemberton is haunted by his fear of bystanders' opinions of him and Morgan. Considering the anxiety related to the 'threat' of homosexual or bachelors around younger boys (as demonstrated in the earlier contextual part of this chapter), Pemberton functions as a perfect example of the nervousness and fear that such individuals felt at the possibility of being wrongly accused or convicted of harassing young boys if they so much as dared to express their feelings, even if with subtlety.

Pemberton's anxiety about the two of them being seen and questioned can be interpreted as James's critical attitude toward the exaggerated fear of bachelors and homosexual men in the late-nineteenth century. Highlighting such fear, moreover, is his way of revealing the painful repercussions of such an exaggerative penalizing attitude toward such men. Pemberton's fear can be read in light of what Foucault introduced about the hysteria pertaining to boys' sexuality in the nineteenth century. In *The History of Sexuality* (1976), Michel Foucault elaborates on the public panic toward child sexuality in this period in the United States. He reveals that educators and physicians obsessively operated to prevent children's suspected onanism, as if it were a dangerous epidemic that required eradication (Foucault 42). There was a general preoccupation with detecting cases of child sexuality, and putting them under severe scrutiny to establish an understanding of the origins and the effects of childhood sexual precocity. Surveillance devices were installed in places where sexual precocity was expected to be found, suspected individuals were tricked into admitting the truth of their conditions, and extensive counteractive discourses were enforced (42). The anxiety pertaining to childhood sexuality in the late-nineteenth century, as elaborated by Foucault, can be noticeably seen as part of the backdrop of James's story.

Homoerotic desire, and its related struggles, are also evident in 'The Author of Beltraffio'. Ambient, the author, is idolized by the narrator. Upon being received by Ambient, his host, at the train station of his country, Surrey, the narrator reveals: 'my heart beat very fast as I saw his handsome face, surmounted with a soft wide-awake and

which I knew by a photograph long since enshrined on my mantel shelf' (James, 'The Author' 867). His heart did not beat from excitement at meeting an author that he admired and respected, rather it beat at the sight of this man's handsomeness. It is also clear that he had been keeping Ambient's picture for quite a long time, possibly harboring scopophilic satisfaction or overvaluation of the sexual object, which involves the fixation on items relevant or belonging to the object of sexual desire. This indicates that he sees in Ambient more than just a talented author; he has feelings of attraction for him. He describes his feelings upon meeting Ambient as someone in love: 'I remember feeling very happy and rosy, in fact quite transported, when he laid his hand on my shoulder as we came out of the station' (867). This disclosure expresses a happiness that comes with being in love. Feeling 'rosy' or blushed and 'transported' are usually feelings that accompany attraction or love. It is also interesting that the narrator associates these feelings specifically with physical contact from Ambient—when he puts his hand upon his shoulder.

It is not only the narrator's excessive euphoria around Ambient that gives the reader a hint at the presence of homoerotic love, but also in his seeming distaste for and hostility toward Ambient's wife. He describes her as cold and controlling and unworthy of Ambient. When he is questioned by Miss Ambient, Mark's sister, about whether he finds Beatrice beautiful, he explains to the reader that he produced his answer 'with an effort' and that he found it 'apparently true that Ambient was mismated' (James, 'The Author' 887). The narrator clearly expresses that he is not impressed by Beatrice's beauty; he finds Ambient more alluring. He shows a preference for Ambient's charm by admitting to the reader that Mrs. Ambient was not charming. She is described as 'though she had lived so near the rose, the author of 'Beltraffio' (887). The disapproval that the narrator harbors for Ambient's wife can be seen to indicate the narrator's inability to hide his indifference to the opposite sex.

His indifference and aversion toward Mrs. Ambient resonates interestingly with what Freud later revealed about the characteristics of sexual deviation in *The Psychology of Love* (1905). He explains that there exists several types of 'inversion' but those who are completely inverted can never desire a person from the opposite sex, and that their sexual attraction can only exist for a subject of the same sex. He divulges that to the 'inverted' individual, the opposite sex in fact makes him feel 'cold or even provokes sexual repulsion, incapable of performing the normal sex act, or else they lack all pleasure in its performance' (Freud, *Psychology* 119). In this story, eleven years

before Freud's revelations about 'deviant' desires, James was already evidently aware of the inability of homosexual men to feel attraction for the opposite sex.

As James demonstrates in Pemberton in 'The Pupil', Ambient, and the narrator also endure the homophobic attitudes of those surrounding them in 'The Author of Beltraffio'. Mrs. Ambient expresses clear distaste for the narrator; she emits an air of discomfort at his presence that she fears might further ignite Ambient's 'depravity'. The narrator writes about Mrs. Ambient:

[she] felt small taste for her husband's undisguised disciple; and this of course was not encouraging. She thought me an intrusive and designing, even depraved, young man whom a perverse Providence had dropped upon their quiet lawn to flatter his worst tendencies. (James, 'The Author' 898)

The narrator continues: 'she measured apparently my evil influence by Mark's appreciation for my society' (898). 'Society' here possibly connotes the community of male friendships. These realizations by the narrator allow James to highlight the social condemnation endured by those of a 'deviant' sexual nature and the alienation and marginalization that it caused them.

Like Pemberton, Ambient is aware of his historical context that criminalizes homosexuality, along with his own 'depraved' image. Although he tries to suppress his hurt feelings, caused by the intolerance to his apparent homosexual nature, he is clearly conflicted by the homophobic attitude toward him and his writing. There is an indication of the unwelcoming social attitude towards Ambient's works. The narrator mentions how Ambient 'very seldom talked about the newspapers which, by the way, were always even abnormally vulgar about him' (James, 'The Author' 889). He also suffers great rejection and alienation from his wife and others around him. Ambient also tells the narrator that he hopes to be able to make his work decent enough. He says: 'At least the people who dislike my stuff—and there are plenty of them, I believe will dislike this thing (if it does turn out well) most' (889). Clearly this intolerance weighs heavy on his consciousness. The narrator confirms Ambient's struggle by commenting: 'This was the first time I had heard him allude to the people who couldn't read him – a class so generally conceived to sit heavy on the consciousness of the man of letters' (889).

His struggle with suppression becomes more evident when he tells Ambient that it is such a struggle for him to conceal his true nature and modify what and how he writes in order to avoid the homophobic repercussions of his society: He tells the narrator:

‘I want to be truer than I’ve ever been’, he said ‘I want to give the impression of life itself. No, you may say what you will, I’ve always arranged things too much, always smoothed them down and rounded them off and tucked them in – done everything to them that life doesn’t do. I’ve been a slave to the old superstitions.’ (890)

He is torn between his truth and the social expectations of him to a point where he feels imprisoned. What is interesting in this passage is Ambient’s comment that he has done everything to his truth ‘that life doesn’t do’. This indicates James’s awareness that this suppression conflicts with the natural way of life and is bound to lead to unhappiness.

Moreover, in discussing his work with his guest, Ambient admits that his content is quite daring and improbable in reality, and he feels ashamed and afraid. He tells the narrator: ‘All the more shame to me to have done some of the things I have! The reconciliation of the two women in his story ‘Natalina,’ for instance, which could never really have taken place’ (890). He admits:

That sort of thing’s ignoble—I blush when I think of it! This new affair must be a golden vessel, filled with the purest distillation of the actual; and oh how it worries me, the shaping of the vase, the hammering of the metal! I have to hammer it so fine, so smooth; I don’t do more than an inch or two a day. And all the while I have to be so careful not to let a drop of the liquor escape. (890)

Obviously, although Ambient dares to express his tolerance for and probably his homosexual desires in writing, he still struggles with the fear and shame associated with an ‘ignoble’ identity.

Even more so, he struggles within his family context and feels alienated. From the beginning of the story, the narrator notices a cold and callous attitude from Beatrice toward her husband, and soon understands that this attitude stems from her repulsion for his ideas and writings and her fear that he will influence and corrupt their son, Dolcino.

Moreover, Mrs. Ambient keeps the child away from his father with great control, as if he is unworthy of a relationship with the child, and presents the threat of corrupting and defiling him. Her rejection manifests itself as a punishing attitude toward Ambient, which effectively criminalizes and marginalizes him. Throughout the story Ambient is seen to suffer from his inability to love and spend time with Dolcino. 'Ah she won't let him come!' (James, 'The Author' 870), Ambient complains to his guest as his wife refuses to let Dolcino go with him. Ambient is treated by his wife as a corrupting plague that might infect their son. As expressed through Ambient's struggle against criminalization and marginalization, James was undoubtedly aware of the suffering endured by homosexual men in the late-nineteenth century. Further on in the story, the narrator becomes acquainted with Miss Ambient, Mark's sister, who reveals Beatrice's hostile feelings toward her husband. James writes:

She has a dread of my brother's influence on the child on the formation of his character, his 'ideals' poor little brat, his principles. It's as if it were a subtle poison or a contagion—something that would rub off on his tender sensibility when his father kisses him or holds him on his knee. If she could she'd prevent Mark from even so much as touching him. (887)

The terminology and relationship between words used by James in this short story is not coincidental. Miss Ambient relates Mrs. Ambient's fear of Ambient's corruption particularly to periods of physical contact like touching him and holding him on his lap. Even more interestingly, Miss Ambient relays Mrs. Ambient's fear that in their physical contact, Ambient might corrupt the boy's 'tender sensibility'. In other words, Ambient may stir his son's sexual awareness and compromise his 'tenderness' or innocence.

Miss Ambient explains Mrs. Ambient's hyper-vigilance by telling the narrator that Mrs. Ambient does not want her husband's ideas to be received by Dolcino because they are undesirable and he is 'very precocious and very sensitive, and his mother thinks she can't begin to guard him too early' (884). This strongly evokes the late-nineteenth century's harsh cultural attitudes toward homosexuality and how young boys were obsessively protected from the alleged potential dangers of homosexual men. Her hysterical need to keep Ambient away from his son reflects the panic-stricken atmosphere of the nineteenth century regarding the idea of possible boy corruption.

Mrs. Ambient's attitude resonates in the work of the late-nineteenth century essayist, Lucien Arreat in an essay entitled 'Pathology of Artists' (1893). Arreat described the emasculating 'nervous erethism' and 'infeverishing passions' of aesthetes, and concluded that artists were particularly feminine (79). Miss Ambient, likewise, explains to the narrator that Mrs. Ambient regards her husband's work as corrupt and hyper-aesthetic. The term 'hyper-aesthetic,' by extension, suggests her suspicion or knowledge of her husband's homoerotic tendencies. Because the term 'asthete' is usually used as a byword for homosexuality, it is clear that Ambient is rejected due to the homoerotic content of his work and more importantly, his nature.⁴

Moreover, Mrs. Ambient's fear is very interesting if read in light of what Freud explained as fixation in *The Psychology of Love*. Freud suggested that sexual deviation can be influenced from childhood. He argued that children, who are not supposed to be awakened to sexuality, can become sexually 'deviant' if sexually stimulated in their youth. Seduction—sexual stimulation—by adults or other children can create lasting disorders. According to Freud, 'many later observed deviations from normal sexual life are thus established in both neurotics and perverts by the impressions received during childhood, which is supposed to be free of sexuality' (*Psychology* 219). Freud's suggestion can explain the hysterical efforts made to protect children in the nineteenth century from sexual awareness. However, James seems to defy such an attitude and seems to criticize the extremity of this view of homophobia, revealing the dangers of such attitudes. It is this questionably valid obsession with protecting boys against possible homosexuality that leads to Dolcino's death. James likely allows Dolcino to die in order to criticize the extremity of homophobia and to reveal the dangers of such harsh attitudes.

In both 'The Pupil' and in 'The Author of Beltraffio' James presents young, 'other worldly' boys as the sexual phantasies of older men. By choosing these boys, James demonstrates significant awareness of the psychology of gay men. Both boys seem to encompass the characteristics that Freud later in 'The Sexual Abberations' attributed to the sexual objects of what he called 'male inverts'. Freud reveals that what excites a gay man's love for his younger, more feminine sexual object is his relatively feminine appearance and mind. It is a young boy's bashfulness, humility and need for

⁴ See Emmanuel Cooper. *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality and Art in the Last 100 Years in the West*. Taylor & Francis, 2005.

guidance and teaching that attract the invert, according to Freud ('Three Essays' 145). In 'The Author of Beltraffio', upon meeting Dolcino, the narrator says:

I had lost no time in observing that the child, not more than seven years old, was extraordinarily beautiful. He had the face of an angel—the eyes, the hair, the smile of innocence, the more than mortal bloom. There was something that deeply touched, that almost alarmed, in his beauty, composed one would have said, of elements too fine and pure for the breath of this world. (James 870)

The narrator sees in Dolcino an otherworldly kind of beauty and uniqueness by describing it as angelic and immortal. He also gives Dolcino somewhat feminine attributes of beauty like fineness and purity. It is also no coincidence that James decides to choose the name Dolcino for this beautiful boy. His name—meaning sweetness—suggests a certain femininity and gentleness, qualities that are, according to Freud, attractive to gay men. Once again, decades before Freud, James's description of the narrator's fascination with Dolcino reflects his striking awareness of homoerotic desire and what it constitutes.

Similarly, in 'The Pupil', James also presents Morgan as somewhat feminine or soft and different. When Morgan is received by his relatives in the hope that they will take care of him, they treat him as some kind of spectacle. Pemberton remarks: 'they even praised his beauty, which was small, and were rather afraid of him, as if they recognized that he was of a finer clay. They called him a little angel and a little prodigy and pitied his want of health effusively' (James 721). Morgan is also described by Pemberton as 'supernaturally clever' with a 'kind of homebred sensibility which might have been bad for him but was charming for others' (721). He also describes him as having 'a whole range of refinement and perception' (722): 'He was a pale, lean, acute, undeveloped little cosmopolite who liked intellectual gymnastics' (722). Both boys possess qualities that resemble those attributed to homosexual men—tenderness, vulnerability, refined beauty, fragility, and ethereality. These qualities are also what Freud introduced in 'A Special Type of Choice of Object made by Men' (1910) as the qualities which attracted older homosexual men, as mentioned earlier. From the reading of these two stories, it seems clear that James was demonstrably aware of the inner thought and feelings of gay men. However, and more importantly, he was also unhappily cognizant of the destructive context within which they had to travail.

The realization of such beauty, tenderness, and vulnerability in Dolcino and Morgan come attached with their observers' acknowledgment of an impending tragedy, however. James generates a sense of pity in these observers who seem to know very well the struggles endured by homosexual men, and the possible tragic conclusions of their lives because in a context unforgiving of homosexuality these boys will have to endure the traumatic repression of their sexual desires. For example, in 'The Author of Beltraffio', the narrator expresses that upon meeting Dolcino he instantly relates to him and subsequently pities him. He compares him to an orphan or to someone who has been 'stamped with some social stigma' (871), indicating an immediate sense of identification with and empathy for him.

Sensing the boy's possible homosexuality, the narrator instantly foresees for the boy an inevitable future of marginality and social castigation. James writes:

As one kissed him, it was hard to keep from murmuring all tenderly 'Poor little devil!' though why one would apply such an epithet to a living cherub is more than I can say. I grasped the truth of his being too fair to live, wondering at the same time that his parents shouldn't have guessed it and have been in proportionate grief and despair. For myself I had no doubt of his evanescence, having already more than once caught in fact the particular infant charm that's as good as a death-warrant. (James, 'The Author' 870-871)

The narrator instantly detects the qualities of homosexuality in this child. However, this recognition spawns in him a sense of intense grief and pity for the boy because he is painfully aware of the tragic alienation and distress that inevitably await him. Another noteworthy idea in this passage is the author's restraint in explaining why he attaches such tragic conclusions to this little boy. By saying that he cannot say why he does so, the narrator, in fact, says a lot. He implies that both Dolcino and himself possess a nature that is unspeakable and a nature that cannot but be repressed and lead to traumatic consequences within the given context. Thus, the reader can assume, within the context of the story, that they are in fact homosexual in nature.

A very important point to focus on in the passage above, which provides further evidence of James's familiarity with the characteristics of homosexuality is his emphasis on the extraordinary intelligence of the young boys in his stories. Morgan is described as 'supernaturally clever', 'with a whole range of perception' and someone

who enjoyed ‘intellectual gymnastics’. His decision to attribute premature intelligence to his young characters resonates strikingly with Freud’s association between sexual precocity and intellectual superiority. In ‘Infantile Sexuality’ (*Three Essays on Sexuality*), Freud writes:

Sexual precocity makes more difficult the latter control of the sexual instinct by the higher mental agencies which is so desirable, and it increases the impulsive quality which, quite apart from this, characterizes the physical representation of the instinct. Sexual precocity often runs parallel with premature intellectual development and, linked in this way, is to be found in the childhood history of persons of the greatest eminence and capacity. (240-241)

It is by no coincidence that in both of these stories James attributes both sexual and intellectual premature precocity in his child characters. He offers fascinating insight into the mind of homosexual men in his homoerotic fiction, years before Freud published scientific discourse on homosexuality and the sexuality of children. James’s fictional accounts of the traumatizing conditions that gay people endured must have contributed to the psychological knowledge pertaining to homosexuality.

As with Dolcino in ‘The Author of Beltraffio’, Morgan in ‘The Pupil’, also suffers the consequences of his alienation and difference. Pemberton describes him as someone who has a ‘sharp spice of stoicism, doubtless the fruit of having had to begin early to bear pain, which produced the impression of pluck and made it of less consequence that he might have been thought at school a polyglot little beast’ (James, ‘The Pupil’ 722). James attaches pain and possible misery to these boys’ different natures. Morgan reacts to his pain of alienation by building a defense mechanism of detachment. Also, the word ‘beast’ is important in suggesting that Morgan’s misery is a result of his possible homosexual or inverted nature that was viewed as bestial in his time. Words such as beast and monster, especially in the works of Henry James, can be perceived to connote a homosexual presence.

