Reading Consciousness:
Analyzing Literature through William James' Stream of Thought Theory

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ABSTRACT

Proceeding from the assumption that psychoanalytic theory has yielded insightful literary interpretations, I propose that equally legitimate readings result from analyzing consciousness in literature. William James' "Stream of Thought" offers a psychological theory of consciousness from which I develop a literary theory that counterbalances the Freudian emphasis on the unconscious. Examining two works by Henry James, I demonstrate how assessing the elements of a character's consciousness leads to conclusions at which other theories do not arrive. This analytical approach leads to not only an alternative critical agenda but also a fuller understanding of the psychological function of the character's and, by extension, the human mind.

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I. Introduction

Literary theory assumed several forms throughout the twentieth-century. Among the most interesting of these trends included psychoanalytic theory. And although its heyday has come and gone, psychoanalytic theory has left an indelible mark on the theoretical world…for better *and* for worse. On the one hand, psychoanalytic interpretation gives the reader the exciting opportunity to delve into characters' minds in order to search for a psychological understanding of literature. On the other hand, the word "psychology" has become nearly synonymous with psychoanalytic theory in literary discussions, thereby excluding other psychological methods from the conversation.

Personally, I have no quarrel with psychoanalytic theory. In fact, I consider it a very useful theoretical approach. But the fact that psychoanalysis serves as the sole proxy for the entire field of psychology regarding literary theory greatly frustrates me. Any introductory psychology course identifies Freud as but a pioneer in a discipline that has continued to develop and evolve for over a century. We would never construct a Socratic theory and accept it as the *only* philosophical lens through which to read literature. Thus, we have no excuse for committing the equivalent heresy concerning psychological readings of literature.

Furthermore, I believe that, for the very reason that psychoanalytic theory has produced such insightful literary interpretations, we can reap equally valuable understandings from the cultivation of contrasting psychological literary theories. I do not propose, however, that we develop them in order to debunk or replace psychoanalytic theory. On the contrary, I suggest that we plumb the annals of psychology to discover

new ways of reading *alongside* the Freudian method. Leon Edel asserts that "true criticism…has never used a single yardstick" (202), and I contend that expanding our psychological understanding of literature will provide greater dimension to the depth and breadth of our readings.

To test my hypothesis, I construct a psychological literary theory based on the work of the "Father of American psychology" (Pajares 41), William James. James explored a different realm of the human mind than did his overshadowing contemporary. Whereas Freud's most famous work concentrated on the unconscious processes, James won acclaim through his renowned theory of consciousness. I argue that readers can apply the theories of two psychological trailblazers who lived and worked during the same period and arrive at two distinct, though equally significant, literary interpretations.

From this premise, I can proceed in a number of directions. Though I loathe negative qualifiers, my course may be easier to discern if I inform the reader of what I do *not* intend to accomplish. First, I do not write an apology for psychological theory. If the reader abhors investigating psychological implications in literature, he or she will probably abhor this thesis. I build my argument on the foundation that psychoanalysis has proven itself to be a valuable literary resource.

Second, I do not write an apology for psychoanalysis or James' theory of consciousness. I am a student of literature with an interest in psychology, *not* a student of psychology. I am concerned with neither the veracity nor the effectiveness of either theory as a psychological practice. The theories in question lead to insightful literary interpretations even if professional psychologists dismiss them as outmoded or fallacious. My concern lies exclusively with their usefulness as *literary* theoretical tools.

Third, rather than formulating a theory based on James' entire corpus of work, I restrict my discussion to his study of consciousness. James was a prolific writer, and to treat the entirety of his thought appropriately requires more attention than the scope of this thesis allows.

Finally, although my thesis includes an application of consciousness theory to the literature of William James' brother Henry, I review neither their personal relationship nor their influence on each other's work. Simply put, I choose Henry James as the subject for my application due to convenience. William's theory of consciousness ideally counterbalances Freud's theory of the unconscious, and Henry is one of my favorite authors. Additionally, I prefer to respond to the question, "Why Henry?" rather than, "Why not Henry?"

I found plenty of literature addressing William and Henry James in one capacity or another. My greatest obstacle to overcome, however, involved finding scholarship that does not focus either on authorial intention or the brothers' personal relationship. The same fascination that draws me to this topic has compelled scholars to explore the James brothers' treatment of consciousness for a variety of reasons.

In his article "Henry and William (Two Notes)," Eliseo Vivas examines the differences between the James brothers as represented by the countries they lived in as well as their similar views on the way the mind perceives the world. Henry seemed to remain indifferent towards William's increasing disapproval of his late work. Ironically, William enjoyed more eventful plots than Henry's artistic explorations of the mind permitted. Vivas limits his discussion to *The Spoils of Poynton* because it displays Henry James' "ethical vision" (584) without "exhibiting the distracting difficulties of his last

manner" (583). Foregoing didactic commentary, Henry James presents an intelligence free of corrupt, ulterior motives. This vision resists William James' "attenuated Darwinism," which equates the "right" with the "expedient" and the progressive (586). In his second note, Vivas compares William and Henry James' similar "conception of consciousness," which also emerges in Bergson, Proust, and Impressionist painting (588). Henry James' realism does not seek to represent life as much as the mind's realistic perception thereof. Vivas appreciates the irony that William should have been the biggest fan of his brother's late work but much more preferred his earlier novels.

Richard A. Hocks argues that Vivas' first note reflects a pedestrian understanding of William's thought. *Henry James and Pragmatistic Thought* is Hocks' scholastic and theoretical attempt to view William James' philosophy from the perspective of Henry James' literature. As William grew increasingly impatient with Henry's "major phase," Henry increasingly identified with William's philosophy. Hocks names this the "Jourdain relationship," in which William was the pragmatist while Henry was "the pragmatism" (4). In other words, Henry's literature plays out William's philosophical thought. William's stream-of-thought theory corresponds with Henry's literary exploration of self-consciousness. The brothers did not influence each other as much as they were both products of a "family consciousness" (8). They exhibit polarity, which Hocks approximates with other literary terms such as "dialectic," "tension," "irony," and "ambiguity" (12). This concept differs from dichotomy in its unifying principle; it emphasizes rather than divides. It refers to the "mutually defining" traits between the brothers' respective work (15). Although William's pluralism overshadows this polarity,

Henry displays this polarity as he progressively replaces 19th-century transcendentalism with psychological realism.