James also uses the term ‘monstrous’ recurrently when he refers to an undesirable or perverted imagination. He referred to his own imagination as monstrous, he referred to Oscar Wilde as vulgar and monstrous, and he uses this term to describe Ambient’s imagination. The continuous use of the term ‘monstrous’ to describe a ‘corrupt’ or ‘anomalous’ imagination is not coincidental. Monsters were, in fact,

consistently used in the nineteenth century to symbolize homosexuality. Andrew Cooper, in particular, relays this relationship between nineteenth-century monstrous creatures and homosexuality, conveying how Frankenstein, the vampire Camilla, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Dracula were all icons of nineteenth-century Gothic horror that contributed to the idea of homosexuality or 'all things sexually deviant' (Cooper 81). James's ghost stories, like *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) were also examples of Gothic literature, viewed by several critics as expressions of homosexuality (Reed 115; Fletcher in Botting and Townshend 178). Cooper explains:

The formula MONSTER=HOMOSEXUAL is a metaphor that merely visualizes the monstrosity already built into homosexuality as a social construct. Conceived as a pathological category, 'homosexual' stigmatizes the people it names; with or without vampire fangs, an image or person labeled 'homosexual' is implicitly monstrous. (81)

James uses reverse discourse to create a homosexual presence in his stories to pronounce their exaggerated marginalization and demonization. Terminology in the nineteenth century that was introduced to stigmatize and marginalize the sexually deviant, was also used by these individuals to reinforce themselves. Foucault explains, in *The History of Sexuality*, that there emerged a strong presence of discourses on homosexuality, inversion, and pederasty in nineteenth-century psychiatry, literature, and law that allowed for social control over these 'perversities' (101). However, these discourses also generated a 'reverse discourse' which enabled 'homosexuality to speak in its own behalf' (101); there came a demand for the recognition of the lawfulness or 'naturalness' of homosexuality, often with the use of the same terminology that was created to disqualify it. Foucault explains:

Cultural, legal and scientific discourses of the nineteenth century constructed homosexuality as a pathology in order to identify and control it, but in doing so they created a language of selfhood that enabled people to understand, justify and defend their desires. (101)

James's reference to Morgan as a 'beast' in the eyes of his surrounding allows him to reveal to the reader the cause behind his struggle and pain. He uses the term 'beast', usually a criminalizing term, to identify Morgan's sexual impulses.

Through the examples of Morgan and Dolcino, James accentuates the stigma and misery that accompanied an unconventional sexual nature. The narrators of both stories make it clear that Dolcino and Morgan, because of their apparently different sexual natures, are doomed within their contexts and may as well be dead considering the stigma, condemnation and sexual repression that they will have to endure. He also mentions the grief and despair that the parents probably endure upon the inevitable realization that their son may be sexually deviant, and if not so then a target of pederasty. Such lamenting signifies James's significant and painful awareness that sexual deviance may generate psychological struggles due to the social denunciation attached to it. James's fictional accounts of the alienation and necessary repression of gay individuals does reveal his understanding of the psychology of gay men much earlier than it became scientifically discussed.

Interestingly, in James's stories, the recognition of effeminacy evokes a sense of alarm. For example, when the narrator comments on the extraordinary beauty of Ambient's son: 'He's so beautiful, so fascinating. He's like some perfect little work of art', Ambient, panic-stricken, replies: 'Oh don't call him that, or you'll—you'll--!' '...' 'you'll make his little future very difficult' (877). A powerful feeling of panic and, more importantly, hesitation, emerges in Ambient's statement. James is able to establish his hesitation by creating a pause ('...') before finally articulating that the narrator's admiration for his son could impose potential damage to his future. In response, the narrator assures Ambient that he 'wouldn't for the world take any liberties with his little future—it seemed to me to hang by threads of such delicacy. I should only be interested in watching it' (877). It is important to note the narrator's comparison of Dolcino to art, along with his desire to just watch him; James's inclusion of these comments by the narrator is strikingly suggestive of his likely intention to attribute to the narrator scopophilic tendencies. It is as if the mere sight of the beautiful child was enough to entice him. What is of extreme importance in relation to such a reading is the narrator's reassurance to Ambient that he would never take liberty with his son (which obviously reads as a sexual liberty) and that he is just interested in watching. The narrator, aware of the inability to explore his 'unacceptable' urges, derives his pleasure from the mere sight of Dolcino's exquisiteness. James engages in pre-psychiatric discourse which

holds much insight about the interiority of the ‘perverted’ individual and his substitutive means of achieving pleasure, since in the given context expression and action upon what was considered ‘perverted’ desires were not options.

Ambient’s fear for his son echoes Freud’s notion that children who are sexually stimulated at a young age may develop ‘deviant’ sexualities that can extend into adulthood. Ambient, himself sexually ‘deviant’, acknowledges that his guest expresses a special interest in the beauty of his son and thus fears that he may act upon his urges and destroy the child’s future. In the 1890s, Freud suggested that infants are born with an undecided sexuality and to a certain extent, can be influenced by external stimuli. He stated that ‘in the case of many inverts, even absolute ones, it is possible to show that very early in their lives a sexual impression occurred which left a permanent after-effect in the shape of a tendency to homosexuality’ (Freud, *Three Essays* 140). He suggests that external influences can be experiences with others of the same sex, which can lead to a ‘fixation of their inversion’ (140).

James implicitly refers to the young Dolcino and Morgan as sexually aware or knowledgeable to affirm the presence of a possible shared desire between them and the indicated elder men in the stories. To support such an idea, it would be important to consider Sedgwick’s reference to knowledge as sexual knowledge in *Epistemology of the Closet*. He explains that by the end of the nineteenth century, ‘knowledge meant sexual knowledge and secrets meant sexual secrets’ (Sedgwick 73). She notes:

The subject—the thematics—of the knowledge and ignorance themselves, of innocence and imitation, of secrecy and disclosure, became not contingently but integrally infused with one particular object of cognition: no longer sexually as a whole but even more specifically now, the homosexual topic. And the condensation of the world of possibilities surrounding same-sex sexuality. (Sedgwick 74)

Both precocity and silence are largely present in both of James’s stories, particularly in instances suggestive of a connection or awareness of the presence of a mutual homoerotic desire between the boys and the elder men in these stories. The presence of knowledge in tandem with silence is also suggestive of the recognition that this shared knowledge must be silent and restrained.

In 'The Author of Beltraffio' James insinuates a sexual maturity and awareness in Dolcino as he expresses an obvious fondness for the narrator. When Dolcino shows signs of recovery after his illness, Ambient brings him downstairs among them. The boy expresses interest in the narrator that captivates the narrator and leaves him entranced by the boy. He explains that although he could have done anything with his time he could not pull himself away from the young boy who sat on his mother's lap:

I found myself looking perpetually at the latter small mortal, who looked constantly back at me, and that was enough to detain me. With these vaguely-amused eyes he smiled, and I felt it an absolute impossibility to abandon a child with such an expression. His attention never strayed; it attached itself to my face as if among all the small incipient things of his nature throbbed a desire to say something to me. If I could have taken him on my own knee he perhaps would have managed to say it; but it would have been a critical matter to ask his mother to give him up, and it has remained a constant regret for me that on that strange Sunday afternoon I didn't even for a moment hold Dolcino in my arms. (899)

This passage offers strong suggestions regarding the narrator's scopophilic and homoerotic tendencies, but also resonates with what Mieke Bal describes as the homosexual gaze. Bal refers to the homosexual gaze as a means of silent communication. The narrator admits that it was impossible to drag himself away from the sight of Dolcino and his expression. He absolutely surrenders to the pleasure which arises from looking at this boy and receiving what he believed or hoped to be silent reciprocations of desire. It 'detained' him, captivated him and made him feel 'an absolute impossibility' to unlock his attention. The visual communication that takes place between Ambient's guest and his young son (even if reciprocation from the young boy is imagined by the narrator since closeted homosexuality is improbable for a seven-year-old boy) can be read in light of Bal's homosexual gaze, indicating James's awareness of the necessity of such communication under repressive conditions.

Bal describes this gaze as a way of generating evocative signals—a semiotic communication for desire and identification which is guarded, silent, and inconspicuous:

The 'gaze in the closet' is a homosexual gaze, desiring, establishing contact with the object, hence communicative, yet at the same time remaining silent about itself, silencing the homosexual connection. This semiotic gaze has a double orientation: it is erotic and epistemological. Taking closeted homosexuality not as a negative, defensive attitude but as a model for a specific manner of 'speaking' that cannot be spoken. (Bal and Bryson 191-192)

Such is the visual form of communication that takes place between the narrator and Dolcino. The narrator speaks of an expression in Dolcino's gaze, possibly insinuating that it was a gaze that intended to express a common desire or mutual sexual nature. If this visual interactive communication between the child and the narrator is read as a homosexual gaze, the narrator's desire for and attraction to Dolcino can be confirmed. More importantly, the presence of this closeted gaze stands to reinforce the idea that such attractions needed to remain guarded and silent.

Moreover, in referring to the young boy, James uses sexual terminology when the narrator seems to recognize a mutual desire in the child. Dolcino silently expressed a desire which 'throbbed' within him; the term throb holds obvious sexual connotations. He also seems to hint at a developing sexual sensibility in the child that becomes evident when he stares at the narrator with a look of desire in his eyes. James writes:

The boy's little fixed white face seemed, as before, to plead with me to stay, as after a while it produced still another effect, a very curious one, which I shall find it difficult to express. Of course I expose myself to the charge of an attempt to justify by a strained logic after the fact a step which may have been on my part but the fruit of a native want for discretion; and indeed the traceable consequences of that perversity were too lamentable to leave me any desire to trifle with the question. (900)

The terminology used in this excerpt is of great importance. The narrator recognizes a 'perversity' in his attraction to Dolcino, and possibly Dolcino's reciprocation of this attraction. He is also aware that the consequences of this perversity would be too 'lamentable' for him to dare to explore. Moreover, the narrator describes what he sees in Dolcino's need to express something as a 'native want for discretion'.

This idea of being native to a certain desire can imply a shared sexual nature—a shared identity—possibly a homosexual identity. Most interesting is the narrator's confession that Dolcino's eye contact with him produced an effect on him that would be difficult for him to express, reinforcing the idea of his scopophilic tendencies. The mere sight of the boy's suggestive glance stirs strong feelings within the narrator. Moreover, his restraint can be seen as James's decision to remain 'decent' and discreet in his writings. However, this constant refraining from telling seems to achieve the opposite effect to what seems to be James's intention. These incidences of scopophilic pleasure that puncture James's stories express his progressive cognizance of the ways in which gay men had to deal with repressed desire and their means of sublimation.

Restraint and repression are feelings which prevail in James's stories and come hand in hand with homoerotic desire. With an acute contextual consciousness, James acknowledged that homosexual men were forced to repress their 'perverted' and 'depraved' desires. The narrator exudes a sense of frustration and suffocated desires. For example, he describes Dolcino's beauty and charm as ethereal. He describes the young boy as angelic and too beautiful for this world. This can be read as James's acknowledgement that in actuality—in the world he lives in—such boyish beauty is impossible to enjoy. An analysis of James's constant comparison of young charming men to otherworldly entities, is presented by John Bradley:

James's association with any kind of sexuality, whether in his fiction or in his life, always appeared to others, as much as to himself, to be unavoidably otherworldly in this way, presenting opportunities for private reflection and regret rather than for indulgence, or at the very most private, secret indulgence, never to be explicitly referred to in even the most intimate of his conversations and letters. (48)

The narrator aches at his inability to hold Dolcino. His struggle to withhold his desires for the child very closely mirrors the regret with which James lived his life. The narrator also articulates an obviously painful regret at not being able to hold the beautiful and apparently sexually curious child in his arms. Another instance in the story that suggests the narrator's pain at having to observe without acting upon his desires is when Dolcino is tired in his sickness and has fallen asleep, and the narrator offers to carry him to the bedroom. When the mother declines the offer, he admits: 'so I

never laid a longing hand on Dolcino' (902). The unspeakable nature of his longing and the fact that this longing cannot be materialized leaves the narrator with a repressed need and such repression can have dire consequences on one's mental health. The narrator makes this last remark with what seems to be the pain of unfulfilled desires. He was left 'longing'. This longing seems a reflection of James's own unfulfilled longings.

David McWirther reveals that James, until his last days, was tormented by the futility and insipidness of his unfulfilling life. From childhood he was aware of, and nervous about, what he recognized as an 'excessive' and 'monstrous' imagination that made him refrain from 'any degree of direct performance, in fact from any degree of direct participation at all' (19). He admits that his life was 'palled by the chill or at least the indifference of a detachment by a resigned knowledge that the only form of riot or revel ever known to him would be that of the visiting mind' (19). The narrator seems to suffer from the same repression and regret at not being able to act upon his desires as did Henry James in his own life.

A semiotic interchange of desire is also evident in 'The Pupil'. When Morgan calls Pemberton a 'jolly humbug', they both share a moment of what seems like sexual knowledge and awareness. James writes:

For a particular reason the words made our man change color. The boy noticed in an instant that he had turned red, whereupon he turned red himself and pupil and master exchanged a longish glance in which there was a consciousness of many more things than are usually touched upon, even tacitly, in such a relation. It produced for Pemberton an embarrassment; it raised in a shadowy form a question - this was the first glimpse of it - destined to play a singular and, as he imagined, owing to the altogether peculiar conditions, an unprecedented part in his intercourse with his little companion. (723)

The silent connection that takes place between Morgan and Pemberton in fact resounds with meaning. James refrains from explicitly expressing the mutual desire that passes between the two, but it is this restraint that allows the implication of a shared homosexual desire to penetrate the story.

Silence is a powerful technique of expression that is used to bring out the panic and repression of the sexually 'deviant,' and both silence and restraint abound in James's two stories, leaving them full of gaps and omissions, pregnant pauses, and

pockets that bespeak the love that dare not speak its name. The fact that the narrator mentions that he cannot tell something or that he will not express something only highlights the idea that there is something inappropriate that was felt or that took place that he cannot or must not disclose. In 'The Author of Beltraffio', when the narrator tells of an evening stroll that Ambient shared with him, he says: 'I shall attempt here no record of where we went or what we saw' ('The Author' 891). Again, this withholding in telling serves only to reinforce restraint and repression. Stevens contends that the understanding of James's fiction necessitates sensitivity to the way in which silence operates in his texts and the texts' context. He informs readers that the function of silence in fiction had already played a significant role before James. He explains that 'in nineteenth-century fiction resonant silences were instrumental in constituting the erotic—silence itself was eroticized, and that silence could signal a boundary point where the erotic hovers, at the edge of discourse' (Stevens 14).

Stevens refers to John Kucich who, he suggests, has created awareness about the significance of libidinal silences in Victorian fiction, which he refers to as 'eroticized and emotionally expansive refusals of expression' which 'play a productive role... in the development of Victorian emotional life... intensify the circulation of desire and heighten a sense of the self's importance' (14). Stevens argues that the eroticism in James's texts resonate with what Foucault referred to as the 'repressive hypothesis' 'whereby a repression of sexual discourse, a taboo on 'calling sex by its name', are in fact accompanied by a 'veritable discursive explosion' (49). He suggests:

The supposed suppression of eroticism in the Jamesian text actually measures an extension of the 'sites where the intensity of pleasure and the persistency of power catch hold,' a widening of the domain of the 'sexual' and in this complex relation between repression and surfacing of what is repressed, 'Silence itself—the things one declines to say, or is forbidden to name, the discretion that is required between different speakers, is less the absolute limit of discourse... than an element that functions alongside the things said, with them and in relation to them within over-all strategies'. (Stevens, *Henry James and Sexuality* 27)

For James's characters, however, this shared awareness comes with a price—that of panic and repression. In 'The Pupil', Pemberton is clearly terrified of allowing his urges

to manifest and also seems to urge Morgan to repress his obvious feelings. This is evident when Morgan shows boldness about his situation and his attraction to Pemberton. James writes:

Morgan pushed the copybook across the table, and he began to read the page, but with something running in his head that made it no sense. Looking up after a minute or two he found the child's eyes fixed on him and felt in them something strange. Then Morgan said: 'I'm not afraid of the stern reality.' (731)

Morgan seems to suggest a bold willingness to explore his urges whereas this boldness alarms Pemberton, who seems to find repression a wiser choice. When Morgan tells him, 'I've thought of it a long time,' Pemberton retorts, 'Well don't think of it anymore' (731). This exchange is very important in bringing out the usual restraint of James's struggling protagonists. Despite their very clear yearnings, these characters remain passive and restrained, aware of the impossibility of acting upon them. It seems as if James's own guilt of his 'monstrous' yearnings is channeled, either consciously or unconsciously, into his characters. The conflict in attitude between Morgan and Pemberton reflects the different attitudes that Freud attributed to 'inversion' in his *Deviant Love* (1905). He reveals that inverts have different attitudes in evaluating their sexual nature: 'Some take inversion perfectly for granted, just as a normal person will take direction of his libido to be quite natural, and keenly stress their equality with normal people. But others reject the fact of their inversion and perceive it as a morbid compulsion' (16).

On this basis, James's protagonists in these stories seem to project his own tormented mind at the prospect of his 'morbid' desires. James successfully presents in these stories, the tormenting and traumatic shame and repression endured by individuals with different sexualities. He can be said to have anticipated many of Freud's theories pertaining to sexual deviance and repression.

Pemberton is an example of an individual who suffers from homosexual panic – another psychological malady that James seemed to express precocious awareness of. Homosexual panic is a term that was later coined in 1920 by psychiatrist Edward Kempf in 'The Psychopathology of the Acute Homosexual Panic: Acute Pernicious Dissociation Neuroses'. Homosexual panic refers to severe panic related to the pressure of overpowering perverse sexual cravings. Such a panic can trigger violence in the

subject and can even lead them to murder. The first indications of Pemberton's homosexual panic is, as elaborated earlier on, his excessive fear and anxiety about what others would think of his relationship with Morgan. He starts to imagine suspicious and accusatory stares. In the passage above, Pemberton continues to express such panic in warning Morgan to not 'think of it anymore' (731). Moreover, it is obvious that Pemberton struggles with himself and his panic about allowing himself to let go with Morgan. When Morgan calls Pemberton a humbug for tolerating his parents, Pemberton asks him why he is a humbug for liking his parents. Morgan replies by saying there is another reason behind calling him so. When Pemberton complains that he does not understand Morgan, Morgan assures him that he will before long. James then reveals: 'Pemberton did understand, fully, before long; but he made a fight even with himself before he confessed it. He thought it the oddest thing to have a struggle with a child about. He wondered he didn't detest the child for launching him into such a struggle' (724). This is a very clear suggestion of homosexual panic in Pemberton. He does not want to admit to Morgan's sexual awareness and seemingly homoerotic desires; it scares him to be put in a tempting situation where he may lose control over his 'deviant' urges.

Moreover, as explained above, the person in panic feels hostility for the person who pushes him to be in touch with his own homosexuality. This resonates with Pemberton's wondering how he 'didn't detest the child for launching him into such a struggle' (724). Pemberton, in a panic, does try his best to avoid encouraging Morgan's homosexual tendencies. James writes:

When he tried to figure to himself the morning twilight of childhood, so as to deal with it safely, he perceived that it was never fixed, never rested, that ignorance, at the instant one touched it, was already flushing faintly into knowledge, that there was nothing that at a given moment you could say a clever child didn't know. It seemed to him that he both knew too much to imagine Morgan's simplicity and too little to disembroil his tangle. (724)

Pemberton, here, seems to defend himself against possible accusations. He realizes that Morgan already seems to have some sexual awareness and that his intention to protect the child's innocence is misplaced as Morgan is clearly not sexually innocent. Pemberton realizes that he would be fooling himself to pretend that Morgan is sexually

unaware and also fooling himself to believe that he could easily detach himself from Morgan. Pemberton struggles with the dilemma of being intensely enmeshed in his attraction to Morgan yet tragically terrified to submit to his 'improper' feelings for the boy. Through this struggle, James expresses his acute consciousness that homoerotic love comes with traumatic psychological struggles—in this case, homosexual panic.

Moreover, the way in which James concludes both of these stories indicates his own homosexual panic about allowing his characters to consummate their desires for each other. To prevent such a consummation, James kills off both Morgan and Dolcino at the end of the stories. Their deaths occur after these characters' recognition of a mutual intimate connection. James, being the apprehensive author that he was, could not allow the characters in his story to consummate a possible love for or sexual bond with each other. Thus, James kills off the boys, the characters who present a threat to the successful repression of what was considered transgressive desire. These endings to James's fictional homosexual love affairs reflect what seems to be a homosexual panic that he himself endured in his writings. He panics when the possibility of a homosexual connection approaches and reacts to this panic by killing one of the characters involved. Alternatively, the killing off of his characters can be James's way to express his awareness of the homosexual panic that results from the enforced shame upon sexually 'deviant' individuals and the traumatic conclusions of their lives. By killing off the young boys in these stories, James indicates that there can be nothing but a traumatic ending to the lives of these obviously sexually repressed and marginalized individuals.

Interestingly, both children die because of illness or natural weakness that is exacerbated by abandonment. Dolcino is abandoned by his mother in his sickness because she prefers that he dies rather than grow up 'corrupted' by homosexuality. Morgan also dies after the shock of Pemberton's abandonment, which proves too much for his weak heart to handle. The illnesses of these boys deserve some consideration. Freud, in 1905, proposed that unexpressed or unreleased emotions would ultimately lead to physical symptoms. Moreover, he expressed that often repressed ideas and feelings were sexual. In 'The Sexual Abberations', he explained that homosexual people were usually predisposed to neurosis due to the suppression of their 'deviant' sexuality, 'the onset of [their] illness is precipitated when, either as a result of his own progressive maturity or of the external circumstances of his life he finds himself faced by the demands of a real sexual situation' (165). Both boys become increasingly ill

when they seem to find the object of their desire yet are unable to consummate this desire. In an explanation of the life of such individuals, Freud writes:

Between the pressure of the instinct and his antagonism to sexuality, illness offers him a way of escape. It does not solve his conflict, but seeks to evade it by transforming his libidinal impulses into symptoms. The exception is only an *apparent* one when a hysteric—a male patient it may be—falls ill as a result of some trivial emotion, some conflict which does not centre around any sexual interest. In such cases psychoanalysis is regularly able to show that illness has been made possible by the sexual component of the conflict, which has prevented the mental processes from reaching a normal issue. (Freud, ‘The Sexual Aberrations’ 165)

It is by no coincidence that James attributes illness to both boys in these short stories which contain obvious homoerotic undercurrents. Also, the reader can observe that the illness is already present in both boys before they are confronted by their apparent desires. However, once James establishes the moments of silent ‘knowledge’ that pass between these boys and the elder men, the objects of their desire, their illness intensifies and leads to their death. Hence, through the presence of this illness, James demonstrates fascinating awareness of the ways in which repressed sexuality manifests in illness. More fascinating, however, is the fact that James published the fictional expressions of the link between sexual repression and illness years before Freud introduced it in his psychological theories.⁵

In *The Psychology of Love*, Freud argues that all human beings have innate, underlying ‘perversions’, but these ‘perversions’ vary in intensity from one person to another and are affected by life influences. To Freud, these perversions can take different courses; either they ‘develop into the true vehicles of sexual activity (perversions)’, or become ineffectively suppressed (repression), indirectly drawing to themselves a great amount of sexual energy in somatic symptoms of illness (*Psychology* 145). The best case would be the ability to carry out ‘a so-called normal sex life’ by effective restraint and modification (145). Both Morgan and Dolcino seem to fit under

⁵ ‘The Author of Beltraffio’ was published in 1884 and ‘The Pupil’ was published in 1891. I have previously mentioned that Freud’s works were not translated into English, and thus introduced in the United States, until 1909.

the second category. Apparently, the suppression of their desires causes the depletion of nervous or mental energy, thus manifesting in somatic illness. It is remarkable that James decides to kill off his young characters only after they are forced to repress their insinuated erotic feelings. Through the illness and death of both of the boys in these stories, James expresses significant knowledge about the psychological trauma that accompanied nineteenth-century homosexuality. As discussed throughout this thesis, Freud recognized the link between sexual repression and psychological trauma, and James preempts and expresses this connection very effectively in 'The Pupil' and 'The Author of Beltraffio.' As a result, James can be viewed as facilitating an understanding of the trauma involved in the criminalization of homosexuality and, consequently, sexual repression.

CHAPTER 4: Psychopathologies in Abused Children: Stephen Crane and Mark Twain

Child abuse and its associated psychological complications were a significant problem at the turn of the twentieth century in the U.S. There were many contributing factors to the widespread presence of child abuse and neglect in 1800s America: the absence of a law that protected children, the increase in harsh living conditions in the U.S., the problem of alcohol dependence, the dominant Calvinistic religious belief system, and the nation's obsession with trying to prevent future generations of corruption by focusing on corrective measures for troubled or troublesome children all contributed to the development of the problem. This chapter will explore the psychological complications that emerged due to child abuse in the nineteenth century in the U.S. To demonstrate the advanced recognition of the link between child abuse and the abused child's future psychological pathologies, I will analyse Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) and Mark Twain's 'The Story of the Bad Little Boy Who Didn't Come to Grief' (1865). Both writers present fictional accounts of psychopathological consequences that inevitably result from child abuse, notably at a time where the trauma resulting from child abuse was not a scientifically recognized phenomenon.

Both Crane and Twain seemed to be significantly aware of the connection between child abuse (which was not yet conceptualized at the time) and resulting adulthood personality disorders and psychopathologies, and both writers indicate a strong and direct correlation between these in their works. Both authors reflect some of the ideas of Jean Charcot, Pierre Janet, Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer who, during the nineteenth century, were investigating and confirming the etiological rather than ontological nature of psychopathology (trauma being the underlying cause).⁶ Another interesting preemption of psychopathologies and personality disorders that they both demonstrate are those of the attachment theory later introduced by John Bowlby in the twentieth century. Bowlby's ideas of the link between child maltreatment and future personality disorders (a reinforcement of the earlier psychologists' understanding of pathologies as etiological or environmental) such as the dissociative/detached personality disorder, anxious attachment disorder, compulsive caregiving, and

⁶ Although Freud deviates from this notion in his later works, he initially joins Breuer in his exploration of real-life experiences associated with hysteria

psychopathy were already clearly extant and observable in the literary works of both Crane and Twain.

Childhood in Nineteenth-Century America

The late-nineteenth century in the United States was a context replete with problems of child abuse. It was a milieu that gave rise to this problem due to several related aspects. On the one hand, the dominant Calvinistic religious belief system of the time legislated for harsh and abusive treatment of children. Calvinistic theology of the Puritan period (sixteenth and seventeenth century) was occupied with the belief that children were inherently corrupt and sinful and required stern discipline in order to prevent corruption and immorality (Greven 1988). This observation of children allowed for physical punishment in the name of morality and religion. Under the influence of such religious beliefs, physical abuse, such as beating a child with a stick, was seen as a just and appropriate form of discipline (Wiehe 30-31).

By the late-nineteenth century, America was still living out the influence of the common law that it inherited from England. According to Stephen Pfohl, this law legitimized violence toward children by emphasizing discipline.⁷ Lawful caretakers were encouraged to carry out any act of punishment seen as essential for the child's proper upbringing. Pfohl refers to Earle, who reveals that 'in the seventeenth century, a period dominated by religious values and institutions, severe punishments were considered essential to the 'sacred' trust of child-rearing' (qtd. in Conrad and Leiter 70). Even as religious dominance began to decline in the late 1700s and early 1800s America, along with the introduction of laws designed to regulate objectionable human behavior, there were still no efforts to thwart guardian abuse of children (Conrad and Leiter 70). For example, in North Carolina a central court declared that the parents' judgment about how to punish their children should be accepted as correct and that punishment would only be considered criminal if it results in permanent injury (qtd. in Conrad and Leiter 70).

Moreover, although children were always assisted and protected to a certain extent, it was not until 1875 that the first organization dedicated exclusively to the protection of children (New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) was founded (Myers 449). Therefore, many children before 1875 went unprotected and their abuse unrecognized because intervention, although it existed, was sporadic (Myers

⁷ Stephen J. Pfohl. "The "Discovery" of Child Abuse." *Social Problems*, vol. 24, no.3, 1977, 310-323.

451). This changed after 1874—although still unsubstantially—when the case of a young girl, Mary Ellen Wilson in New York raised widespread awareness about child abuse. Mary Ellen was severely maltreated and abused by her adoptive parents; she was beaten, chained up, neglected and malnourished. Ironically, despite the severe danger her life was in, the law did not allow for her removal from the home of her adoptive parents. It was only through animal protection services that Mary Ellen was able to leave her tormenting home (Shelman and Lazoritz 12, 18). The media attention produced in response to the plight of this eight-year-old girl ultimately led to the creation of a law that protected children against such cruelty. The New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children was established in 1874 and within 25 years over 160 child protection organizations were established. However, although the purpose of these organizations was to protect children, many of them still failed to emphasize the need to protect abused and neglected children. One example is the American Humane Association (AHA), established around 1870. In an attempt to protect children, the AHA focused on the health of mothers and the high rate of infant mortality, overlooking the problem of cruelty against children and child neglect. It was not even until the 1950s that this organization addressed the problem of actual child abuse (Schwartz et al.). In addition, although around 300 nongovernmental child protection organizations emerged across the U.S. after 1875, many cities and almost all rural areas had very little, if any, access to proper child protection amenities (Myers 452).

According to Herbert Covey, the Deputy Director of Human Services in Adams County Colorado, who has been concerned with child welfare for around 30 years, although there were obvious signs of child abuse in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they were not defined as child abuse or, if abuse was confirmed, the case was soon forgotten and thus allowed to persist. For example, although physicians recognized abuse in their patients, they did not take action to protect these children, leaving them to experience subsequent abuse (Covey 49). This did not change until the late 1960s and 1970s when public recognition of child abuse was engendered through academic publications on the problem. Dr. Henry Kempe, in particular, was the first pediatrician to contribute to the recognition and notion of child abuse. In 1962, Dr. Kempe and his colleagues published the paper ‘Battered Child Syndrome,’ which stimulated, along with other similar publications and child protection advocacies, the recognition and identification of child abuse (then defined as battered child syndrome) as a social problem (51). Dr. Kempe and his colleagues insisted that once battered child

syndrome was identified in a child, he must be taken from his parents or caregivers (Covey 51).⁸

It was the immigrant children in particular, however, who concerned both Crane and Twain. Both writers were aware of the abuse, neglect and misery that these young victims endured, often as a result of their poverty. The childhoods of these immigrant children were completely different from that of children from wealthier families. As a result, Crane and Twain knew that, as Jacob Riis put it, ‘the instinct of motherhood even was smothered by poverty and want. Only the poor abandon their children’ (Riis 141).⁹ They knew that rectifying the behavior of children involved alleviating their conditions and not beating them into obedience. To them, these children were largely misunderstood as evil and corrupt, and thus misrepresented. This misrepresentation resulted from many social factors.

The historian David Bennet reveals that the growing number of immigrants in the first part of the nineteenth century in the U.S. created great social and political tensions. For example, there were public hostilities toward Catholic immigrants because of their poverty, the putative diseases they carried, their slum tenements, their alcoholism, and their alleged contribution to the increase in crime rates and general poverty in America (Bennet 62). This resentment intensified toward the end of the century, as the end of the American Civil War brought even more immigrants—2.7 million new immigrant arrivals in the 1870s, for example. According to John Higham, ‘the Civil War inaugurated a period of immense industrial, agricultural, and geographical expansion, in which the hundreds of thousands of annual arrivals from across the Atlantic seemed a national blessing’ (14). However, for two decades afterwards, nativist challenges were overpowered by the hope for enrichment. As the Civil War came to an end, the *Chicago Tribune* boasted:

Europe will open her gates like a conquered city. Her people will come forth to us subdued by admiration of our glory and envy of our perfect peace. Onto the

⁸ Symptoms of battered child syndrome, according to Kempe et al., included general ill health, malnutrition, poor hygiene and several soft tissue injuries.

⁹ Jacob Riis was a Danish-American journalist and social reformer who was primarily concerned about the poor immigrants of New York City. Reference to Riis is important for this chapter since he offers great insight into the lives of the poor immigrants and the challenges they endured and since Crane was significantly influenced by him.

Rocky Mountains and still over to the Pacific our mighty population will spread.
Our thirty million will be tripled in thirty years. (qtd. in Higham 15)

By the end of the century, however, American nativists viewed immigrants as the defective and useless people from Europe who should never be integrated among American citizens (Bennet 68).

According to Higham, Americans viewed the Irish, for example, as ‘rowdy ne’er-do-wells, impulsive, quarrelsome, drunken, and threadbare’ (26). These deep-rooted attitudes, he explains, were largely generated by childhood conflicts. Middle-class American town boys of the late-nineteenth century fought persistently with what they considered ‘roughneck Irish gangs from the other side of the tracks’ (26). According to the critic, Henry Seidel Canby, ‘no relations except combat were possible or thought of between our gangs and the “micks”...They were still the alien, and had to be shown their place’ (qtd. in Higham 26).¹⁰ This alienation, according to Higham, was not only a result of the alleged rowdiness of the Irish but also their poverty. Crane and Twain were aware that the children of these immigrants paid the price of this demonization, and wrongly suffered as a consequence.

John Myers in 2004 observed that specialists in mistreated children observed that physical abuse and neglect were concentrated among the poor (Myers 289). This connection between poverty and child abuse was first recognized by the pioneering nineteenth-century reformer and founder of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC), Elbridge T. Gerry, and many since then have reinforced and maintained his conclusion (Myers 289). This link was also recognized by Twain and Crane as well, and was brought out powerfully in their fiction.

Covey explains that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in America, there was an intense concern about and fear of the potential circulation of the immigrants’ and poor populations’ cultural influence. It was this obsessive fear of ‘social and cultural contagion’, according to Covey, that characterized much of the evolution of American child protection. Reformers and many citizens of the latter half of the nineteenth century demonized the recent immigrants, the impoverished, and other marginal groups. Covey reveals that these ostracized populations were portrayed as

¹⁰ Henry Seidel Canby was a descendant of a Quaker family in Wilmington, Delaware. He was an editor and one of the founders of *Saturday Review of Literature*.

‘parasites, poisonous to society, impure, degenerate, and prone to crime or delinquency’ (17). It is no wonder then that the children of these populations were seen as threatening to the well-being of society, and that their perceived depravity needed to be kept at bay by any means.

In the history of American child protection, one of the earliest and most enduring assumptions about impoverished families has been that poverty is a consequence of moral failings (Covey 17), thus promulgating the view that poor children were in fact decadent and immoral themselves. Both Crane and Twain believed the inverse, that ‘immorality’ was in fact a consequence of poverty. They insisted on capturing, through their fictional representations of the lives of immigrant children, an authentic, holistic image of what they endured and of their humanity. Their ideas parallel those of Jacob Riis who notes:

With human instincts and cravings, forever unsatisfied, turned into a haunting curse; with appetite ground to keenest edge by a hunger that is never fed, the children of the poor grow up in joyless homes to lives of wearisome toil that claims them at an age when the play of their happier fellows has just begun’ (134).

To Riis, as to Crane and Twain, morality was impossible when starvation, the need to survive and exhaustion overwhelmed these young children. This did not mean, to them, that these children were bad or morally dubious. Rather, they insisted in their fiction on presenting the socio-economic causes and conditions of these children alongside their eventual ‘crimes’ and psychological disorders. In their short stories, they delve into the minds of these young, traumatized victims to reveal the inner worlds of these little ‘demons’ and ‘parasites’—seen and understood only superficially by fearful Americans who were oblivious to the inner suffering they endured. To Twain and Crane, the public needed to see what these vulnerable children tolerated, and the dangers their traumatic childhoods entailed. In their stories, discussed in this chapter, they both adopt a cause-effect style in order, I believe, to correct the notion that these children are naturally corrupt or delinquent as characteristic of their poverty, but rather become delinquent as a direct result of abuse and mistreatment and poverty.

In parallel with this view, Riis explains the conditioning factors behind children who end up judged as bad and corrupt:

Home, the greatest factor of all in the training of the young, means nothing to him but a pigeonhole in a coop along with so many other human animals. Its influence is scarcely of the elevating kind, if it have any. The very games at which he takes a hand in the street become polluting in its atmosphere. With no steady hand to guide him, the boy takes naturally to idle ways. Caught in the street by a Truant officer, or by the agents of Children's Society, peddling, perhaps, or begging, to help out the family resources, he runs the risk of being sent to a reformatory, where contact with vicious boys older than himself soon develop the latent possibilities for evil that lie hidden in him. (136)

According to Kristina Gibson, the general nineteenth-century view of the poor immigrants of the city was that the impoverished city child could only become 'a street rat' who would cause the 'dismantling' of society (36). She reveals that nineteenth-century social reformers suggested the displacement of the impoverished children, seen as the most defenseless and suggestible segment of society, from urban spaces to rural spaces. This was the best solution, according to these reformers, to save this population from the corruption of urban life and the urban jobs available to this social group, such as prostitution, for example. By the end of the nineteenth century, Gibson explains, moralistic accounts of abandoned and corrupted children like Stephen Crane's *Maggie* (1893) along with other such accounts like Charles Loring Brace's *The Dangerous Classes* (1872) generated humanitarian efforts to save street children. Gibson's assertion supports my contention that Crane contributed to the reform of child mistreatment with *Maggie* and, I will add, was able to do this by demonstrating the tragic psychological repercussions that arise from child abuse.