In his follow-up essay "Recollecting and Reexamining William and Henry," Hocks reviews the scholarship regarding the relationship between Henry and William James' work over the 24 years since he published *Henry James and Pragmatistic Thought*. Finding that most of the discussion at the time of this publication refuted any credible connection between the brothers' work, Hocks theorized William James' epistemology. He found that a philosophical perspective of Henry James' work can not only link him to a major philosopher but also open his work to postmodern analysis. Hocks reviews the scholarship written since his book's publication, affirming the "Henry-William connection as fundamentally apposite and positive" (281). William James contends that we cannot contrive an ethical philosophy based on skepticism, yet the moral philosopher must still maintain a speculative attitude, bearing in mind that every decision engenders a unique set of ideals without an exact precedent. Hocks concludes that Henry James' literature embodies this exact attitude.

Henry Adams approaches the brothers' relationship from a different angle. In "William James, Henry James, John La Farge, and the Foundations of Radical Empiricism," Adams discusses the personal and artistic relationship between John La Farge and the James brothers. Out of their discourse emerged "a new vision of reality," emphasizing the "perception of the object in the field of consciousness" over the external object itself (60). Adams foregrounds this vision's influence on the three friends' respective works. John La Farge depicts consciousness' perception of the world rather than mimetically representing it. Foreshadowing the French Impressionists, La Farge

integrates the subjective experience with the outer, material world. Similarly, Henry James' fiction accentuates sensation and consciousness, favoring the outer world's psychological impact and involving sparse action in which consciousness and interpretation replace event and setting. Likewise, William could attribute his ability to define experience, thought, and sensation to his training as a painter. Like La Farge, he shifts the epistemological focus from the ego to the consciousness, thereby blurring the line between subject and object and replacing materialism and idealism with the "world of pure experience." Each man preferred subjectivity over objectivity and reevaluated the traditional boundaries between consciousness and matter.

Another common focus I encountered involved the manner in which William James' theories of consciousness influenced literature in general. In *The Modern Psychological Novel*, Leon Edel discusses the spectrum of the types of psychology the reader finds in literature. The subjective narrative style of certain 20th-century authors introduces the reader to the character's associations of his or her perceptions of the outer world, creating a problematic relationship between the writer and the reader as well as between the writer and his or her characters. This nontraditional way of writing demands a new, active, creative method of interpretation in which the act of reading becomes a process of constructing the text's meaning. Edel reviews the Romantic and Symbolist origins of the stream-of-consciousness novel as well as the genre's autobiographical, poetic, self-examining, and often plotless characteristics. Henry James anticipated the movement, achieving psychological subjectivity by shifting the narrative point of view. Similarly, Tolstoy displayed an acute awareness of point of view and association in his efforts to capture perceptual experience as an omniscient narrator. Joyce credited

Édouard Dujardin with creating the internal monologue, which Edel defines as the unspoken expression of thought. For Proust, the subjective novel was a process of self-discovery in which thoughts and feelings constitute experience. For Joyce, introspective literature was an aesthetic, emotional, revelatory means by which to articulate evanescent time from perceptions giving rise to associations that focus the character's memory. Faulkner memorialized experience in order to protect it from time. Virginia Woolf poetically groped for the past in its present absence. These innovative approaches create a difficult task for critics, who must consciously recognize narrative content while maintaining an objective distance from the narrator. A "logic of subjectivity" results in which the reader must consider "point of view, discontinuity, simultaneity, [and] time" (198-99).

In "William James and the Art of Fiction," Ellwood Johnson extends Edel's conversation, proposing that William James' psychology greatly determined modern fiction's blurring the boundary between subject and object. James' ideas challenged "American Transcendental individualism" and "placed the self 'in time'" (285). Referencing James' third and fifth characters of thought, Johnson argues that James insisted that "we are constantly becoming rather than being" (285). James established the consciousness' selecting function as the source of the will and the locus of the self. Consciousness creates the outer world from which sensations proceed through its perceptions. As we come to believe in our constructions of the outer world, we act on those beliefs. Thus, our free will largely depends upon the degree to which we control our thoughts. This dependency implies that individuality, rather than ingenuity, determines the shape of history and society, which in turn create the conditions from which

individuals will emerge. James' aesthetics also imply that one appreciates beauty intellectually rather than emotionally or reflectively. As these ideas trickled down through early 20th-century culture, the narrative shifted from the omniscient point of view to a more subjective point of view contained within the time of the fictional work. As a result, modern American literature's defining attribute involves the self *comprised* of, rather than *resulting* from, both subjective and objective experience.

Gary Kuchar shares Edel's view of the problematic relationship between the writer and the reader, locating one such instance in Henry James' fiction. In "Henry James and the Phenomenal Reader," Kuchar compares themes in *The Wings of the Dove* to James' approach to conveying consciousness and imagination. Kuchar contends that James represents different existential stages of the self in relations to its past through an evolving style. James psychologically reveals to the reader Milly's struggle with her past to establish her identity. James invites the reader to anticipate the progressive movements of the characters' consciousnesses. Kuchar applies Paul Armstrong's argument that James' presentation of consciousness' broad comprehension also applies to the work's structure. To follow these movements, the reader must vigilantly observe the varying distances at which the narrator keeps him or her. The reader must also decipher narrative implications in order to grasp fully Milly's negotiation of death's defining relationship to life. Finally, the reader must follow the consciousness of the novel itself, joining Milly in her journey toward self-discovery.

I occasionally encountered scholars who dealt with the character's consciousness directly. One such article includes "Isabel Archer: The Architecture of Consciousness and the International Theme." In this publication, Elizabeth Sabiston positions Isabel Archer

in "a long line of romantic, imaginative, provincial heroines" who are "womanly, active, energetic" and independent (29). Like other authors in this tradition, Henry James creates an isolated, bookish woman seeking her own ideal identity in a patriarchal society. In *Portrait of a Lady*, James sketches of the incipient "New Woman" and vicariously explores the artist's role in a materialistic society through Isabel. Sabiston compares Isabel to similar 19th-century literary heroines and argues that, by foregrounding Isabel's consciousness, James presents it "architecturally" (30-31). James represents his characters and the novel's conflict with his buildings' varying architectural structures (32). The Albany house cultivates the idealistic naïveté that makes Isabel vulnerable to Madame Merle's and Gilbert Osmond's machinations later in the novel, culminating in Isabel's transition from the "perceiver" to the "perceived" (32-33). Gardencourt blends elements of European as well as American culture and exacerbates Isabel's idealism while simultaneously exposing her to the cultural perils that will eventually deceive and bind her. James ironically plays out the contradictions between the theory and practice of Isabel's idealism as well as Madame Merle's materialism. Isabel learns to read her fellow characters according to their dwellings: Lockleigh stands for Warburton's worldliness, the Crescentini resonates with Mrs. Touchett's imaginative deficiency, and Osmond's Florentine villa manifests his intellectual discouragement and suppression. Finally, Roccanera imprisons Isabel, holding her under her warden-husband's oppressive, reductionist eye. Isabel's redemption lies in the fact that she critically assesses Osmond in her consciousness' "structure" and thereby holds him captive (42). The tension between Isabel's "complex architecture of consciousness" and her denied creativity makes for an ambiguous conclusion to the work.

In "Levels of Knowing: Development of Consciousness in *The Wings of the Dove*," Linda Raphael discusses how analyzing characters' consciousnesses can complicate a narrative. We must not only remember that our consciousness is not the character's but also maintain an awareness of what the character acknowledges and ignores. Ruth Bernard Yeazell observes that, in James' late novels, the reader struggles to differentiate between the narrator's and the character's voice. The reader encounters the same difficulty concerning the novel's emotional "vision" (60). The narrative voice takes over and creates distance between the reader and the character. This narrative language continues even when the speaker describes the character's thoughts and emotions. In some cases, this technique elucidates characters' internal monologues without making them completely accountable for their decisions. By applying this technique, James partly affects the reader's impression of his characters.

Karen Halttunen comes the closest to sharing my theoretical objective. In "'Through the Cracked and Fragmented Self': William James and *The Turn of the Screw*," Halttunen reviews the scholarly debate regarding whether the novella is "a ghost story or a Freudian study in delusion" (472). Psychoanalysis provides a natural, scientific reading that overshadows the 19th-century "literature of the fantastic" genre (473). Halttunen proposes that William James' psychology serves as a "psychology of the fantastic" that wavers between the natural and supernatural realms, providing a superior reading to 20th-century psychoanalytic interpretations (473). This psychology of the fantastic directly addresses phenomena such as hallucinations and dissociation and may have indirectly influenced Henry James while he wrote the work. Halttunen first shows how William James' "hypnagogic state" (i.e., the suspension between sleeping and

waking states of mind) can explain the governess' heightened "suggestibility" to apparitions (474). This consideration coupled with the governess' intensified emotional and intuitive sensitivity provides a more plausible explanation for her eccentric behavior than does Freudian hysterics. William James' study on hysteria focuses on multiple personalities, which may better explain the events in *The Turn of the Screw*. That the governess primarily perceives Quint and Jessel in reflective surfaces may even indicate that she not only relates to the apparitions but also schizophrenically plays the role of a specter herself. Halttunen speculates that multiple personalities may account for the governess' love and lust for her employer as well as her passion for the children. Similar to Frederick Myers' arguments, James' theories also permit viewing the governess as "a medium who commands supernormal powers of cognition" that enable her to witness paranormal activity her fellow characters cannot (481-82). Although James' ideas cannot "present a simple key" to the text, they do offer "a subtle range of possible interpretations of the governess' state" as well as "a scientific approach to the central ambiguity of the tale" (483). Moreover, the hysteria from which James' sister Alice suffered and the brothers' involvement in the Society for Psychical Research may have influenced both Henry's and William's views of abnormal psychic states. Halttunen concludes by suggesting that William's condescending reviews of his brother's work may have provoked Henry to write *The Turn of the Screw* as a parody, mocking William's ambivalence toward the supernatural and asserting "the superiority of the literary imagination over scientific thought" (487).

Each of these publications address William James' consciousness theory in relation to literature. My contribution to this conversation involves a particular agenda. I

summarize William James' stream-of-thought psychology in order to construct a literary theory from it. I briefly review traditional psychoanalytic literary theory and construct a contrasting literary theory of consciousness. In order to demonstrate its versatility, I then apply that theory to two of Henry James' works that offer elements of consciousness readily lending themselves to analysis. In my first reading, I evaluate Christopher Newman's relationship with Benjamin Babcock in *The American* by picking apart each character's attention. I proceed to examine how narrative memory drastically shifts the subject and theme from the title character to the narrator in "Brooksmith." My argument throughout the thesis contends that reading consciousness reveals insights that are not only different from but also at least as significant as psychoanalytic and other readings.

II. A Pretty Piece of Ingenuity[1]:

An Overview of William James' Theory of Consciousness

"It is impossible for us to imagine 'mind,' as we understand that concept in the twentieth

century, without…a Jamesian notion of consciousness" (Kress 283).

In his 1890 publication, *Principles of Psychology*, William James introduces his

theory of consciousness. In the chapter "The Methods and Snares of Psychology," he

establishes that psychological inquiry must always begin with "introspective

observation," which James defines as "the looking into our own minds and reporting

what we find there" (1: 185). Thus, he turns from the empirical approach and examines

the mind from the inside out, designating the "fact of thinking" as our study's point of

origin (1: 224).

Taking for granted that some sort of thinking actually occurs within the mind,

James assumes that even the most skeptical critic acknowledges his or her consciousness,

regardless of any other misgivings he or she maintains about the world. Furthermore,

James assumes that each person can discriminate between his or her consciousness and

the *objects* that fill the consciousness. James considers these two points "the most

fundamental of all the postulates of Psychology" (1: 185).