The media was also greatly responsible for instilling and or reinforcing the anxiety about the danger of criminal children or children as 'agents of violence' (MacDonnell and Rasmussen 180). The Victorians were accustomed to stories of children committing crimes inspired by popular 'dime novels' and newspaper accounts of jailhouse interviews with adolescent murderers. Although Victorian academics reasoned that a period of wildness was a normal part of growing up, newspapers cried out about a 'bad boy' crisis (MacDonnell and Rasmussen 180). Andrew Levy notes that the late-nineteenth century in the U.S. was an era where newspapers 'dutifully' reported stories of children's crimes or murders of one another, often inspired by dime novels (51). He notes examples such as where one boy playing hockey might brain

another with his stick and watch as the second boy died, and be taken into custody. A Boston newspaper on December 2, 1973 reported an account of a twelve-year-old boy named James Kelly and his fourteen-year-old friend named O'Conner who were detained for aimlessly firing two rifles along the Boston and Albany road; they confessed that their motivation was to 'shoot anything [they] can hit.' In the 1880s, New Yorkers might read about three teenagers arrested holding 'four gold-mounted revolvers' (51). The focus given to criminalizing children and portraying them as violent bad boys was misleading and destructive.

Riis, like Twain and Crane, knew that children were not naturally depraved and if exposed to better conditions, they would behave well. Riis notes:

Rough as he is, if anyone doubt that this child of common clay have in him the instinct of beauty, of love for the ideal, of which his life has no embodiment let him put the matter to the test. Let him take into a tenement block a handful of flowers from the field and watch the brightened faces, the sudden abandonment of play and fight that go ever hand in hand where there is no elbow-room, the wild entreaty for 'posies,' the eager love with which the little messengers of peace are shielded, once possessed; then let him change his mind. I have seen an armful of daisies keep the peace of a block better than a policeman and his club, seen instincts awaken under their gentle appeal, whose very existence, the soil in which they grew made seem a mockery. (Riis 136)

According to Riis, as probably according to Twain and Crane, children are products of their environments, and grow up to have personalities and psychological frameworks which have been generated by their conditions. Riis refers above to a real life example of poor children who were distracted from fighting by flowers, the simplest specimen of beauty (something they are largely deprived of in their suffocating tenements). In congruence with this view, the fiction of Twain and Crane illuminates the broken personalities bred from abusive childhoods.

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and 'The Story of the Bad Little Boy' have been chosen for this chapter since they are specific to childhood trauma. Like the other authors selected for this research, Crane and Twain were also interested in forcing

readers to recognize the conditions at the root of trauma. *Maggie* and 'The Story of the Bad Little Boy' both explore the 'post-traumatic stress' and psychopathology that often result from traumatic childhoods. Moreover, these works specifically were the choice for this chapter because of the similar cause/effect style that both Crane and Twain demonstrate within their stories. This style, where both naturalist authors begin their stories with an explanatory description of their characters' childhood environments and then an immediate transition to these characters' future states inflicted by pathologies, personality disorders, and delinquency, allows these writers to make a very strong and clear statement about the effects of childhood trauma. John Regoli and Matt DeLisi Hewitt propose that, for Crane and Twain, juvenile delinquents were led astray by either corrupt adults or their own benign failures (18). In either case, however, both authors recognize that children, if not guided and loved, would end up victims of parental errors.

Mark Twain: The Ambassador of Children

Mark Twain was interested in and knowledgeable about children's psychological processes and reactions, and he expressed these interests in several of his literary works, including *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in 1884. Regoli and Hewitt propose that Twain may have, in fact, been the first to identify a link between child maltreatment and delinquency when he wrote about Huck running away after being beaten by Pap (18). Also, MacDonnell and Rassmussen reveal that modern social scientists acclaim Twain for 'having identified 'with such clarity' the social anomie that were markers of abused children, children of alcoholics, even children likely to have criminal adulthoods' (178). Twain's writing, therefore, was instrumental in the early recognition of what is presently known as child abuse.

For Twain, a significant factor which prevented the humane treatment of children in the nineteenth century was 'the paternalistic philosophy that treated children like inferior adults to be molded alike into the same mass-produced shape' (MacDonnell and Rassmussen 181). In fact, when Twain was expected to practise corporal punishment as discipline for his own children, he was 'mortified', and instead of beating his son Jean, he 'fraternized with the enemy' (Twain, *Autobiography* 223). Evidently, Twain recognized that there were flaws and loopholes in the way children were brought up, due to limitations in the understanding of childhood and childhood

behavior. Twain was therefore determined to promote a better understanding and better treatment of children. There is substantial evidence to support the contention that Twain was in fact very interested in the realm of childhood, and in reevaluating the ways in which children were perceived and treated. In an interview of 1907, for example, Twain claimed that his involvement with the Children's Theater was 'the most important work of [his] life' (Twain, *Interviews* 658). He declared: 'There is a great deal of the dramatic in the makeup of every human being. By the dramatic we can appeal to one's sympathies, to one's highest sentiments, to one's sense of justice and right and to one's ambition to progress' (656). Twain's observation about the power of drama to appeal to people's sympathies and sense of justice accentuates his desire to promote justice and feelings of sympathy toward, in this particular context, immigrant children. Ann Ryan reveals that the older Mark Twain became very interested and involved in reform projects that would address the difficult lives of immigrant children such as The Children's Theater Alliance, for example.¹¹ He encouraged these children to become in touch with 'their true identities' through drama (Ryan and McCullough 61). Thomas Peyser reveals that as a young journalist, Twain expressed outrage in his written accounts about the cruelty which Chinese immigrants in San Francisco experienced and the fate of the Italian immigrants in the U.S. (1013).

Twain's apparent belief that child abuse compromises one's mental health possibly stems from the influence of Darwinism on his thoughts and his way of understanding his surroundings. Twain was familiar with Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871) and was influenced by many of his ideas. One significant idea was the notion that there is no major difference between men and animals, whether in mind or in body. Twain also took an interest in Darwin's idea of the relation between instinct and thought. However, he deviated from Darwin in terms of Darwin's belief that man was morally superior (Waggoner 366). Twain agreed with Darwin's presentation of the 'natural order of things, ruled by the law of cause and effect' and his idea that man is only an animal (366).

These Darwin-influenced beliefs are mirrored in 'The Story of the Bad Little Boy'. In this story, Twain presents a young child who is provided with nothing but abuse and neglect; this traumatizing environment causes him to become pathological.

¹¹ The Children's Theater Alliance was a reform project whose objective was to educate impoverished East-side immigrants about American citizenship ideals (Ryan and McCullough 61).

Moral superiority does not fit into the picture here. Once the child is psychologically damaged, morality can no longer be a conceivable component in the child's neurological and psychological makeup. The child grows up with significant psychological problems due to the damaging influence of his environment. To emphasize Twain's belief in the environmental cause and effect on people, note the following words by Thomas Henry Huxley that Twain often restated: 'If the world is full of pain and sorrow; if grief and evil fall, like rain, upon both the just and unjust; it is because, like rain, they are links in the endless chain of natural causation by which past, present, and future are indissolubly connected' (Waggoner 366). This passage strongly reveals Twain's understanding of behavior as a result of environmental causation; a belief that grew more widely once Darwinian ideas began to percolate into American culture.

Twain, in this regard, can be seen to have an advanced understanding of the human mind, and can even be seen as a forerunner of Freud's three-structure model of the mind. He presents these ideas in his essay, 'What is Man?' in 1906; an essay that can, in fact, be considered foundational to later advanced psychological thought and the study of behaviorism. According to Waggoner, 'thirty years after he had expressed these ideas, they still had some vogue and were accepted by many as the basis for advanced psychological thought' (368). Abraham Kupersmith draws interesting parallels between Twain and Freud; he recognizes that both Twain and Freud had great interest in human nature and the deterministic forces that shape an individual's psyche. In 'What is Man,' Twain introduced the 'multi-part model' of human psychology which, as Kupersmith puts it, could be considered 'a harbinger of Freud's three-part structural model of personality' (9). Twain himself believed that 'What is Man?' presented substantial influence in the understanding of the human mind, codifying his view of human psychology. Twain, in fact, referred to his essay as 'his book on psychology' (qtd. in Kupersmith 10). Like Freud, Twain strived to demonstrate that human behavior is determined by influences external to human awareness and control.

In 'What is Man?' Twain provided a map of the human mind with the desire to explain the process through which external forces determine human consciousness and form one's personality (10). This essay consists of a dialogue between an old man and a young man who discuss the human mind. The idea of a multi-layered consciousness is presented by the old man: 'To me, man is a machine made up of many mechanisms; the moral and mental ones acting automatically in accordance with the impulses of

multitudinous outside influences and trainings,' (4). Kupersmith draws a strong parallel between Twain's ideas and those of Freud:

Through the old man, Twain has structured an interactive psychological model in which 'the moral' or internalized training loosely corresponds to Freud's superego, 'mental' to ego, and 'temperament' to id. In Twain's paradigm, internalized training involves the storage of moral ideas that the individual consciously and unconsciously takes from the society. (11)

Although Kupersmith recognizes strong parallels between Twain's and Freud's multi-layered mental structures, he clarifies that he does not suggest that Freud was directly influenced by Twain. I would argue differently, however. Freud was an avid reader of Twain's sketches, and expressed great admiration for Twain's work (Vogel 58). This makes it very likely that he was exposed to Twain's 'What is Man?,' which might suggest more than mere similarity in thought between the two.

Freud used tales and sketches by Twain to provide examples for certain points in his theories (58). For example, in *Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious*, Freud cites Twain's *The Innocents Abroad* (1869) and *Roughing It* (1872) to support the idea that humor is used as an outlet for anger (LeMaster and Wilson 308). Freud's admiration for Twain is further documented in one of his letters to his friend, Dr. Wilhelm Fleiss, in which he explains his absence from an important lecture by the chief physician to Prince Bismarck of Vienna in 1898. He confessed to having gone instead to 'treat' himself to a talk by Mark Twain, which he described as sheer pleasure. This experience was also cited later in his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). According to William Robert Irwin, Freud often referred to Twain in order to counter continuous claims that the psychoanalytical movement was dead. Specifically, he quoted Twain's renowned telegram: 'report of my death greatly exaggerated' (31). Moreover, when asked by Hugo Heller, a Viennese publisher, about his ten favorite books, Freud mentions Mark Twain's sketches. He describes them as texts 'to which one stands in rather the same relationship as to "good" friends, to whom one owes a part of one's knowledge of life and view of the world' (31). Moreover, toward the end of his life, when Freud was struggling with cancer, his contribution to a collection of essays on anti-Semitism was requested. Interestingly, his contribution contained a great

amount of unreferenced quotations. In 1980, it was revealed by Marison A. Richmond, that it was in fact from Twain that these quotations were borrowed (qtd. in Vogel 58).

Also, like Crane, Twain shared striking similarities in thought with William James. Twain, for instance, was also a keen student of science throughout his lifetime. He was particularly interested in the scientific implications upon human behavior. Twain and William James shared many interests and associations, both being members of the American Society for Psychical Research in 1884. Both James and Twain were also interested in the paranormal, Twain particularly in the possibility of thought transference or, as he termed it, ‘mental telegraphy’. Twain was largely influenced by James’s analysis of behavior, and he assiduously read his chapter on habit recognizing his own statements on the importance of ‘training’ (Horn 5). According to Gary Horn, in thinking back over the years in ‘My Platonic Sweetheart,’ Twain recollected his 1876 article, ‘The Facts Concerning the Recent Carnivals of Crime in Connecticut’, and drew a connection between his own ideas about psychology in the article and those of James. In this article, Twain described his struggle with his conscience, which he depicted as ‘an independent entity bent on freeing itself from his guest host’ (qtd. in Horn 5). He explained that the article was a ‘crude attempt to work out the duality idea’ (qtd. in Horn 5), which to him was later reinforced by the investigations made by William James and certain French experiments and hypnotisms (most probably the prominent psychotherapists, Jean Charcot and Pierre Janet). For Twain, these informative investigations confirmed his conviction that ‘two persons’ with ‘quite opposite characters’ ‘did indeed inhabit one body’ (Horn 5).

Twain and James met for the first time in 1892 during a vacation with their families in Florence. They connected immediately and, as documented in their letters to others, inspired each other in their shared and complementary strands of thought. For example, James, in a letter to Royce, mentioned a reawakening in philosophical ideas for a new work after having suffered from what he called ‘mental palsy’ for a year. In another letter to Francis Boott, James acknowledges his equal inspiration to Twain: ‘[Twain] says he has written more in the past four months than he could have done in two years in Hartford (James, *The Letters of William James* 341-42). James and Twain remained friends throughout their lifetime. Twain even left Florence with a purchased copy of *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), and recorded evidence that he read the book exists from the notes and acknowledgements that he made a few years after he bought it. In his 1896 notebook, for example, he used a quotation from James’s *Habit*

(1890), the subject matter of which, as previously mentioned, was of great interest to Twain. The excerpt he used came from a chapter in which James discussed the idea of the divided self, the same idea that Twain referred to as ‘training’ (and what Freud would refer to as the superego).

Twain used the term ‘training’ to refer to ‘the host of cultural and environmental influences that condition thought and action’ (Horn 5). He had already explored this idea in 1884 in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in presenting Huck’s struggle with his conscience and in ‘My Platonic Sweetheart’ in 1898.¹² In this dream narrative, Twain recounts his recurrent dream encounters with a young sweetheart who to him was very real despite her presence only in his dreams. From the age of nineteen until the age of sixty, Twain had dreams where he encountered the same girl and enjoyed with her a profound love. To Twain dreams were in fact a form of reality, representing duality of consciousness rather than unreality. In ‘My Platonic Sweetheart’ he writes:

Everything in a dream is more deep and strong and sharp and real than is ever its pale imitation in the unreal life which is ours when we go about awake and clothed with our artificial selves in this vague and dull-tinted artificial world. To me she is a real person, not a fiction, and her sweet and innocent society has been one of the prettiest and pleasant experiences of my life. I know that to you her talk will not seem of the first intellectual order; but you should hear her in Dreamland—then you would see. (295)

As this passage suggests, Twain regarded dreams as a media for another consciousness, or as James would refer to it, a ‘variety’ of the self, to manifest itself. To Twain, this consciousness is not any less real than the consciousness one inhabits in his waking hours; rather it expresses a duality of consciousness. His experiences with and understanding of dreams prefigure his later thoughts on the idea of the dual energies of the self and his desire to reveal the double nature of identity. In other words, Twain was already exploring this idea of duality before he met James, who just reinforced his thought through his complementary convictions.

¹² See Mark Twain. *Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches, & Essays 1891-1910*. Literary Classics of the United States Inc., 1992.

Although ‘My Platonic Sweetheart’ was published in 1912, Twain wrote it in 1898 (then titled ‘The Lost Sweetheart’)

Eugene McNamara also supports the idea that Twain believed in the duality of consciousness. According to McNamara:

Twain's undemanding world of a dream childhood jarred heavily against the world of harsh adult reality. He could escape the real world by vanishing into the Garden before the serpent of maturity came. And the dream provided an escape; a temporary regression from the world of ... the terrible burdens of responsible adulthood. (McNamara 18)

To escape the difficulty of life, McNamara believes, the dream world offered him a space for another consciousness, a more desirable state, to roam free. The ideas of a dual identity and of the influence of environment on an individual's traits and psychological makeup are strikingly prevalent in 'The Story of The Bad Little Boy Who Didn't Come to Grief'.

'The Story of The Bad Little Boy Who Didn't Come to Grief' (1865): Beneath the 'Bad Boy' Label

'The Story of the Bad Little Boy Who Didn't Come to Grief' (1865) is a short story which traces the life of Jim, a child who is abused and neglected by his mother during his childhood. He is repeatedly beaten and neglected, and he grows up to be a delinquent adolescent who steals, detests morally wholesome people, and commits acts of violence. Eventually Jim grows up to have a family of his own, all of whom he ends up murdering at the conclusion of the story.

Although this story is commonly considered a short humor sketch that targets Sunday school books with its satire, I believe that its implications reach beyond this common view. It is, I argue, a very powerful and straightforward account of the consequences of childhood trauma. Although there are obvious moments of this satire that are targeted at religious beliefs and practices, it would be a shame to reduce this sketch to just that. Although I recognize that Mark Twain is known for his more popular works, such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Tom Sawyer*, both which contain themes of child abuse, neither of these presents the effects of childhood trauma as straightforwardly and dramatically as 'The Story of the Bad Little Boy.' Moreover, this story fits seamlessly with Crane's *Maggie* for this chapter, since both stories

present as case studies of traumatized children who grow up to be dysfunctional adults. For this reason, although a very short sketch, this piece, of all the other possibilities of Twain's works, is the most suitable for the purpose of this thesis.

In this story, Twain wastes no time or narrative space in demonstrating how child abuse may result in future juvenile delinquency, and even eventual psychotic behavior and crime. He begins by establishing a setting of persistent motherly abuse and neglect in the life of the child. Very early on in the story, the narrator describes the cold and dysfunctional relationship between the mother and her young child: 'She was not anxious on Jim's account. She said if he were to break his neck it wouldn't be much loss. She always spanked Jim to sleep, and she never kissed him good-night; on the contrary, she boxed his ears when she was ready to leave him' (Twain, 'The Story' 68). Twain begins by directly introducing the mother's neglectful and abusive behavior towards her son in order to explain the root of this child's delinquency and, as will be discussed later in the chapter, to criticize the ways in which 'bad boys' were typically represented and understood. To Twain, boys who end up like Jim are not bad boys who are punished by God for their sins, but instead are broken and dysfunctional individuals influenced by their often abusive and neglectful childhoods. In other words, they are individuals whose psyches have been too damaged to allow for the normal development of moral values.