From this basis, James outlines "five characters in thought" (1: 225). The first

character states that "thought tends to personal form" (1: 225). Psychology cannot

question the phenomenon of the personal self. Hence, several different minds

simultaneously entertain several different thoughts. James asserts as an "elementary

[1] In "Does Consciousness Exist?" William James describes consciousness as a function rather than an entity. Shifting his focus to "pure experience," or the "one primal stuff or material in the world…of which everything is composed" (2), James reflects that his stream-of-thought theory was "very pretty as a piece of ingenuity" (19).

psychic fact" that each person's thoughts exclusively belong to that person and cannot shift from one mind to another (1: 226).

For example, if my friend shows me his new pipe, we can admire it and discuss its various qualities. But we each think our own thoughts about the pipe even when we are in complete agreement. So when I think, "What a marvelous pipe!" at the exact same moment my friend thinks, "What a marvelous pipe!," a single thought does not coexist within our minds. We think two, individual thoughts even though each thought expresses the same opinion about the same object. Accordingly, James confines his discussion to the "personal consciousness" we experience daily (1: 225-26).

Vivas considers the second character of thought – that "thought is in constant change" (*Principles of Psychology* 1: 229) – to be "the most interesting feature of William James's conception of the mind" (Vivas 589). Although one mind's thoughts are utterly isolated from another's, the thoughts within each mind link to every other thought, creating an infinite chain of cognition within each personal mind. Rather than suggesting that states of consciousness have no duration, James declares just the opposite – each personal state of mind runs unbroken throughout one's life and is constantly evolving. This constant change implies that each state of mind is unique. Even if one returns to a thought one previously entertained, the revisiting thought cannot duplicate the previous thought. It is an entirely new thought unto itself.

James references Shadworth Hodgson's observation that a "sequence of different feelings" constitutes the succession of consciousness (1: 230). James refutes the philosophical idea that, amid our complex string of conscious states, fundamental Lockian "simple ideas" remain constant (1: 230). Concrete objects and abstract realities

may and unquestionably do recur, but we occasionally confuse our thoughts of the objects with the objects themselves. As a result, when we encounter these objects and realities on multiple occasions, we believe our thoughts of them are identical to our *original* thoughts of them. Every encounter with the same object, however, produces a new thought that considers the object *as well as* our earlier thought(s) of the object. Every experience evokes a sensation that "corresponds to some cerebral action" (1: 232). Every cerebral action in some way modifies the brain. An identical sensation can only take place within an "unmodified brain," which is psychologically impossible (1: 232). Therefore, we cannot possibly experience two identical sensations even from the same object because "whilst we think, our brain changes [sic]" (1: 234). Each past "brain-state" in Hodgson's succession comprises a part of the present brain-state, thereby removing the possibility of ever returning to any previous brain-state (1: 234).

So when I visited the Pantheon in Rome four years ago, I thought about how beautifully the sunlight shone in through the oculus. When I saw a documentary on the Pantheon last week, I again thought about how beautifully the sunlight shone in through the oculus four years ago. However, I did not think the same thought twice. I entertained last week's thought in the context of everything else I had experienced since I traveled to Italy. The gnocchi I ate the next day, the "Agnus Dei" I sang with the choir in *Il Duomo*, the plane ride back to O'Hare, the Cubs game I attended in Cincinnati later that summer, my wedding two years later, the stressful drive from Charleston to Blacksburg in a moving truck, the hours spent reading William James last semester, the cup of coffee I drank that morning, and the millions of other objects and events I had experienced since I stood before Vittorio Emanuele II's tomb reframed last week's thought of the sun

beautifully shining through the oculus of the Pantheon. Even if I return to the Pantheon, stand before Vittorio Emanuele II's tomb, and think about how beautifully the sunlight shines through the oculus, my thought at that moment would still not be identical my observation the first time it passed through my mind.

The import of consciousness' constant change reveals a deficiency in the use of language that brings about mistaking present thoughts for resurrected past thoughts. We tend to name our thoughts after their objects, resulting in the difficulty distinguishing between the two. Complex objects further complicate the problem. If an object contains parts, we erroneously assume that segments of thought divide up our thought of the whole object. Nevertheless, that a thought remains simple or singular no matter how complex its object still holds true.

If I think about my mandolin, for instance, which consists of a teardrop soundboard with two f-holes, a pinblock, four double courses of strings, a floating bridge, a rosewood fret board with 21 frets, a nut, and a stock with eight tuning pegs, I do not think one thought that consists of 41 subparts. I simply think one thought – my mandolin. If I think of the strings, I do not think one thought comprised of eight smaller thoughts. I simply think one thought – mandolin strings. This defies "associationist-psychology," which declares that separate ideas compose thoughts in a one-to-one ratio with the parts of a complex object (1: 277). Were this the case, complex objects would dislocate our thoughts and disrupt the continuity of consciousness.

James responds to this problem at great length with his third character: "within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous" (1: 237). James defines continuous as "without breach, crack, or division" (1: 237). Having earlier established

that thoughts cannot transfer from one mind to another, James limits his discussion to breaches within the personal mind.

James refers to interruptions in consciousness as "time-gaps" (1: 237). We are aware of some time-gaps (e.g., sleep) and unaware of others. Because we cannot *feel* the time-gaps of which we are unaware, the consciousness does not register them. Furthermore, the consciousness bridges even the time-gaps of which we *are* aware. When someone wakes up in the morning, his or her consciousness reaches back and connects with his or her final waking thoughts. The consciousness recognizes these thoughts as its own and claims them as part of the personal self. Because the time-gap cannot break the "community of self," it cannot break the stream-of-consciousness that identifies its past self in its present self (1: 239).

James compares consciousness to a moving body of water because it is "unjointed and flowing," not segmented as the expression "train of thought" implies (1: 239). One object or another *always* occupies consciousness (1: 240). Consciousness seems fragmented only if we disregard the fleeting transitions that constitute as much of consciousness as the more "significant" thoughts (1: 240). James calls this oversight the "superficial introspective view" (1: 240) and attributes it to the same misappropriation of language I discussed earlier (1: 241).

Thus, the stream-of-consciousness includes both "substantive parts" and "transitive parts" (1: 243). Substantive parts consist of "sensorial imaginations" upon which we can meditate "in periods of comparative rest" (1: 243). Thinking's primary purpose entails moving from one substantive part to the next. Transitive parts, on the other hand, "lead us from one substantive conclusion to another" (1: 243). We cannot

capture or analyze the transitive parts as they occur. If we stop to ponder them, they vanish, or as Kress observes, "'Stopping' the thought is equivalent to 'annihilating' it" (1: 267). The substantive parts always eclipse the transitive parts if we try to reflect upon them. Consequently, we do not even recognize that transitive parts occur at all and regard the substantive parts as independent, self-contained thoughts. Once more, our use of language interferes with our understanding of transitive parts. We emphasize substantive parts because we tend to correlate names with objects. However, we fail to register transitive parts when no name exists for such phenomena.

This issue compels James to address feelings of tendency. He makes the distinction that not having a name for a mental state does not mean that it does not occur or is less "cognitive" than states to which we have given names (1: 249). James illustrates his point, comparing the situation to struggling to remember someone's name. Even if we cannot recall a person's name, that person still exists. James calls these unnamable states "consciousnesses of emptiness" that stand as unique states and are not equivalent to nonexistence (1: 251-52).

James' revolutionary argument is that these tendencies help make up the stream-of-consciousness. Continuing to compare thought to water, James rejects the notion that our consciousness consists of isolated "pails" of thought. He agrees that pails of thought may float in the stream as substantive parts. However, these pails still drift along in the current of consciousness that serves as a "halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts" them (1: 255). Still part of the stream, these transitive tendencies make up the "*internodal* consciousness," which gives us "the sense of continuity" but only serves to fill the gaps between the substantive parts (1: 265). The penumbra contains our tendencies of where

our thoughts are going and from whence they have come. How far we project or reflect depends on how fresh our minds are at any given moment.

James calls our vague ideas or general notions of an object a "psychic overtone, suffusion, or fringe" (1: 258). The psychic overtone floats in the penumbra among the stream's other transitive parts as "knowledges-*about*" the object. Once we focus our attention on the object, trying to put it into words or pin it down in a stable thought, the transitive parts flow into a pail, thereby becoming a substantive "acquaintance" (1: 259).

Whenever we take an interest in something or try to solve a problem, we search the psychic overtone for relations that will lead us to some resolution. Whether we find these relations in images, sounds, or any other form makes no difference. We sense relations to our objective in the psychic overtone that either brings us closer to or takes us farther away from our goal. Again, this substantive goal serves as our thought's "conclusion," "topic," or "meaning" (1: 260). This is the "word or phrase or particular image, or practical attitude or resolve" that we remember or take away from our meditations (1: 260). We arrive at the conclusion when we encounter a relation that appeals to our interest. Our interest then "*arrests* [the relation]…, induces attention upon it and makes us treat it in a substantive way" (1: 260). Once we reach the conclusion, we typically forget the psychic overtone, relations, and all other transitive parts that guided us. As a result, two people may arrive at an identical, though personal, substantive conclusion by means of very different transitive approaches.

James' fourth character states that "human thought appears to deal with objects independent of itself" so that "it is cognitive, or possesses the function of knowing" (1: 271). He contends that "*sameness* in a multiplicity of objective appearances is…the basis

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of our belief in realities outside of thought" (1: 272). In other words, because more than one person can perceive a single object, we believe that single object exists in the real world and not simply within our imaginations. Contrast this seemingly obvious principle with that of Absolute Idealism, which holds that the object exists in reality because we think of it in our minds. Were this true, no two people could ever think of the same object because two personal consciousnesses would create two identical physical objects rather than one, single object. Since this plainly is not the case, we accept that objects exist in the real world independently of our thoughts of them. Thus, what James calls "the *psychological* point of view" states that we believe in "realities no one single thought either possesses or engenders, but which all may contemplate and know" (1: 272).

Returning to my pipe analogy, I can very simply illustrate these principles. The psychological point of view's first aspect extends the character of personal thought. When my friend shows me his pipe and we both comment, "What a marvelous pipe!," we not only think our own, separate thoughts about one pipe but also confirm each other's sanity. For instance, if the pipe in question did not exist, and I exclaimed, "What a marvelous pipe!," I would be insane or silly because I would be complimenting something that did not exist as though it did. Were I to make this comment as a sane person, the pipe would exist in my imagination, but my friend would still not see it. Likewise, if my friend showed me his pipe and praised it, and I responded, "What pipe?," Again, I would probably be suffering from some disorder that inhibited me from seeing something that existed in reality. Hence, when two people can contemplate and discuss an object or event before them, their personal thoughts confirm the object or event as real and each other as sane.

The psychological point of view refutes Absolute Idealism in this scenario because my friend and I think two, autonomous thoughts about one object. Were Absolute Idealism true, as soon as I thought about my friend's pipe, another pipe would materialize out of my thought of the pipe. Although this would be a glorious mental power, unfortunately, neither I nor anyone I know possesses it. Consequently, this particular pipe singularly exists, and my friend and I and anyone else who perceives it have the ability to think our own, personal thoughts about it.

By the time we reach adulthood, we not only perceive things but also are *aware* that we perceive them. Some philosophers disagree with James, claiming that we cannot think of any object at all unless we are aware that we perceive it. Otherwise, they argue, we could not distinguish between the object we think of and ourselves who think of it. James disregards this philosophy as a classic example of the psychologist's fallacy. The fallacy occurs when we assume that everyone else knows an object to the same extent or in the same way that we know it or when we presuppose that someone is aware of himself or herself in the same way that we are aware of him or her. In other words, we may still perceive an object even if we are not aware that we perceive it.

James goes on to clarify his psychological definition of the word "Object" (1: 275). As an example, he offers the sentence, "Columbus discovered America in 1492" (1: 275). Grammatically, the object is "America." Conversationally, we might think of the object as the topic – "discovering America." Psychologically speaking, however, the thought's Object is nothing short of "Columbus-discovered-America-in-1492" (1: 275). For psychology not only considers the "subject of existence" but also the "act of knowledge" (1: 275). "America" as the Object may lead us to think of less than the

psychological object because we may disregard the explorer and the historical context. Conversely, "America" may also lead us to think of too much if we associate the thought's Object with "The Star-Spangled Banner," Mickey Mouse, and General Motors. Thus, the thought's Object is "neither more nor less than all that the thought thinks, exactly as the thought thinks it" (1: 276).