It is very clear from the passage above that the mother not only exerts physical abuse on her child but also emotional abuse and neglect, showing him that she does not care about him and that he is unimportant to her. Immediately after describing the relationship between the abusive mother and her child, Twain moves into what seems like a list of frequent misbehaviors by Jim. The short story, therefore, reads like a direct cause and effect list of child abuse rather than a narrative. The first consequence introduced is what seems to be Jim's compulsion to steal. In particular, the first incident of theft is when he breaks into his mother's pantry, eats all the jam, and fills the empty jars with tar so that she would not notice he had eaten it. However, of course, this results in further abuse: 'she whipped him severely, and he did the crying himself' (Twain, 'The Story' 69). Later, Jim is said to steal a great number of apples from the neighbor's tree. Twain's establishment of Jim's persistent thieving is striking in its prefiguration of John Bowlby's later recognition of the link between child abuse and compulsive stealing.

In 1944, John Bowlby linked theft in children to dysfunctional parent-child relationships. Specifically, Bowlby conducted a study that analyzed 44 children who had been institutionalized for theft. Results of the study revealed that almost all the children who had a stealing problem came from backgrounds of parental violence and emotional abuse (Cassidy and Shaver 24). Fascinatingly, as his fiction indicates, Twain, in 1875, was already aware of this link, and can be said to have anticipated the dysfunctional behavioral reactions to childhood trauma. Kenneth Rosenthal, a specialist in clinical social work, recognizes that stealing food is a common behavior in children with backgrounds of abuse and neglect, and suggests that stealing in fact stems from the child's emotional deprivation. He explains that because feeding is a child's first experience of interaction (which usually involves contact, care, and love), eating becomes associated with the satisfaction of both biological and emotional hungers. Thus, emotional deprivation can be confused at times with biological hunger because eating satisfies both biological and affectional needs. Therefore, the children who experience compulsive food stealing may be trying to cope with a sense of emotional starvation by creating a kind of abundance (Finkelman 118). Rosenthal explains that 'the secret stockpiling of food both defends the child from experiencing his inner hunger for care, and expresses quite literally that self-reliance is the only safe course' (qtd in Finkelman 118-119). The ritualistic persistence of this defence in spite of potential discovery and punishment, he argues, reveals the intensity of the child's vulnerability (Finkelman 119). The compulsive food stealing that Jim seems to exhibit in the story can be seen as the kind of emotional hunger that Rosenthal elaborates upon, thus indicating Twain's early awareness of the emotional hunger abused children struggle with, and the ways in which they compensate for this deprivation.

However, Twain doesn't stop at the less harmful effects of child abuse. The abused child of this story suffers from a much more serious and dangerous consequence of his abusive childhood; Jim's lack of feelings seems to indicate the possibility of psychopathology. Twain is determined, in all instances of Jim's so-called misbehavior, to point out his lack of guilt, shame, or remorse. For example, when stealing the apples from the neighbor's tree, he ruthlessly knocks down with a brick a dog that tries to stop him, and he feels nothing. On another occasion, when Jim steals his teacher's pen-knife and hides it in the hat of his classmate who is whipped as a consequence, Jim feels no remorse or guilt whatsoever. In fact, he instead feels a sense of satisfaction: 'No meddling old clam of justice dropped in to make trouble, and so the model boy George

got thrashed, and Jim was glad of it, because, you know, Jim hated moral boys' (Twain, 'The Story' 70). Earlier on in the story, when stealing the jam from his mother's store, the narrator informs the reader that 'a terrible feeling didn't come over him' and that 'something didn't seem to whisper to him, "Is it right to disobey my mother? Isn't it sinful to do this?"' (68) 'He ate that jam and said it was bully... and he put in the tar, and said that was bully also and laughed' (68-69). Jim's reactions to his mischief are fundamental in bringing out Twain's fascination with the idea of a schizoid personality. The absence of the voice of the superego, a conscience, or a voice of morality (which would make him feel guilty for his misdoings), is the first indication of a possible psychosis in Jim.

As I have mentioned, during Mark Twain's time, child abuse was not yet recognized as a crime, and trauma or trauma-related reactions were not yet codified as they have been since the mid-twentieth century in an increasingly refined form. This makes his awareness of both child abuse and trauma, and the ways in which they interrelate, remarkable for his time. Multiple personality disorder, in fact, was not scientifically and officially recognized until 1980, when it became included for the first time as a diagnostic category in the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychological Association. Richard Kluft (clinical professor of psychiatry, specialized in trauma, boundary violations, dissociation and hypnosis), who believes that without abuse there would be very few cases of multiple personality disorder, explains that MPD develops as a kind of defense mechanism in a child when he/she is forced to face an overwhelming situation. The child cannot escape or fight and so, as Kluft puts it, 'takes flight inwardly and creates an alternative self-structure and psychology within which or by virtue of which emotional survival is facilitated' (610). Philip Coons reveals that children who experience multiple personalities encounter trauma, neglect and parental unavailability at a very high frequency (332). These nuanced views pertaining to MPD came to the scientific fore around one hundred years after Twain presented them with great clarity in his fiction. This suggests another fascinating prefiguration of the link between childhood trauma and MPD, making him an admirable pioneer in the understanding of the effects of childhood trauma.

William James, who was very interested in Janet's ideas of 'the hidden self' and different levels of consciousness, brought these ideas into American psychological discourse (296). As previously mentioned, Twain and James had a long lasting friendship, and shared the same interests in human consciousness. However, according

to Horn, Twain furthered the notion of a tormented conscience, suggesting that this ‘other’ could develop to offer a better option of reality. Where conscience exists as a product of what Twain referred to as ‘training,’ certain actions suggest ‘an encounter with a presence outside the bounds of such a determining influence but still within the expansive margins of the self’ (6). Both Twain and James believed that such an encounter offered a means for creating ‘a new vision of the human possibility for freedom in the face of an array of rather bleak indicators of the eternal presence of a cosmic determinism’ (6). Twain regarded James’s psychology with great importance, especially his ideas related to the duality of a self and the freedom, which such duality can offer an individual. In fact, Twain appreciated and welcomed James’s theories (especially his chapter, ‘The Consciousness of the Self’ in *The Principles of Psychology*) on duality as a reinforcement and confirmation of his own strong belief in the idea of the divided self. Interestingly, Freud would later introduce the phenomenon of the divided self in the twentieth century, offering methods to cure or alleviate inner division, believing that this division can be a disabling pathology (Horn 7). Twain’s interest in and exploration of the ideas of divided consciousness exemplifies the ways in which he, along with other late-nineteenth century writers, was engaging in psychological dialogues and expressing their advanced knowledge of psychological ideas before they became diagnostically classified.

Jim’s later brutal slaughtering of his family at the end of the story reinforces the suggestion that his abusive and traumatic childhood resulted in psychopathology. As previously suggested, Jim seems to lack empathy as ‘braining’ his own family with an axe is a deed that would require a severe remorselessness to be executed. (71). According to Bowlby, experiences such as maternal deprivation can lead to libidinal craving and hatred running at especially high levels (Bowlby 1). He further explains that an unhealthy regulation of a child’s conflicts can result in an inability to curb feelings like violence, jealousy, and greed (1).

Eric Hickey, a specialist in criminal psychology, also suggests that attachment deficits are often seen to cause aggressive and violent behavioral patterns. When inadequate coping strategies are internalized due to dysfunctional socialization and attachment experiences, the basic ability to distinguish right from wrong cannot be developed. The result is misinterpretation of violent actions as an appropriate technique for conflict solving. While attempting to repair the damaged self, application of aggression and violence leads individuals to believe in a false sense of power and

control over others and over their own lives (Hickey 38). He reveals that increasing importance is given to the link between attachment deficit and the birth of psychopathological behavior patterns, such as repetitive acts of violence. Hickey explains: ‘Children who are victims of violence—due to dysfunctional interactions with parents, siblings, or peers or being forced to rely on unstable family structures with inadequate role models—suffer from various frustrations and often become violent offenders later in life’ (38). Jim grows up with a psychopathological inability to curb his feelings of violence and aggression, reflecting Twain’s astonishing early awareness of the way a child’s mind morphs under the trauma of terror and insecurity. Jim beats his little sister in moments of anger and ends up persistently drunk and arrested for delinquency.

The story ends with Jim as a husband and father abusing and killing his own family and inflicting crime upon his society in general: ‘He grew up and married, and raised a large family, and brained them all with an axe one night, and got wealthy by all manners of cheating and rascality; and now he is the infernalist wickedest scoundrel in his native village’ (71). Twain apparently recognized the link between early childhood attachment deficits and future psychopathological violence and crime, as this passage strongly suggests.

Twain was undeniably cognizant of the traumatic imprints of childhood maltreatment on a child’s brain, and how it can alter a healthy brain into one susceptible to psychopathology and psychotic episodes, even though he may not have used the language of psychology to describe it. The findings of Dorothy Lewis et al., twenty first century psychiatrists, indicate that severe physical abuse is often likely to be related to violence, delinquency, and criminality due to one of the following reasons: the child suffers from a central nervous system dysfunction that damages his ability to regulate his emotions and control his reactions; the child suffers from psychiatric disorders that impair his ability to perceive reality accurately, without viewing his environment as excessively threatening; or the child has been exposed to extraordinary household violence between parents or caregivers (Lewis et al. 717).¹³ Evidence also suggests that early damage to the nervous system can be related to later psychotic disorders in vulnerable children who otherwise might not have become psychotic (718).

¹³ Dorothy Lewis is an American psychiatrist and author who specializes in the analysis of violent people and people with Dissociative Identity Disorder.

What is remarkable about Twain is not only the fictional representation of his outstandingly advanced understanding of the psychological repercussions of child abuse, but also his very clear desire to reject the ‘bad boy’ label for these damaged individuals. Twain’s bitter sarcasm and anger about such misleading labels cannot be missed as he mocks the Calvinistic understanding of ‘misbehaved’ or ‘sinful’ children. To Twain, this ignorance can cultivate nothing but more destruction. Twain scorns the belief that boys like Jim should be preached to or punished into morality, finding it ludicrous considering the great complexity of the psychological makeup of these individuals. This sarcasm can be observed when Twain’s narrator reveals that Jim is not cursed or punished by God for being ‘bad’:

[t]he strangest thing that ever happened to Jim was the time he went boating on Sunday, and didn’t get drowned, and the other time that he got caught out in the storm when he was fishing on Sunday, and didn’t get struck by lightning. Why, you might look, and look, and look, all through the Sunday-school books from now till next Christmas, and you would never come across anything like this. Oh no; you would find that all the bad boys who go boating on Sunday invariably get drowned, and all the bad boys who get caught out in storms, when they are fishing on Sunday, infallibly get struck by lightning. Boats with bad boys in them are always upset on Sunday and it always storms when bad boys go fishing on the Sabbath. How this escaped Jim is a mystery to me. (Twain 69)

Obvious to Twain (and his narrator) was that it was erroneous to associate delinquency with sinfulness and proper behavior with piety. And, as he expressed quite powerfully, such associations only existed in books (Sunday-school books particularly) and not in reality (69). When Jim’s delinquency goes unpunished by God, Twain sarcastically retorts through his narrator, ‘it was very strange—nothing like it ever happened in those mild little books with marbled backs’ (69). More important, however, is his obvious determination to create an awareness of the questionable attitudes towards children of this era. He shows that practices of beating and corporal punishment are not the cure for delinquency. A modern interpretation of Janet’s theory of dissociative disorders presents the idea that ‘children are not born with a sense of a unified identity – it develops from many sources and experiences. In overwhelmed children, its development is obstructed, and many parts of what should have been blended into a

relatively unified identity remain separate' (qtd. in Richardson 296). To Twain, who obviously understood the deeply ingrained impulses behind violent behavior, the view that 'bad boys' would be punished by God was naïve.

This idea is expressed in the following passage when Jim is shown to have no remorse for anything he does. To Twain, when a psyche has formed an inability to integrate the development of morality, the consequences promoted by religious beliefs do not apply:

And then he didn't kneel down all alone and promise never to be wicked anymore, and rise up with a light, happy heart, and go and tell his mother all about it, and beg her forgiveness, and be blessed by her with tears of pride and thankfulness in her eyes. No; that is the way with all other bad boys in the books; but it happened otherwise with this Jim, strangely enough. (68)

This 'bad boy' is not punished by God for his delinquency but rather successfully continues to commit misdeeds, wreaking havoc on his social setting instead. To emphasize the limitations in the upbringing of children during his time, Twain not only makes it a point to reveal the way in which 'bad boys' are in fact damaged victims of abuse but also to show that the inability to recognize this can cause great damage to society in general.

After demonstrating that Jim never suffers the consequences for his deeds, Twain goes a step further and shows that on the contrary, he ends up roaming free in his surroundings, inflicting corruption and destruction, uninterrupted. Twain's criticism of the traditional religious and unscientific ways of perceiving sin is apparent in his refusal to cause Jim to suffer the punishment of his 'sinfulness'. As someone who understood the psychological aspects of child abuse, the blind categorization of behavior under sinfulness or morality, and the respective reactions to such behaviors could lead to nothing short of disaster or, as he puts it, 'hell'.

As a response to William Edward Hartpole Lecky's *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* (1869), which Twain read in 1873, he wrote that after reading the book he understood, 'beyond shadow or question,' 'that Christianity is the very invention of Hell itself' (qtd. in Bush 1). Twain was greatly attracted to Lecky's ideas, which repeatedly condemned 'the superstitious torpor' and 'blind credulity' of Medieval religion. Twain mocked and ridiculed religion and considered it

the root cause of a lot of pain in the world. Twain's fictional account of an abused child who grows up to inflict crime and murder is an excellent account of his contention that one needs to look beyond misleading preachings of morality and necessary punishment for 'bad' children and understand the mental processes behind the actions of these often traumatized victims.

Stephen Crane: Guardian of the Marginalized

Like Twain, Stephen Crane was another late-nineteenth century American writer whose writing represented the link between childhood trauma, future psychopathology, and personality disorders. George Monteiro contends that 'Crane's artistic vision sprang from his strange capacity of criticizing and analyzing the tumultuous rush of the elemental human passions in the very flash of his feeling them' (268). He believes that Crane had a remarkable ability to naturally and authentically feel 'the animal impulses of the human will, of watching them artistically, and of viewing them in ironic perspective against the environing forces of life with which they clashed' (268). Monteiro even identifies Crane as having been 'a psychologist of genius' (268). Undoubtedly, Crane was interested in human behavior and emotion to the point where he would live among the marginalized social groups to experience their struggles for the sake of authentically feeling and experiencing the traumatic effects of their environments in order to later express them faithfully in his writings.

Crane said on one occasion: 'I had no other purpose in writing *Maggie* than to show people to people as they seem to me' and on another occasion he says that his purpose was 'to show that the environment is a tremendous thing in this world, and often shapes lives regardless' (Crane, *The Correspondence* 82). Such articulations suggest Crane's belief that environment has a significant impact on one's psychological makeup. This belief is reflected in the way that he wrote *Maggie*. According to Greg Phelps, Crane was greatly concerned about the 'neglected masses' and used his journalistic skills to study the details of the conditions upon which the novella was based. Russell Nye observed that:

Crane talked sympathetically and interestedly to New York street-walkers, wandered through the Bowery, slept in flophouses, talked with drifters, pried

stories out of breadlines and loiterers, and kept himself out of money by responding too readily to a hard luck story. (77)

Such investigation allowed Crane to gain an acute awareness of the environment and lifestyles of New York City's lower classes and enabled an authentic presentation of the social context of his story. According to Sorrentino, 'Maggie depicts graphically the slums of lower Manhattan with their filth and decay and allows for the possibility that environment can affect human behavior' (56). Sorrentino's suggestion about Crane's intention to show the effect of one's environment on their behavior concurs with my contention in this chapter—and the contention of all of the chapters in this thesis—that one's environment is a dictating factor in an individual's mental constitution, and more particularly, traumatic environments are breeding grounds for psychopathologies.

To provide a more vivid idea of the slum life that underpins Crane's *Maggie*, Jacob is an important reference. In his chapter, 'Waifs of the City Slums' he describes the slums of New York City:

It stands at the very outset of the waste of life that goes on in a population of nearly two millions of people; powerless to prevent it though it gather in the outcasts by night and by day. In a score of years an army of twenty-five thousand of these forlorn little waifs have cried out from the streets of New York in arraignment of a Christian civilization under the blessings of which the instinct of motherhood even was smothered by poverty and want. Only the poor abandon their children. (Riis 141)

This is the environment that breeds the characters in *Maggie* and, as Crane powerfully demonstrates, this is the environment that dictates the future constitution of his outcast characters.

Crane was familiar with Riis and his work. He attended Riis's illustrated lecture at the Beach Auditorium in 1892, and commented on it in an article that he wrote for the *New York Daily Tribune* that same week (July 24, 1892). And although Crane recognized the positive effects of Riis's photography in forcing middle class citizens to acknowledge the dire conditions of poor immigrants in the slums, he also believed that photographs would only impose temporary effects on these citizens (Williams 186).

However, such authenticity was not well received by the popular presses. When Crane finished writing *Maggie* in 1893 he turned to his old *Tribune* editor for publication advice and was advised by him that ‘it would be difficult to find a reputable publisher who would dare to bring it out’ (Dooley 6). Crane did try at least one mainstream publisher—Richard Watson Gilder. Gilder’s magazine (*Century*) was highly esteemed. Gilder expressed shock at the harshness and profanity in Crane’s *Maggie*; he found it ‘cruel and revolting’ (6). Crane responded to this by saying, ‘you mean the story’s too honest?’ (6). Crane, unfortunately, ended up borrowing money to publish *Maggie* at his own expense because it was deemed to be unpalatable to readers. Evidently, Crane wanted the public to read *Maggie* to see the injustices meted out to immigrant children.

Martha Lamb reveals that the reformers of the time believed that the standard of living among these ethnic city dwellers had to be improved if the squalor of the tenements was not to become a permanent feature in American society (Lamb 10). Juvenile crime, in particular, increased at a terrifying rate, and even the interference of the Children’s Aid Society and similar organizations failed to counter the growth of these crime rates (Volo and Volo 10). Stephen Crane seems to have been aware that although the late-nineteenth century in America was becoming a period of the idealization of children (who should be protected from the adult world, sexual knowledge, knowledge in general, and work), lower class children were not included.¹⁴

The literary and social movements that were emerging during Crane’s time contributed to his interests, his style of writing, and the subjects he covered. While most commonly considered a Naturalist writer, Crane does deploy Gothic rhetoric in his writings to portray the idea of an individual at the mercy of forces (whether inner or outer) that are more powerful and beyond one’s control. In his analysis of Crane’s use of the Gothic in his writing, Stephen Arch observes:

The Gothic offers Crane a toolbox for writing about the ways in which violence and warfare estrange men from themselves and irrevocably alter them, either in

¹⁴ In *Childhood and Nineteenth-Century American Theatre: The Work of the Marsh Troupe of Juvenile Actors* (2015), Shauna Vey notes that the idealized children of the nineteenth century were ‘pink and well fed’ (64). ‘Children of the working classes and children of color were outside the realm of childhood. Evacuated of innocence and incapable of feeling pain, they did not require protection.’ (Vey 64) This branching of the concept of childhood, she explains, allowed late-nineteenth century industrialists to ‘exploit and destroy millions of young bodies for capitalistic goals while their upper and middle class contemporaries continued to venerate childhood’ (64).

death or in the ecstasy of combat. Far from being opposite to realism or naturalism, the Gothic is an integral part of the naturalist aesthetic and a crucial means of figuring the forces that overwhelm and annihilate the modern subject. (102)

The way in which Crane does this in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* will be explored in the analysis section of this chapter.

Like Twain, Crane was also influenced by Darwin's evolution theories. Donna Campbell, in 'The Rise of Naturalism' (2011), notes that these theories not only challenged the idea of the supposedly 'natural' separation between humans and animals, but also reevaluated the idea of 'natural' itself: 'was morality "natural" or love or duty? Or were they all simply socially acceptable manifestations of human drives such as fear, desire and self-preservation?' (499). She refers to Stuart P. Sherman, who criticizes naturalistic fiction because the protagonists of naturalistic writers (Stephen Crane included) influenced by such theories acquired sensations rather than wisdom (In Cassuto and Reiss 499). He notes that, unlike Realism, which examines human behavior, naturalism analyses the animal behavior in humans (499). He offers the example of Theodore Dreiser's Jennie in *Jennie Gerhardt* (1911), who does not feel sinful or remorseful when she becomes pregnant with a child out of wedlock, or when she leaves her daughter to travel with her lover. Another example to consider is Kate Chopin's Edna in *The Awakening* (1899), who does not feel guilty for leaving her family to indulge in sensations offered to her through the love of other men, or the sensations of freedom offered by the ocean. In contrast to Sherman, who criticized naturalists for giving more importance to sensation than to wisdom, I believe their attention to sensation allowed naturalists to faithfully, accurately and comprehensively understand human behavior. When dealing with groups of people who are poor, starving, abused or miserable, naturalists knew that sensations and the instinct of survival overpowered superficial concepts of wisdom and morality.

As a journalist in New York, Crane contributed to presenting the experiences and situations of the 'other half' to the readers of newspapers and journals, and as a naturalist like Twain, he was aware that human beings were shaped by forces beyond their control. According to Mary Esteve, Crane 'writes to achieve an accurate statement of the feeling of the scene and his details are physical correlatives... He writes as a phenomenologist of the scene, intent on characterizing the consciousness of the place...

converting sheer data into experience' (663-664). 'Sheer data' was only the tip of the iceberg in terms of accurate and wholesome representation. To him 'sheer data' was not enough to bring out the complexity in the lives and feelings of the victimized children of his concern—children who were perceived by many as dirty and corrupt burdens to the nation (as mentioned earlier in this chapter). In contrast to critics like George Monteiro, for example, who believes that Crane's impressionism 'addresses itself to the eye and ear' and 'merely tries with a few swift strokes to show the significant surface of things' making his impressionism more photographic in effect, I believe that Crane offered great in-depth exploration of his characters' minds and emotions (Monteiro 232). Through his fictional expressions of the lives of these victims, he takes readers into their homes, their families and the innermost depths of their minds, exposing the challenging conditions that influence their future personalities. One example of this insufficient understanding of these children occurs in a column of criminal reports in an 1870 newspaper, *The Daily Cleveland Herald*, issue 82. The report reads as follows: 'Henry Schutter, a bad boy, arrested for threatening to shoot his mother, was directed to be sent to the Reform Farm.' Crane, however, recognized the dangers of such fragmentary reports. He rejected the 'bad boy' labels by offering readers the conditioning factors behind such occurrences.

Like Twain, Stephen Crane also had much in common with William James in his understanding of human behavior and its susceptibility to be formed or transformed under the influence of environment or traumatic experiences. The influence of Darwin was, of course, a common denominator in all of these thinkers. James, influenced by Darwin's theories, believed in 'the evolutionary function of consciousness' and 'functional adaptations of the nervous system to the environment' (Taylor 7). James, furthermore, applies Darwin's theories to the evolution of human thought; in reinforcement of such a view, James writes:

the new conceptions, emotions and active tendencies which evolve or which evolve [in the mind] are originally produced in the shape of random images, fancies, accidental out-births of spontaneous variation in the functional activity

of the excessively instable human brain, which the outer environment simply confirms or refutes, preserves or destroys. (James 178)¹⁵

It is thus clear that both Crane and James shared an interest in applying Darwinian theories of evolution to human consciousness and psychology, believing that both origin and environment determine certain traits. According to Esteve, it would be difficult to confirm Crane's familiarity with James's works, but there is a possibility that he may have come across extracts and references to James in the journals in which he himself published. For example, in *Arena*, which frequently published articles on physical research, the editor B.O. Flowers (to whom Hamlin Garland, himself a member of the American Psychical Society, had recommended Crane) authored a few articles in 1892 on hypnotism (citing James as a source), both of which explore the phenomena of anesthesia. (Esteve 103-104). It is possible that Crane read some of James's work because he adopted medical, psychological, and social dialogues of anesthesia and hypnotism.

Crane exhibits an acute awareness of a hypnotic state that emerges in the face of trauma, one that can change or alienate an identity. For instance, his most famous work, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) is seen as an excellent example of such hypnotic states, described as 'a merciless realization of the psychology of combat, in which paralyzing terror, reckless bravery, and ignominious flight appear to be the result of a sort of hypnotism (Weatherford 86). Crane views the 'semiconscious, reflex actions of combat as remarkably akin to barroom behavior' (Dooley 68). For example, Crane presents his protagonist, Fleming, as robotic and automatic after suffering the trauma of battle: 'he fired a first wild shot. Directly he was working at his weapon like an automatic affair' (Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* 33). This robotic state or automatism into which Fleming is immersed seems to, according to Crane, strip him of his usual identity: 'he became not a man but a member. He felt that something of which he was a part—a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country—was in a crisis. He was welded into a common personality which was dominated by a single desire' (33). This desire is the desire to survive. Fleming becomes dominated by some kind of trance when a different identity—one like an animal striving for survival—overtakes him in

¹⁵ William James. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, vol. 6, Harvard University Press, 1979, p. 178.

the face of his threatening surroundings: ‘a blistering sweat, a sensation that his eyeballs were about to crack like hot stones’ and ‘following this came a red rage. He developed the acute exasperation of a pestered animal, a well-meaning cow worried by dogs (34). All this triggers in Fleming a temper that ‘was rampant within him’ (34). Fleming clearly enters a hypnotic, trance-like state when faced with danger, and his mind seems to work to protect him by entering a different state of consciousness. This indicates Crane’s awareness that different states of consciousness can emerge as a defense mechanism to alleviate the pain of traumatic external realities. Although his characters in *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* are not endangered by battle, they are endangered by their home environment and thus also undergo or reveal different levels of consciousness as a way to survive their painful realities.

John Bowlby was a British psychologist, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst who was known for his emphasis on child development and his theory of attachment. He was the first psychologist to introduce the attachment system to psychoanalysis. Before Bowlby, psychoanalysis disregarded the importance of fear and safety seeking in the development of personality and psychopathology (39). Bowlby’s theories were Darwinian and essentially based on the view that ‘we – like all species – are biologically programmed to enhance our chances of survival, and thus preserve the species at all costs’ (qtd. in Yellin and Epstein 3). Like Crane, Freud, Breuer and Charcot before him, Bowlby also believed that the mind can adapt to stressful environments to allow the possibility of survival. Usually the means for this survival or protection against pain is some kind of psychopathology or attachment disorder.

***Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893): The Effects of Childhood Trauma**

Maggie: A Girl of the Streets traces the lives of three children who are brought up in slum life, poverty, and drunken, abusive parenting. Through the documentation of the lives of these children, Crane seems to illustrate an awareness of the psychological problems that result from abusive parenting. Each of the children of the Johnson family develops a different psychological reaction to their abuse. Jim, the eldest boy, grows up to be abusive, violent, and detached, unable to form healthy attachments. Maggie, the younger girl, who seems to be a compulsive caregiver early on, flees her home in hope of being protected and loved by Pete, a man who ends up deserting her. She tries to return home after this, but is rejected by her mother and brother and has no choice but to resort to prostitution before dying. Tom, the baby, present only briefly at the

beginning of the story, dies early in infancy. This chapter will now focus on the lives of each of these children to explore Crane's understanding of the association between childhood trauma and its resulting psychopathologies and attachment problems. The main personality disorders that Crane presents as a result of the childhood trauma in this story are the anxious avoidant personality disorder and the anxious attachment personality disorder demonstrated through Jimmie and Maggie respectively. To substantiate the contention that Crane was well ahead of his time in understanding the link between child abuse and attachment disorders, I will draw on John Bowlby's ideas around attachment which were first introduced around 1948, as well as his notion of dysregulated attachments that result from inadequate or traumatizing caregiving.

Crane provides elaborate accounts of child abuse in the Johnson household and the destructive home environment at the beginning of the story in order to pave the way for an understanding of the children's reactions to this abuse later on in the story (in their future lives). He creates a home atmosphere of terror and instability that affects the Johnson children quite dramatically. The mother is a chronic drunk who is always enraged and ready to inflict terror and abuse when given the slightest chance. All the children witness at home is their mother's drunkenness, hostility, and contempt for their father. The children are never seen to be cared for or loved, but rather live in constant fear, anxiety, and abuse. To establish the environment of terror in the Johnson home, Crane powerfully describes the intimidating and terrifying nature of Mrs. Johnson. He introduces her at the beginning of the story when the children and father return home one afternoon with the young boy, Jimmie, having been involved in a street fight. When they enter the house, they are received by what Crane describes as a large 'rampant' woman. At finding out that her son has been fighting again she turns to fix her anger on him, and as she moves toward him to inflict physical abuse upon him she is described as having massive shoulders that heave with anger. Then she grabs the little boy by the neck and shakes him aggressively until he 'rattles' (8).

Maggie, the young girl, is also abused by her mother but bears this while also taking on the responsibilities of the mother. She cares for the baby, Tom, and even for her brother Jimmie. She also seems to be responsible for the household chores, and if her little body cannot cope under the burden, the mother beats and terrorizes her. On the day Jimmie is beaten for fighting, Maggie is beaten for breaking a dish while trying to tidy up after dinner. The abuse, however, is not limited to the children. Mrs. Johnson expresses great hostility and violence toward Mr. Johnson. When her husband protests

against her constant abuse of the children she directs her aggression towards him. Crane writes: 'The woman screamed and shook her fists before her husband's eyes. The rough yellow of her face and neck flared suddenly crimson. She began to howl' (8). Then 'they had a lurid altercation, in which they damned each other's souls with frequency' (8). She is described as 'thunder[ing]' at her husband until he leaves the house, leaving the children to receive her wrath:

She returned and stirred up the room until her children were bobbing about like bubbles. 'Git outa deh way,' she persistently bawled, waving her feet with their disheveled shoes near the heads of her children. She shrouded herself puffing and snorting, in a cloud of steam at the stove. (9)

Mrs. Johnson is a source of terror in the Johnson household. Not once in the story is she presented in a loving or nurturing light. Not once is she presented in the story without evoking an atmosphere of dread and aggression. Crane powerfully establishes such an environment to later demonstrate its destructive consequences on the children's future mental wellbeing.

Although Mr. Johnson is not portrayed to be as abusive as his wife, he does engage in abusive behavior toward his son, Jimmie. Upon finding his son involved in the street fight, he reacts violently, exposing Jim to both physical and verbal abuse: 'Here, you Jim, git up, now, while I belt yer life out, you damned disorderly brat.' He began to kick into the chaotic mass on the ground (5-6). As he drags his son home, he kicks him and threatens to further his abuse if his son does not obey him: 'Come home, now,' he cried, 'an' stop yer jawin', er I'll lam the everlasting head off yehs' (7). When Jim and his sister argue on their way home, Mr. Johnson warns Jim, 'Stop that, Jim, d'yeh hear? Leave yer sister alone on the street. It's like I can never beat any sense into yer damned wooden head' (7). As visibly demonstrated, Jim is not only physically abused by his father, but also verbally and psychologically abused. This, Crane shows, is bound to create a dysfunctional adult in Jimmie.

Avoidant Personality Disorder and Jimmie

Jimmie's life presents the reader with a powerful demonstration of Crane's preemptive awareness of the consequences of child abuse on a child's mental health and stability.

Crane describes most of Jimmie's childhood as one contaminated by chronic fear and anxiety, and he is described as greatly afflicted by the violence and unsafe environment of his home. In Crane's documentation of Jim's childhood, the terror, fear and anticipation of threat and danger are persistent. On several occasions he is described as terrified and anxious about returning home. Crane describes a typical day in the life of Jimmie to build up the terror that governs his childhood. His constant anticipation of the terrible conditions at home leaves him too nervous and frightened to enter. He waits for a long time in the streets to avoid the terror, and when he finally builds up the courage to go inside, he cautiously listens through the door in order to evaluate the danger that awaits him. As Jimmie lingers outside, hesitant to enter, he hears his mother 'chanting in a mournful voice, occasionally interjecting bursts of volcanic wrath at the father, who, Jimmie judged had sunk down on the floor in a corner' (Crane, *Maggie* 11). He also hears furniture being thrown and shattered as it crashes against the door 'into clattering fragments' (12). He hears 'howls and curses and groans and shrieks, confusingly in chorus as if battle was raging' (12). This is too much for Jimmie to handle and the narrator pronounces Jimmie's horror through the manifestation of Jimmie's involuntary somatic responses: Jimmie suppresses a shriek at the terror he hears inside and 'the eyes of the urchin glared in fear that one of them would discover him' (12). The somatic response to his fear show the power of the fear with which Jimmie lives his every day.

Jimmie's constant state of alarm is important to Crane, who intends to demonstrate the effect of persistent and prolonged terror in a child's life. He is always in a state of alertness, unable to settle into a state of comfort or security. In the scenario presented above, Jim remains on the stairs until the danger seems to subside, but even when he senses that things have calmed down inside, his anxiety and insecurity never leave him as he continues to expect danger. He carefully creeps upstairs with 'the caution of an invader of a panther den' (12). As he finally enters, he is trembling and extremely scared that he may wake his parents and inflict danger upon himself by doing so. Crane describes him as trembling with fear as he makes his way through the house and tries not to awaken his parents. Crane writes: 'the urchin bended over his mother. He was fearful lest she should open her eyes, and the dread within him was so strong, but he could not forbear to stare, but hung as if fascinated over the woman's grim face' (12).

This passage is very powerful in capturing the paralyzing fear and anticipation of terror in which Jim is persistently immersed. Crane extends Jimmie's constant state

of dread and expectation of danger when he shares another incident of Maggie breaking a plate while washing the dishes. Jimmie immediately recognizes the warning signs (anger and hatred in his mother's facial expressions) of an onset of rage and abuse. With this anticipation comes his immediate response—the desire to flee to safety. Crane writes: 'The boy ran to the halls shrieking like a monk in an earthquake. He floundered about in the darkness until he found the stairs. He stumbled, panic-stricken, to the next floor. An old woman opened a door. A light behind her threw a flare on the urchin's quivering face' (9). For a child to tremble intensely in fear, and for anxiety and terror to produce somatic reactions is a strong indication of a serious terror that takes a toll on this young boy's future mental and physical wellbeing.

Crane is aware that the constant overwhelming terror and anticipation of danger is bound to exhaust Jimmie's mental energy and result in a psychological disorder as he demonstrates later in the story and in Jimmie's adulthood. He very carefully and clearly accentuates the unceasing, agonizing terror that Jimmie endures in the early stages of the novella and the early stages of Jimmie's life to trace the origins of his later detached personality disorder and what seems like psychosis. It would be quite unlikely, as Crane (like Twain) seemed to acknowledge rather well, for a child to develop without psychological problems in such a toxic environment. Remarkably, Crane, in this story, demonstrates awareness of what later psychologists (at least a century later) had found as significant links between chronic childhood fear and stress and future behavior problems and psychopathology. For example, Ainsworth et.al. (1978), Bowlby (1980), Kagan et.al. (1991), Trad (1987), and Widom (1989) all relate chronic and overwhelming fear and stress to psychopathy. They explain that when stressors exceed an individual's ability to cope or are present for an extended period of time, it can result in psychopathy. Moreover, the link proves stronger, they reveal, especially when the stressors are severe and persistent. It is also broadly acknowledged that adult psychopathology habitually manifests as a result of severely stressful early-childhood experiences. In *Maggie*, Crane presents this correlation quite strongly, demonstrating his progressive knowledge of the psychopathological consequences of child maltreatment.

Before proceeding to the analysis of Jimmie's adulthood, it is worth spending time on Crane's apparent intention in presenting this delicate and vulnerable child in contrast against, first, the ignorant and stereotypical image given to immigrant children of Crane's time and second, to the adult Jimmie. The story opens with Jimmie—an

‘urchin’ from ‘Rum Alley’—fighting in the streets against ‘howling urchins from Devil’s Row’ (*Maggie* 3). These ‘tattered gamins’ wore the ‘grins of true assassins’ (4). The narrator describes Jimmie, who wins the fight, dripping with blood by the end and wearing ‘a look of a tiny, insane, demon’ (4). The boys ran to and fro... swearing in barbaric trebles’ (3). ‘A worm of yellow convicts came from the shadow of a building and crawled slowly along the river’s bank’ (4). The terminology that Crane chooses to represent the tenement children in this scene is indicative of his resentment at the way these children were perceived and stereotyped as criminals, demons, and even animals. The striking contrast that Crane creates between the Jimmie of the streets and Jimmie at home is fundamental in bringing out Crane’s determination to correct the common nineteenth-century perception about children, particularly immigrant children, as agents of violence who needed to be beaten into morality. This is because, like Twain, Crane was acutely aware of the dangers of such a view. After this scene, and as demonstrated above, Crane takes us into the home and the vulnerable mind of this child. He zooms in, out of the general context of Jim’s street fight, and into the detailed processes of his terrified mind, in order to show the reader the inner truth of such children: that they, just like all children, are defenseless individuals who cannot thrive under terror. They are just like any other child, and therefore should not be abused or beaten in the name of discipline. To Crane, just like to Twain, these children are not naturally delinquent or criminal; it is rather their traumatic circumstances that lead to delinquency and not vice versa.