James' final character describes thought as "interested more in one part of its object than in another" and that it "welcomes and rejects, or chooses, all the while it thinks" (1: 284). We observe this character in moments of "selective attention" or "deliberative will" (1: 284). Yet consciousness exercises this discretion more than we realize, for we cannot give an equal amount of attention to every stimulus at once. We constantly and unwittingly emphasize a few objects while ignoring most of what we encounter. James reminds us that even our senses are "organs of selection" (1: 284). Likewise, our attention chooses items of interest and squelches the rest. We name what interests us and disregard all other objects that are just as present and deserving of names. Even among our selections we choose certain attributes to represent the object even at times when it does not display that specific attribute. For example, we consider grass green even when it appears black at night.

This selective process significantly impacts our experiences. Our attention's focus determines what we take away from an experience, and what we take away from an experience determines our "empirical thought" (1: 286). Beyond empiricism, the mind combines selected objects through reasoning, aesthetically eliminates undesirable qualities, and ethically determines future situations. And as each individual consciousness

accentuates the reality's particular aspects that interest it, each consciousness that perceives the world creates its own perspective of that world.

Most of us make similar selections to those of our friends, families, and communities. For example, my father used to listen to motion picture soundtracks, so when my family watches a movie, we are more attentive to the musical score whereas my college friends do not even register it. In one respect, however, we all make a choice remarkably different from everyone else. We all more intensely devote attention to anything we call "me" or "mine" than anything we consider "not-me" or "not-mine" (1: 289). No matter how selfless and thoughtful we may try to be, we can never choose for someone else in the same way he or she will choose for his or her "me." Thus, we all divide "the whole universe into two halves" in exactly the same way, resulting in no two identical orders of interest (1: 289).

In short, James' stream-of-thought theory states that consciousness is a personal, evolving, unified, objective, selective awareness of experience. Certain aspects, such as the difference between thoughts and their objects, the inability to think the same thought more than once, and thought's unbroken continuity, may challenge popular notions of consciousness. Yet other points such as the idea that every consciousness belongs solely to one person and the idea that consciousness selects and dismisses objects according to interest, seem like common sense. So how does one develop common sense into a literary theory? Perhaps collating James' ideas with another prominent theory from the turn of the 20th-century that theorists have adapted and employed in literary analysis will reveal that the five characters of thought are not as obvious as one might initially assume.

III. Constructing a Literary Theory of Consciousness

1. Reviewing Psychoanalysis

While James was composing the United States' first psychology textbook, an Austrian neurologist was devising experimental treatments for his patients suffering from hysteria. Sigmund Freud encountered some patients whose symptoms had no neurological explanation (Myers 576). He speculated that these unaccountable symptoms resulted from shameful passions that, buried deep within his patients' psyches, were struggling for recognition (Richter 1106-07). Freud developed his exploration into "the first comprehensive theory of personality," what we now know as psychoanalysis (Myers 576). His foundational concepts include the topographical model of the mind, the drives, the defenses, infantile sexuality, and dream work.

Today, we inextricably associate Freud and his work with our concept of "the unconscious." Freud's unconscious consists of the inaccessible region of the mind that lies beyond and yet significantly determines much of consciousness' content and activity (Barry 92). Some of the unconscious' content manifests itself in our work, beliefs, and habits (Myers 577).

Freud believed that the human psyche consists of the id, the superego, and the ego (Barry 93). He compared the mind to an iceberg. The ego and part of the superego are exposed while the id, which makes up most of the mind, is submerged. Human personality results from the ongoing conflict between these three realms of the mind (Myers 576-77).

The id is Freud's term for the unconscious proper (Barry 93). Driven by the pleasure principle, the id seeks the instant satisfaction of its instinctive impulses "to

survive, reproduce, and aggress" (Myers 577). In contrast, the superego seeks the ideal rather than the real, compelling us to do what we *should* as opposed to what we *may* (Myers 578). In relationship to Freud's iceberg metaphor, the superego consists of two parts – one "above the waterline" and one below. The former level, or ego-ideal, projects our ideal images of ourselves and the world. The conscience, on the other hand, records our success or failure in achieving or realizing the ideal. It resides in the unconscious yet still qualifies as part of the superego rather than the id. A responsible, respectful life proceeds from a healthy superego (Richter 1107-08) whereas an overdeveloped superego can lead to a virtuous yet guilt-ridden existence (Myers 578).

Finally, the ego is Freud's term for consciousness (Barry 93). The reality principle motivates the ego to fulfill the id's desires while satisfying the superego's demands (Myers 578). Along the ego's outer reaches lies the preconscious, which consists of thoughts, ideas, and memories that we do not think about but can access if we direct our attention to them (Richter 1107).

The id's psychic energies, or drives, create the unconscious and consist of two conflicting instincts. Each drive's "primary process" involves seeking satisfaction rather than sustenance or survival. We practice cathexis as a secondary process when we naturally channel the drives toward a person, object, or idea (Richter 1107-08). Freud defined Eros as the "life instinct" that includes the sexual drive he called the libido (Barry 93), the latter of which scholars frequently use in reference to the drives collectively (Richter 1107). According to Freud, the "death instinct," Thanatos, opposes Eros (Barry 93). We all possess self-destructive proclivities that we learn to discharge by means of either outward aggression or more socially acceptable pursuits such as artistic expression

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or athletic competition (Myers 719). Thanatos exacerbates the fear of ultimate loneliness fulfilled by either dying alone or experiencing abandonment when a loved one dies. Fear of loneliness becomes destructive when death so terrifies someone that it inhibits or even incapacitates him or her from leading a healthy life (Tyson 24-25).

Freud postulated that life's first few years shape personality as children pass through three psychosexual stages. The id progresses through three erogenous zones in its quest for pleasure. If children move out of a stage prior to resolving its conflicts, they may develop corresponding fixations later in life such as an oral fixation or becoming anal retentive (Myers 578-79).