Crane also creates a strong contrast between the young Jim, who was full of fear and alarm, and the adult Jim, who becomes numb and void of feelings. By doing this he suggests an inevitable causal link between Jimmy’s traumatic childhood environment and his development of a personality disorder. After describing the destructive home environment of the Johnson children, Crane shifts forward in his narration to Jimmie’s adulthood. Jimmie grows up to be delinquent, affectionless, violent, and conscienceless. He is also presented with what Bowlby later introduced as avoidant personality disorder. The narrator provides the first glimpse of the older Jimmie, describing him as hardened and emotionless. Crane writes:

The inexperienced fibres of the boy’s eyes were hardened at an early age. He became a young man of leather. He lived some red years without laboring.

During that time his sneer became chronic. He never conceived a respect for the world, because he had begun with no idols that it smashed. (*Maggie* 13)

Crane also portrays the adult Jimmie as a violent delinquent who takes pleasure in terrorizing people and in violent and gruesome thoughts of women: 'Jimmie's occupation for a long time was to stand on street-corners and watch the world go by dreaming blood-red dreams at the passing of pretty women. He menaced mankind at the intersections of streets' (15). Jimmie's violence and aggression are demonstrated in his imaginings of the beautiful women that he sees. Rather than imagining these women in a romantic or sexual way, Jimmie imagines them as victims of his violence—covered in blood. This is indicative of a distorted and altered mind, possibly a mind afflicted by some form of psychosis. Jimmie's aggression and delinquency begin at a young age and persists into adulthood. The narrator reveals that at quite a young age Jimmie attains a criminal record and is frequently arrested for persistent acts of violence:

He developed a great tendency to climb down from his truck and fight with other drivers. He had been in quite a number of miscellaneous fights, and in some general ballroom rows that had become known to the police. Once he had been arrested for assaulting a Chinaman. (16)

Even as a young child, Jimmie is violent and aggressive. He is consistently involved in street fights and even beats his sister when she tries to advise him against violence. He aggressively retorts: 'Ah, what deh hell! shut up er I'll smack yer mout' (7), and when Maggie does not obey his warnings, he beats her. Jimmie also beats his mother until she bleeds, as an adult. He seems to develop the defence mechanism of violence to mentally protect himself against any suspected threat. It is of course also learned behavior from his first teachers—his parents.

Like Twain, Crane also recognized the link between childhood trauma and delinquency and powerfully expresses this link in *Maggie*. His awareness resonates with what Jay Belsky reveals about children's biological and neurological response to chronic fear and abuse.¹⁶ He explains that the stress induced by a child's fear stimulates the release of the stress hormone, cortisol; if this cortisol release becomes persistent,

¹⁶ Jay Belsky is a contemporary child psychologist specialized in child development and family studies

then the systems becomes unable to regulate stress responses. This, he notes, produces lasting effects beyond the immediate moment such as constant anxiety, worry and hyper vigilance. This hyper vigilance produces exaggerated reactions to any suspected threat to the child (qtd. in Patton). This is undoubtedly the case with Jimmie.¹⁷

Murray Straus links child abuse to long-lasting consequences not only on the abused child himself, but also to society at large. He explains that child abuse can result in further and broader societal danger because the abused child may in turn inflict his own aggression and violence on those within his social setting. Straus suggests that when the abused child's tendency to commit violence is extreme, he can take it as far as to commit murder and more specifically parricide (114). Heider et.al (2005) reveal estimates of about three hundred yearly homicides specific to abused children against their parents or caregivers. Moreover, these homicides usually occur when the abused child has become an adult (qtd. in Shoemaker 104). It is interesting to note the similarity in the perceived and illustrated outcomes of child abuse in both Twain's and Crane's characters. Twain's Jim and Crane's Jimmie both grow up to inflict violence and aggression on their surroundings, although Twain's Jim goes to the extent of murder.

Crane, before child abuse became recognized in psychoanalysis, interestingly presented fictional accounts of a connection between child abuse and violence. This link has been studied more recently. For example, Karr-Morse and Meredith Wiley reveal that child abuse and neglect can change the brain in a way to produce violent and aggressive thoughts and behaviors (Fisher and Lab 292). As previously mentioned, Jimmie's thoughts and behaviors are abnormally violent and Mark Twain's Jim, in his 'The Story of the Bad Little Boy who Did Not Come to Grief', grows up to be extremely violent and murderous as well, as a result of his traumatic childhood.

Jimmie not only grows up to be delinquent. He also exhibits significant signs of psychosis, dissociation and attachment disorders. He is shown later in the story to be detached from reality and at certain points, expresses signs of delusion. He has a delusional way of perceiving the world around him and reacts according to these delusions. Crane writes:

¹⁷ Murray Arnold Straus. *Beating the Devil out of them*. Transaction Publishers, 1994.

After a time his sneer grew so that it turned its glare upon all things. He became so sharp that he believed in nothing. To him the police were actuated by malignant impulses and the rest of the world was composed, for most part, of despicable creatures who were all trying to take advantage of him and with whom, in defense he was obliged to quarrel on all possible occasions. (*Maggie* 14)

Also, it is revealed that ‘as one drove toward his truck, he would drive fearfully upon a sidewalk, threatening untold people with annihilation’ (14). Crane presents Jimmie’s reaction with an exaggerated sense of danger and hyper-vigilance that most probably stems from his terrifying childhood. Jimmie reacts to his delusional perceptions by inflicting violence against people because he has a distorted belief that he needs to protect himself against them. Jimmie also has a delusional sense of his own identity. He views himself as an entitled hero, or God, sent to punish any cars that came near his truck. He perceives his violent reactions as reasonable and necessary. Crane writes: ‘He himself could perceive that Providence had caused it clearly to be written, that he and his team had the unalienable right to stand in the proper path of the sun chariot, and if they so minded, obstruct its mission or take a wheel off’ (*Maggie* 15). Crane attributes distorted perception or delusions to Jimmie as a result of his traumatic childhood, revealing a strikingly advanced awareness of the consequences of childhood psychological trauma.

The American Psychiatric Association defines delusions as false personal beliefs based on false perceptions about one’s external reality. This belief is firmly maintained regardless of any reasonable contradictions (356). Considering this definition, Jimmie can be seen to demonstrate signs of delusion. His perceptions of himself and his surroundings largely contradict his external reality. His external behaviors are products of his inner delusional sense of reality—that he has been given the right to commit any action to stop the ‘sun chariot’ from causing ‘trouble’.

Jane Ellwood, a psychotherapist for victims of torture, explains that a person who suffers from psychosis does not relate to the real world. She compares the victim of psychosis to a baby who desperately needs to preserve good memories, the good objects and succeeding in so doing only by getting rid of projecting the bad and frightening feelings into the outside world. Ellwood writes:

He or she constructs his or her own world by omnipotently imposing his or her own unreal inner structure on the real outside world, which has perforce to contain all the terrifying thoughts and objects, which had never previously in infancy been contained and assimilated. Considered in this way psychosis is part of our very early development process. Most of us know it is still there and keep in touch with it through dreams (Ellwood 3-4).

Jimmie also falls into trance-like episodes that coincide with his delusions. As he drives his truck on the road, he becomes immersed in a dream-like trance, which is nearly impossible to wake him from. Crane writes:

He fell into the habit, when starting on a long journey, of fixing his eye on a high and distant object, commanding his horses to begin, and then going into a sort of trance of observation. Multitudes of drivers might howl in his rear, and passengers might load him with opprobrium, he would not awake... (*Maggie* 15)

Jimmie would not wake from this trance, or dissociative state, until the police react to his inconvenience by striking Jimmie's horses that jolt and consequently awaken him. He seems to develop what Christiane Sanderson, a counselling psychologist, identifies as mild detachment. Sanderson describes it as 'absorption which is seen as voluntary, often pleasurable engagement in an activity and from which the person can easily disengage and return to alert consciousness' (188). She explains that in mild detachment, the person is so engrossed in a certain activity that s/he detaches from the events in his/her external reality and exists in a trance-like state. In this state, she explains, 'the individual directs his attention inward and accesses his capacity for vivid imagery. Despite this inner focus, the individual is still open to experience and can switch his attention easily' (Sanderson 188). This is the case with Jimmie.

In 1896, Freud published *The Aetiology of Hysteria*, which presented eighteen case studies of hysterical women. By talking to them all, he discovered that they had all experienced underlying childhood trauma (Spiers 216). *Maggie* was published in 1893, three years before this, thus revealing Crane's evident anticipatory awareness of the connection between childhood trauma and dissociative states. It is interesting that the ideas that became the foundation of psychoanalysis in the twentieth century were

already being explored and demonstrated in the works of American writers in the late-nineteenth century. Crane's clear cause-effect display of Jimmie's future psychopathologies as a result of his traumatic childhood is a strong indication that Crane was already suggesting a reevaluation of the understanding of hysteria and other psychological problems. Crane, like all of the other authors in this thesis, highlights the conditions that propagate psychopathological individuals, suggesting the importance of considering the etiology of psychopathologies.

Jimmie can be said to exhibit what Janet identified as derealization and depersonalization that are characteristic of dissociative states. As explained in previous chapters, these disorders involve a feeling that the self or the world is unreal. Jimmie is presented by Crane as someone who seems to see life as a dream, where he just exists and watches the world go by as an objective observer and not as an active participant. He is described as standing outside of the ongoing world around him. He is also disconnected from the real, external world around him as he inhabits a mythological realm that contradicts his external reality, where he is an entitled god whose violence is justified. The idea of dissociation gained great recognition and popularity toward the end of the nineteenth century. It was an idea that became widespread because of Pierre Janet's influence on Charcot and Freud.

Both Twain and Crane were evidently conscious that childhood trauma would most likely result in dissociative disorders and explored this idea quite articulately in their fiction. Jim and Jimmie are valuable examples of this awareness and function to showcase the pathological repercussions of childhood trauma. As previously mentioned, both Crane and Twain were interested in the studies of Janet and Charcot, and thus may have influenced other psychologists through their fictional representations of dissociative individuals who underwent childhood trauma.

Crane anticipated more modern psychologists too, as we can see in his depiction of Jim as an emotionless and detached adult. His awareness of the effects of childhood trauma on adult personalities anticipates what John Bowlby later identified as the detached and avoidant personality disorder in the later part of the twentieth century. Because Jim's childhood is consumed by fear, his attachment system becomes unregulated and thus he later suffers the personality disorders of detachment. In his attachment theory, Bowlby introduces attachment as the prime motivation in human interactions and survival. He believes that attachment is crucial for physical and psychological survival and wellbeing. He places fear of loss and danger as the most

important elemental reactions because it is these that control and regulate the attachment system and shape the structure of mental life. According to Bowlby, fear is essential for safety and survival. It is fear that pushes a child back into the protection of his caregiver and controls physical and mental contiguity. However, he explains, uncontrolled and dysregulated fear can interfere with the normal and healthy development of mental life, leading to psychopathology and maladaptation (Bowlby 41-42). Crane's tracing of Jimmie's life from a chronically terrified but compulsively self-reliant child to a hardened, violent and, numb adult demonstrates his early awareness of the importance of the idea of child attachment in psychoanalysis.

Compulsive self-reliance, also introduced by Bowlby in his attachment theory, is manifested by withdrawal from close relationships. As explained by Bowlby, the emotionally detached person is unable to form any sort of stable, affectionate attachment as a result of prolonged maternal unavailability and or rejection. The avoidant people deny attachment needs and suppress attachment-related thoughts and emotions (Mishne 1993). This inability to form healthy relationships and connections seems to be the case with Jimmie, as he refuses to form any deep connection with everyone in his life. It appears early in the novella that Jimmie fosters this attachment disorder. After his father stops his street fight at the beginning of the story, he is described as humiliated when seen to be controlled or rescued by his father: 'He swore luridly, for he felt it was degradation for one who aimed to be some vague soldier, or a man of blood with a sort of sublime license, to be taken home by a father' (*Maggie* 6). It is noteworthy that at the beginning of the story Jim is described as a 'very little boy'; Crane possibly intentionally specifies how little he is in order to reveal the incompatibility between his age and his need for independence. It is unusual for such a little child to have such a strong need for an image of self-reliance.

His need to rely on himself is also quite strong at home. He refuses to appear hurt or defeated and rejects help and compassion quite adamantly. After being beaten by his mother and thrown in a corner, Jimmie rejects his sister's care, pretending to be fine. Maggie asks him: 'Are yehs hurted much Jimmie?' He replies: 'Not a damn bit! See?' (8). Maggie continues to try to tend to Jimmie and his wounds, asking him if she can wash the blood from his injuries, but he refuses to allow her. As she proceeds with her pleading he interrupts her saying: 'When I catch dat Riley kid I'll break 'is face! Dat's right! See?' He turned his face to the wall as if resolved to grimly bide his time' (8). His relationship with Maggie and his refusal to accept compassion are strong

indications of Jimmie's inability to form healthy attachments and connections; he seems to be careful to not allow himself to be affectionally dependent, as if determined to protect himself from pain and disappointment. He seems to have developed a defence mechanism to protect himself from unmet emotional needs.

Jimmie's avoidant attachment disorder continues into his adulthood as he seems to avoid people who might love or express loyalty for him. He is depicted as emotionless and detached. On one occasion in the story, it is indicated that Jimmie tries to escape a woman he has obviously shared some relationship with. His attempts to detach himself from her, despite her pleading, reinforce the suggestion that he is a victim of a detached personality disorder. As he unexpectedly encounters this woman on the street, she tells him that she had been searching for him everywhere. Jimmie, however, refuses to interact or communicate with her. He starts to quicken his pace to escape her. He 'turned upon her fiercely as if to make a last stand for comfort and peace' (47). He yells at her to stop bothering him 'with the savageness of a man whose life is petered' (47). Regardless of the woman's obvious pain at Jimmie's abandonment and her insistent pleading for him to communicate with her, he is determined to escape her and detach himself from her. He tells her to go to hell and stop following him and when he successfully escapes her he feels safe from attachment or emotion. Crane tells us, '[he] laughed with an air of relief and went away' (47). Through this encounter Crane emphasizes Jimmie's inability to form and maintain healthy relationships. Any sign of a potential relationship throws Jimmie into an exaggerated sense of threat to his wellbeing and so he refuses all connections. Jimmie's refusal to form a healthy connection with anyone in his life is reflective of his avoidant attachment personality disorder, an attachment disorder that was theorized well after Crane's time.

As Phillip Shaver and Mario Mikulincer reveal, avoidant people try to deny or reject needs for attachment and emotional connections; they even discard emotion and attachment related thoughts and impede undesired urges to seek close connection or support. Individuals who have acquired an avoidant personality disorder place great value and importance on independence, even with long-term partners (Edelstein and Shaver, 2004; Fraley, Davis and Shaver, 1998). This detachment develops as a defense mechanism activated by the loss of an attachment figure; in this way feelings of anxiety and sadness are inhibited or moderated (Mikulincer 59). Crane interestingly presents Jimmie in his childhood as someone who experiences fear and who is not completely

detached from his emotions, thus becoming an emotionally numb and detached adult. Such detachment in Jimmie, which obviously results from his traumatic childhood, offers significant insight into Crane's early acknowledgement of the manifestations and implications of a dysregulated attachment system resulting from childhood trauma.

On another occasion in the story, it is revealed that Jimmie is unable to express mutual loyalty or concern for a friend who engages in a fight with Pete for Jimmie's sake. Jimmie, his friend, and Pete partake in a savage fight because of Maggie. It becomes very intense and violent to the point that it attracts the police. Jimmie, skilled in deviant ways, escapes the police abandoning the friend who was only involved for Jimmie's sake. Even when Jimmie does think of his friend for a moment, he pushes the thought out of his mind: 'On first thoughts, Jimmie, with his mind throbbing at battle heat, started to go desperately to rescue his friend, but he halted. 'Ah, what deh hell?' he demanded of himself' (38). Jimmie appears to be unable to feel loyalty, attachment, or genuine concern for others in his life. Crane's establishment of Jimmie's need to protect himself, to detach when any relationship requires genuine emotion on his part reflects his fascinating early awareness of the importance of healthy attachment in childhood. Jimmie's inability to process emotions strongly resonates with what Bowlby later identified as the avoidant personality.

Martin Kantor explains that individuals who suffer from avoidant personality disorder are too afraid to form and maintain relationships and connections because of 'ongoing, engaging, deep, pervasive, multilayered interpersonal anxiety' (Kantor ix). This anxiety, he suggests, hinders these victims from forming close connections with others and maintaining those connections. This idea of the link between emotional numbness and previous childhood trauma has continued into contemporary psychological theories. Everstine and Everstine (1989) later observe that most children who are harshly abused learn to reduce the emotional pain of their disillusionment by 'turning off their emotions'; this defense mechanism lessens the impact of negative experiences. As adults, these children with well-established dissociative reaction will become 'hardened' and behave with a 'strong/tough' demeanor' (156). It is probable that, in certain cases, emotional deactivation could contribute to the creation of a psychopath (Everstine and Everstine 185). It is noteworthy that when Jimmie is first introduced as an adult, Crane's narrator describes him as hardened and callous, thus indicating Crane's awareness that childhood trauma results in future emotional numbness of the child.

It is interesting to note that Crane uses the idea of a defamiliarized face to express the idea of an affected or threatened identity, possessed by a distorted mind, one which changes under traumatic circumstances. The children of the Johnson household experience terror when drunkenness alters their mother's identity. They perceive the changes through her face that changes color and her eyes that become dreadful and hateful: 'Her eyes glittered on her child with sudden hatred. The fervent red of her face turned almost to purple' (*Maggie* 9). Also, when Jimmie comes home to his drunken parents sprawled out on the floor after a drunken fight, Jimmie sees his mother's face 'inflamed and swollen from drinking. Her yellow brows shaded eye-lids that had grown blue... her mouth was set in the same lines of vindictive hatred that it had, perhaps borne during the fight' (12). Crane also uses the eyes and the face to depict Jimmie's numbness in adulthood. Moreover Jimmie, under the influence of a traumatic childhood, grows up to carry a hardened and lifeless identity (quite different from that of his childhood identity). This is also expressed by Crane through Jimmie's eyes. Crane specifically refers to the adult Jimmie's 'hardened' eyes, eyes that reveal a different identity.