The first psychosexual stage is the Oral Stage, in which mouth is the infant's initial locus of pleasure. Freud speculates that the anus gratifies the child's Eros around two years of age, at which time he or she enters the Anal Stage (Richter 1107). Progressing on to the Phallic Stage, a young boy's desire for genital stimulation cultivates an unconscious sexual desire for the mother called the Oedipus complex. Freud also toyed with the idea that young girls undergo a similar experience called the Electra complex (Myers 578-79). Children of either sex lay exclusive claim to their mothers' attention and grow jealous of their fathers and siblings, perceiving them as rivals. Love for and dependency upon the father partly checks the child's rage along with his or her fear of the father's retribution. Believing that the mother prefers the father because he has a penis, a boy develops castration complex. He fears that the father has deprived his mother of her phallus and will do the same to him if he rebels. Proceeding from the same conviction, a girl's fear evolves into penis envy. She perceives herself as having already been castrated and seeks the father's approval (and eventually a husband's) as

compensation for her phallic deficiency (Richter 1108). Children overcome this conflict by means of identification whereby they model themselves after the same-sex parent, acquiring their "gender identity[ies]" and strengthening their superegos (Myers 579).

When the ego cannot reconcile the conflicting demands of the id and the superego, unaccountable anxiety results, and the ego unconsciously deploys its defenses (Myers 579-80) in order to confine repressed issues to the unconscious (Tyson 17). The defenses include several psychological mechanisms that protect one from dealing with undesirable issues (Barry 94) by rerouting the drives (Richter 1107) while simultaneously altering one's perception of reality to varying degrees (Myers 580). If the defenses fail, crisis or trauma ensues, and repressed issues break free into the consciousness, overwhelming the ego (Tyson 23).

Anxiety can call forth a number of defenses, including repression, projection[2], sublimation[3], rationalization[4], transference[5], displacement[6], parapraxis, reaction formation[7], regression[8], symbolization[9], selective[10] and screen memory[11], denial[12], and

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[2] We project when we recognize our own negative traits in someone else while ignoring them in ourselves (Barry 93).
[3] Sublimation occurs when one channels repressed energy into constructive activity (Barry 93).
[4] We rationalize when we refuse to admit our actions' true motives and justify them on other grounds (Myers 580).
[5] Transference occurs when the patient redirects long-repressed feelings toward the therapist (Barry 93).
[6] Displacement redirects aggressive or sexual feelings from the person or object causing them to a more appropriate person or object (Myers 580).
[7] Reaction formation consists of the ego presenting unacceptable desires as their opposites (Myers 580).
[8] Regression occurs when one relives a previous psychological state (Tyson 18).
[9] Similar to displacement, symbolization is a form of cathexis in which one replaces a person, object, or idea with a metaphorical representation (Richter 1107).
[10] Selective memory involves editing or even completely forgetting uncomfortable memories (Tyson 18).
[11] Screen memory consists of insignificant recollections that conceal or replace more important memories (Barry 94).
[12] Denial occurs when one does not believe that unsettling issues exist or that troubling events ever took place (Tyson 18).

avoidance[13]. Repression serves as the foundation for all other defenses (Myers 580) and occurs when one disregards or censors thoughts and emotions one does not want to confront (Barry 92-93). Repression preserves one's self-image and mitigates anxiety (Myers 370). Life experiences, such as loss, can arouse repressed issues (Myers 637), or they may symbolically emerge in our dreams and parapraxes, or "Freudian slips" (Myers 580). Repression begins at a very early age (Myers 629), and the majority of repressed issues concern events from childhood, which accounts for why no one can recall infantile sexuality (Myers 580-81).

Because the unconscious more freely expresses itself during sleep (Tyson 19), repressed passions also surface in our dreams (Myers 577). Along with the defenses, dream work supposedly confirms the unconscious' existence and provides the most accessible ingress to the subconscious (Richter 1107). Freud theorized that real events and desires symbolically appear in dreams (Barry 94). He believed that a dream acts as a "psychic safety valve," or an outlet for unacceptable desires (Myers 282). Thus, dream interpretation uncovers portions of the veiled unconscious content (Myers 577). The defenses continue to protect even the sleeping mind by means of a process called primary revision (Tyson 20).

Displacement occurs when someone or something appears in a dream in the form of another person or object somehow related to it. Condensation takes place when a single dream image represents multiple objects (Barry 94). Freud named the recalled plot of a dream the dream's manifest content (Myers 281). It is the "censored, symbolic version of its latent content" (Myers 282). A dream's latent content comprises

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[13] Avoidance entails an aversion to people or circumstances that stir up repressed issues (Tyson 18).

unconscious, erotic desires too unsettling for overt expression (Myers 282). Secondary revision is a conscious process by which we censor the manifest content in order to ignore any disturbing psychic issues they may imply (Tyson 20).

Psychoanalysis was controversial in its day, and just as many skeptics have their doubts now. Regardless of what the reader thinks of psychoanalysis as a social science, he or she can still apply its principles to literature without personally ascribing to them. From this brief overview, I will go on to discuss a few options the psychoanalytic critic has at his or her disposal and contrast them to the perspective through which the consciousness theorist reads literature.