This idea is important in the acknowledgement of Crane's obvious awareness that traumatic environments can influence an individual's psychological makeup. By using the metaphor of the disfigured face, Crane was able to explore the theme of self-estrangement which was emerging in the late-nineteenth century and which would become a significant theme of the twentieth-century. According to Monika Elbert and Wendy Ryden, Crane uses the trope of a distorted face to bring out the uncanniness of the 'divided self (alienated by madness, emotion, or intoxication)' (101). They argue that '[w]ithout recourse to psychoanalytic tropes of repression or sexual neurosis, Crane finds a powerful image for the dissolution of the coherent and self-identical subject' (101). Thus, albeit through fictional expression and metaphorical representations of an alienated self, Crane was strikingly aware of the inflictions of psychopathology and its influence on alienating or defamiliarizing one's 'coherent self' or identity. As mentioned earlier, this splitting or self-estrangement as a result of traumatic experiences is an idea that also greatly interested Twain.

Anxious Attachment and Maggie

The analysis of Maggie's character is also crucial to Crane's presentation of the psychological implications of child abuse. Through Maggie's life, Crane demonstrates further psychological understanding of the link between child abuse and future personality disorders. Interestingly, he was apparently aware of the fact that different people may have different reactions to the same abuse. Maggie's psychological response to her horrifying childhood is a low self-image, anxious attachment, and compulsive caregiving.

Compulsive caregiving, triggered by the parentification of Maggie, is one of the first psychological responses of Maggie's that the reader is exposed to. Maggie is shown to hold parental responsibilities at a very young age. She is the only one seen to care for her baby brother, Tom, and is protective over Jim. She is also given household responsibilities like washing dishes and tending to household chores. Through Maggie's role in the Johnson household Crane introduces the concept that is later introduced as the parentification of a child. Parentification refers to the process through which children are assigned the role of an adult, taking on both emotional and functional responsibilities that typically are performed by the parent. The parent, in turn, takes the dependent position of the child in the parent-child relationship. This process can become pathological when the tasks become too burdensome or when the child feels obligated to take on the role of an adult. Crane powerfully establishes Maggie's character as one of great responsibility and nurturance toward her home and her siblings. However, Maggie apparently has no choice and is thrown into these responsibilities because of the emotional absence of her parents.

Bowlby argues that compulsive caregivers constantly extend their attention and concern to others—whether or not they are looking for it' (qtd. in Mishne 253). He also relates this kind of compulsive caregiving to people with a history of 'parentification'—'caring in some fashion for the disabled mother or younger siblings' (Mishne 253). Bowlby's definition of the parentified compulsive caregiver is astonishing when considered alongside Maggie's evident compulsive caregiving in the story. For example, Maggie is the primary caregiver for her baby brother, Tom. At no point in the story is Tommie, the baby, seen to be loved or cared for by his mother. Maggie expresses significant feelings of pressure caused by her need to tend to Tom: 'the little girl cried out: 'Ah Tommie, come ahn. Dere's Jimmie and fader. Don't be a-pullin' me back.' She jerked the baby's arm impatiently. He fell on his face, roaring' (6).

Moreover, when Tom dies later in the story, Maggie is the only one to care. He is described to have departed them in a very meager coffin, with a rose that Maggie had stolen to put in his coffin and make his death more dignified. It is remarkable how the parents are never mentioned in relation to Tom, not even at his death. The only one who is ever seen to be a sort of parental figure or caregiver for Tom is Maggie, who is herself a very young child. Such is a good example of how parentification can occur. Due to her parents' constant drunkenness, Maggie is forced to assume responsibility for her baby brother, despite her childish inability to handle such pressure.

Tom is not the only sibling of hers that she assumes responsibility for or tries to care for. Maggie also seems to be responsible for the wellbeing of her brother, Jimmie. Maggie, in her own terror and fragility, still feels an obligation to protect Jimmie when she acknowledges that he may be scared or in pain. There is a point where Jimmie is too fearful and anxious to enter the house due to the loud and violent fighting that he hears from the outside. When the hostile noise dies out, and he finally enters, he is caught in sudden terror when his mother, asleep on the floor, momentarily awakes. Maggie, upon hearing his terrified shriek from her room, feels the need to rescue or protect her brother. Maggie takes on the responsibility of comforting her brother:

The thin, white face of his sister looked at him from the doorway of the other room. She crept to him across the floor. The small frame of the ragged girl was quivering. Her features were haggard from weeping, and her eyes gleamed from fear. She grasped the urchin's arm in her little trembling hands and they huddled in a corner. (Crane 13)

In his description of Maggie's care for her siblings, Crane demonstrates how the parentification of Maggie leads to compulsive caregiving, another form of attachment dysregulation.

This analysis of Maggie is reinforced by Nady El-Guebaly's observation about the relationship between parents' alcoholism and their children's future relationships. He suggests that an alcoholic parent's inability to be empathetically responsive to his or her child can result in continuing relational complications for children as they develop into adults. He explains:

Typically, the children of alcoholic parents will become insecurely attached adults, developing a pattern described by John Bowlby as either anxious attachment, compulsive self-reliance, or compulsive caregiving. Moreover, because the alcoholic parents usually cannot properly care for themselves or their children, they often parentify one or more of their children. (El-Guebaly102)

It is fascinating how immensely aware Crane was of the importance of healthy attachment systems. His early understanding of attachment related ideas and theories project strongly in the attachment deprived characters of *Maggie*.

As Maggie grows up, the reader can sense another psychological consequence of her hostile childhood environment. Maggie seems to suffer from low self-image, thus forming anxious attachments in her later relationships. Her low self-image is brought out in her admiration and idealization of Pete, her boyfriend. She perceives Pete as superior and she as undeserving of him. The narrator describes how Maggie observes Pete, in awe, as a godly being: 'Maggie marveled at him and surrounded him with greatness. She vaguely tried to calculate the altitude of the pinnacle from which he must have looked down upon her' (Crane, *Maggie* 19). She perceives Pete as 'the beau ideal of a man. Her dim thoughts were often searching for faraway lands where, as God says, the little hills sing together in the morning. Under the trees of her dream-gardens there had always walked a lover' (19). Her idealization of Pete and devaluation of herself in comparison to him are clear signs of Maggie's low self-image. Moreover, because Crane effectively described Maggie's harsh childhood environment at the beginning of the story, he obviously suggests that this low self-esteem develops from an inadequate childhood environment. This tendency to idealize is another byproduct of anxious attachment.

Maggie's idealization of Pete is interesting if read in light of Freud's theory of idealization and devaluation. According to Freud, when an individual cannot deal with difficult feelings, certain defense mechanisms are activated, allowing the individual to cope with what they consider unbearable situations. Splitting, the tendency to view others as either exclusively bad or exclusively good, Freud explains, is one of these defences. Idealization occurs when the individual sees others as exclusively good, thus allowing for the attribution of exaggerated and only good qualities of the other. For Freud, splitting is a normal part of development in childhood, but the child should

eventually mature into someone who can see a coexistence of good and bad in others. If this process is interrupted during childhood (usually due to some kind of traumatic experience) the splitting becomes fixated (Spruiell 778). This seems to be the case that Crane attributed to Maggie in her idealization of Pete. Since she has experienced ruptured or interrupted ego development due to her insecure childhood, Maggie is unable to develop a healthy or mature view of people—one which recognizes the possibility of both good and bad in others.

In a recent study, Banai, Mikulincer, and Shaver (2005) revealed that attachment anxiety was correlated with ‘mirroring’, the need to be admired for one’s qualities and achievements, and idealization of significant others. These correlations show that anxiously attached individuals suffer from unresponsiveness to their need for love, proximity and union, while the avoidant individuals reject these needs and seek distance from others (Banai et al. 257). In contrast to Jimmie, Maggie is presented by Crane as an anxiously attached person, one who would undergo any risk to fulfill her need for affection and proximity, demonstrating yet again the destructive outcomes of child abuse. Maggie, at the hope of finally feeling loved and cared for by someone, leaves home and risks her acceptance by those around her, giving up everything in order to be with Pete, who eventually abandons her. Maggie’s idealization of Pete is understandable. She had not the slightest trace of love and affection growing up, thus receives the slightest attention from Pete as the greatest kindness and affection. One type of idealization, according to Deirdre Johnson, can develop due to the absence of healthy exposure to close relationships in early childhood. She explains that this may cause the deprived individual to perceive ordinary emotional responses as extravagant and too good to be true. For example, something as ordinary as consideration for their feelings and refusal to abuse them could be perceived as an extraordinary quality. This distortion in the perception of emotional responses can ultimately lead to future disappointment and disillusionment (Johnson 104). Crane, with evident recognition of the psychology of attachment in childhood and how unhealthy attachment can lead to personality disorders, establishes in Maggie the qualities related to idealization.

Maggie flees into the arms of Pete, seeing him as a savior and as one who can finally provide her with the love and affection that she hungers for. This desperation to attach herself to someone who can offer her affection reveals her anxious attachment. According to Chris Prunell, relationships of anxious attachment probably result due to the inadequacy of a caregiver’s responses to a child’s safety/comfort seeking. Bowlby

explains that the attachment system is vital for regulating emotions. It is stimulated by a sense of physiological and psychological danger and pushes the threatened individual to seek the closeness and security of others as a way of regulating the threat and reestablishing emotional equilibrium (Mikulincer and Shaver 11).

Donald Shoemaker reveals that emotional and psychological abuse may have long-standing effects on children, one of the most important problems being substantial self-image problems endured by these children and adolescents. He explains that ‘when parents or caregivers call children names, isolate them from caring human interactions, exploit them, or terrorize them, the damages may have been more harmful than if the child had been hit’ (Shoemaker 103). The damaging low self-esteem that results from Maggie’s abusive childhood is the main cause of Maggie’s destruction toward the end of the story. Had she not thought of Pete as some sort of ideal savior, of whom she was not worthy, she would have not thrown herself upon his mercy to no avail. Through Maggie, Crane continues to explore the detrimental effects of unhealthy attachment systems formed during childhood.

At a time where child abuse was not yet properly recognized as a concept and many parents believed that good child-rearing meant ‘beating the devil out of’ their children, Crane and Twain were determined to show the disastrous effects of child abuse in their fiction. Working against the ‘bad boy’ discourses of the press and the popularity of Freudian psychoanalysis that disregarded real-life experiences as the possible root causes behind trauma, these two authors demonstrated exceptional knowledge and determination to produce recognition of the dangers of child abuse and neglect.

Conclusion

In discussing the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis, Lionel Trilling suggests in *The Liberal Imagination* (2008) that although the psychoanalytical theory has greatly influenced literature, the relationship is reciprocal, and that the effect of literature upon Freud was as substantial as the effect of Freudian thought upon literature. In his essay 'Freud and Literature', Trilling writes:

The Freudian psychology is only the systematic account of the human mind which, in point of subtlety and complexity, of interest and tragic power, deserves to stand beside the chaotic mass of psychological insights which literature has accumulated through the centuries. To pass from the reading of a great literary work to a treatise of academic psychology is to pass from one order of perception to another but the human nature of the Freudian psychology is exactly the stuff upon which the poet has always exercised his art. It is therefore not surprising that the psychoanalytical theory has had a great effect upon literature. Yet the relationship is reciprocal, and the effect of Freud upon literature has been no greater than the effect of literature upon Freud. (34)

Freud himself admits this reciprocation of psychological thought in a celebration for his seventieth birthday when he was hailed as 'the discoverer of the unconscious.' He rejected this title, clarifying that the credit of discovering the unconscious was not his own: 'The poets and philosophers before me discovered the unconscious, what I discovered was the scientific method by which the unconscious can be studied' (qtd. in Meisel 95). This declaration by Freud reflects the core interest in this thesis—the stepping stones that literature provides for the scientific study of the human mind. Whether the traumatized minds of Civil War soldiers debilitated by the tragedies of war and dying, the minds of women distressed by the oppressive and suffocating values of an androcentric culture, the struggling minds of homosexual individuals who were forced to repress and suppress their true desires, or the tribulations of mistreated children, literature was a fundamental influence in the development of a scientific understanding of the human mind under the effects of trauma.

Having examined a variety of late-nineteenth century American short stories and novellas, I have substantiated the contention that the short fiction of the late-nineteenth century literary naturalists concerned in this thesis aided in the establishment of a scientific notion of what is today recognized as psychological trauma. By drawing close parallels between the psychological ideas present within the fictional works of these authors and those of later psychologists and psychiatrists, and by tracing the direct links between some of these authors and the psychologists that they had influenced or interacted with, I have argued and provided evidence that the postbellum short fiction of Ambrose Bierce, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Henry James, Stephen Crane and Mark Twain, contributed to the more informed scientific development of psychological notions and particularly the notion of trauma.

In Chapter One I demonstrated Ambrose Bierce's striking cognizance of the mind's reactions to traumatic situations and when faced with the inevitability of death. By examining the mental reactions of his traumatized protagonists in 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' and 'One of the Missing', I established that Bierce demonstrates significantly advanced awareness of and familiarity with the psychological nature of trauma and its associated mental reactions. 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' was one of the stories chosen for this chapter; it was fundamental in allowing for the establishment of Bierce's early recognition of what, around 100 years later, became identified as peri-traumatic dissociation by psychologist Russel Noyes in his study of near-death psychological processes. Farquhar, the protagonist of this story, experiences all the stages of the near-death psychological state which Noyes and Kletti later expanded on in their investigations of near-death psychology. By examining the similarities between Bierce and Noyes in the ideas pertaining to near-death psychology, I confirmed that Bierce's fiction demonstrated an advanced notion of trauma as a psychological notion. In this chapter I also established Bierce's determination to present trauma as psychological and refute the ignorant understanding of trauma as physical injury. By drawing parallels between the theories of George Beard on the depletion of nervous energy as a result of traumatic circumstances and the death of Bierce's protagonist, Searing, I have shown that Bierce understood trauma more in line with the twentieth-century sense of the term before it became scientifically recognized and established. By examining 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' and 'One of the Missing', I believe I have shown that Bierce foreshadowed the twentieth-century notion of trauma.

In Chapter Two I argued that Charlotte Perkins Gilman contributed directly to the more informed and scientific understanding of women's psychological ailments and related treatments. By drawing on close parallels between the ideas of traumatic dissociation in 'The Yellow Wallpaper', and those of Pierre Janet, I was able to verify the contention that Gilman had an advanced understanding of psychological trauma as an etiological result of stressful situations. In this novella, Gilman emphasizes her protagonist's debilitating context and the necessary suppression of her individuality as the result of her later dissociative state. By detailing the harsh conditions and confinement in which her protagonist lives and illustrating how suppression leads to mental decline, Gilman was able to reverse the common belief of her time that women had an inherent tendency for hysteria due to their reproductive organs. By emphasizing the link between her protagonist's harsh domestic context and her eventual mental decline Gilman, like Bierce, reflected a twentieth century understanding of psychological trauma.

However, Chapter Two also establishes Gilman's direct influence on the psychiatric and medical fields of her time. She wrote 'The Yellow Wallpaper' as a warning against Silas Weir Mitchell's rest cure, eventually leading Mitchell to stop this practice. Gilman also worked closely with Mary Jacobi Putnam and offered to undergo her experimentation on a different kind of treatment for women's psychological ailments which involved activity and intellectual exercises. Gilman helped prove Jacobi's treatment successful. I elaborated both on Gilman's awareness of the more informed way of understanding women's psychological conditions and effective treatments, and established the direct links she had with physicians of her time. In doing this I believe that I validated my argument that Gilman contributed significantly to the development of women's psychological treatments, advocating an understanding of and treatment of traumatized women more in line with what came to be more widely practiced in the twentieth-century.

In Chapter Three, I established Henry James's acute awareness of the painful repression endured by the newly criminalized homosexual individual of late-nineteenth century America. This chapter focused on James's 'The Author of Beltraffio' and 'The Pupil' to illustrate the struggles with repression endured by those regarded in the nineteenth century as 'perverted'. This chapter explores James's familiarity with the notions of scopophilia later introduced by Freud in 1924, and homosexual panic, introduced by Edward Kempf in 1920, establishing James's acute awareness of and

early presentation of the psychological processes associated with repressed homosexuality.

In Chapter Four, I demonstrated the striking similarities between Stephen Crane's fictional representation of the attachment personality disorders that result from childhood trauma and John Bowlby's Attachment Theory. The chapter examined Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* in order to bring out the close parallels between Crane's understanding of the resulting psychopathologies of traumatized children and Bowlby's Attachment Theory, which was established in 1948. This chapter also demonstrates Mark Twain's advanced recognition of the correlation between child abuse and future criminality. I also demonstrated the way in which Twain was a pioneer in the recognition of the almost inevitable link between childhood trauma or abuse and the development of psychopathology. By drawing on the theories of trauma-induced dissociation of Janet and the attachment disorders explored by more contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists like John Bowlby, Richard Kluft, Robin Morse-Karr, Phillip Shaver and Mario Mukulincer, I have demonstrated the fascinating awareness of both Crane and Twain of the correlation between childhood trauma, future psychopathologies and personality disorders.

I would argue strongly that these writers substantially influenced the shaping of our current understanding of trauma. In their refusal to accept the sensational journalistic misrepresentations of the socially marginalized, other and wounded individuals particular to this thesis, these writers allowed their readers more in-depth insight into the minds of their fellow countrymen and women. It is also my conviction that psychology is a dynamic and ever-evolving field because human experiences and struggles will persistently be shaped and reshaped by shifting environmental influences of an ever-evolving world. For this reason, it is logical to suggest that for future examinations of emerging and evolving psychological disorders, scientists will inevitably find a rich medium for their investigations in literature. In a letter to a fellow writer, Anton Chekhov, known as the father of realism, stated: '[The] sensitivity of the artist may equal the knowledge of the scientist. Both have the same object, nature, and perhaps in time it will be possible for them to link together in a great and marvelous force which is at present hard to imagine' (qtd. in Coope 49). This suggestion by Chekhov, although articulated centuries ago, still holds a powerful truth for our time. Since writers express the realities and truths about human nature and human suffering in their written works and provide intricate insight into these realms, and since scientists

and psychologists concern themselves fundamentally with these matters, it is undeniable that a coinciding study of literature and psychology promises to yield new insights into both disciplines.

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