2. Psychoanalytic vs. Consciousness Literary Theory

"The novel...has always been first and foremost 'psychological'" (Edel 203).

i. Psychoanalytic Literary Theory

Social psychologist David Myers recognizes psychoanalysis' lasting effects: "Although Freud's current influence in psychological science has diminished, his influence lingers in literary and film interpretation, psychiatry, and pop psychology" (576). Classic psychoanalytic literary theory develops from Freudian dream work (Barry 94) and psychoanalytic Thematic Apperception Tests, in which the patient tells a story based on a prompt (Myers 581). Like literature, dreams metaphorically present implicit meaning that requires interpretation. Freud assumed that the observant psychoanalyst can trace dream imagery back to repressed issues through a chain of associations (Barry 94-95). Psychoanalytic theorists can interpret the author's mind, a character's mind, or even their own minds (Richter 1109). Psychoanalytic theory assumes that literary characters are not real people but that they represent *realistic* psychological experiences. Freud developed his theories after studying human behavior; therefore, any artistic work displaying human activity naturally contains elements a psychoanalyst can interpret (Tyson 29-32). However, the psychoanalytic theorist must constantly maintain an awareness that he or she can interpret only the psychic material the text presents and formulate his or her conclusions accordingly (Richter 1109). The following list includes a few features psychoanalytic theorists consider when analyzing the author, the character(s), or even themselves as readers.

ii. Objectives of Psychoanalytic Theory

1. Distinguish between conscious and unconscious elements in the mind.

2. Focus on the unconscious contents of the mind.

3. Detect the presence of defense mechanisms.

4. Determine what repressed issues psychoanalytic symptoms may indicate.

5. Notice chains of associations and what results those associations produce.

6. Recognize regression involving elements of the phallic stage (e.g., Oedipus/Electra complex, castration complex, penis envy, &c).

7. Look for evidence of Thanatos or Eros.

8. Pay close attention to dreams.

9. View wordplay in terms of parapraxis.

iii. Consciousness Literary Theory

In "William James and the Unconscious: Redressing a Century-Old Misunderstanding," Joel Weinberger opposes the popular belief that William James refuted psychoanalysis' theories of the unconscious processes. Weinberger argues that this misunderstanding arises from a problem of terminology. The 19th-century definition of the "unconscious" does not denote what it does in contemporary psychology. Weinberger insists not only that James' writings advocate our current conception of the unconscious but also that James even contributed to the study. Until very recently, however, psychology scholars have erroneously cited James as the unconscious' enemy. In truth, James associated the word "unconscious" with Schopenhauer's and von Hartmann's arguments, which do not correspond with the current denotation of the unconscious. Despite his ten proofs against the "unconscious" in Chapter VI of *Principles of Psychology*, James bolsters what we now understand as the unconscious in

other writings, though under different names. Weinberger consults James' letters and others' personal testimony that James developed an excited interest in Freud's work.

If the Jamesian and Freudian psychologies are not at odds with each other, the reader should not consider consciousness theory in opposition to psychoanalytic theory. Like the psychologies from which theorists have adapted them, the literary theories merely emphasize different realms of the human mind. Halttunen observes that "a Jamesian interpretation need not entirely displace the Freudian approach;" however, she suggests that, in some cases, "it may prove more useful" (474). Psychoanalytic theory almost exclusively concentrates on the id and the unconscious superego. Consciousness theory, on the other hand, focuses on substantive and transitive parts of the consciousness, which, in Freudian terms, equate to the ego, the preconscious, and the conscious superego. The easiest way to understand the difference between consciousness theory and psychoanalytic theory is to imagine Freud's iceberg metaphor. Psychoanalytic theorists analyze the "submerged" portion of the character's mind whereas the consciousness theorist reads the "exposed" part. The reader could conceivably conduct a psychoanalytic reading and a consciousness reading of the same text and discover little to no disagreement between the two. In fact, the two theories may even overlap at certain points. That they may not contradict each other, however, does not mean that they produce the same conclusions. Consciousness theory's value lies in the fact that it evaluates the percepts and concepts of which characters are aware, which imply vastly different conclusions than those which the unconscious' repressed issues suggest. The following list includes a few features consciousness theorists may consider when analyzing the author, the character(s), or even themselves.

iv. Objectives of Consciousness Theory

1. Isolate thoughts of individual minds and recognize them as personal to that particular consciousness.

2. Record substantive parts of consciousness and speculate how transitive parts flow between them.

3. Observe that each substantive part, or thought, is unique and never an exact duplicate of any other thought.

4. Remember that thought never stops and that transitive parts always fill any supposed gaps.

5. Identify how the consciousness practices selective interest.

6. Recognize that consciousness registers unselected objects as transitive parts for a time.

7. Differentiate between thought and the object of the thought.

8. Acknowledge that a thought contains no less than its entire content.

By promoting the reading of consciousness in literature, I am, in essence, proposing that theorists act like psychologists by treating the characters and their circumstances as if they were real. In a sense, the reader lays each character "on the couch" and evaluates his or her experience as the reader learns it. However, I strongly caution the reader to observe James' admonitions, especially concerning the psychologist's fallacy. Theorists must always strive to be as objective as possible even though complete objectivity is unattainable. Everyone reads from a subjective point of view and can easily imbue a text with his or her own life experiences if reading carelessly. The reader must not unreasonably assume that the characters know everything

he or she knows. Even if the characters do, the reader cannot assume that they know them in the same ways that he or she does. Characters may also perceive themselves differently than the reader perceives them.

Furthermore, characters do not automatically understand themselves or their surroundings after the same fashions as their fellow characters. Granted, without making certain assumptions, the reader would be able to draw few conclusions, if any at all. I mention the psychologist's fallacy, however, to underscore the importance of exercising discretion and "self-positioning" when reviewing a character's consciousness. Considering consciousness theory's objectives, I now demonstrate its application.

IV. Application

1. Philosophy of Theory

My interpretations require a few remarks regarding my theoretical philosophy. The reader may choose from several available theories and even multiple approaches *within* those theories in order to interpret a literary work. One of the benefits of reading consciousness in literature is the theory's flexibility. However, this flexibility mandates that I specify my personal method so that the reader knows what to expect.

In my analysis, I abide by one of Wimsatt and Beardsley's principles regarding the Intentional Fallacy. Specifically, I concur that "the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art" because "an author…may better achieve his [or her] original intention" (811-12). Likewise, the author may fail in his or her objective or simply accomplish something different than he or she intended. However, I am not conducting a New Critical reading of literature. One of the great ironies of literary history may be that Wimsatt and Beardsley probably *intended* for their readers to practice their principles within New Criticism's purview. But this aspect of their own work made their intentions of no concern to the reader, hence the spate of every critical theory one could imagine after the fall of New Criticism. Wimsatt and Beardsley unwittingly opened the theoretical floodgates when they published their now widely anthologized article. So when I say that I observe the Intentional Fallacy, I strictly mean that I apply my theory of consciousness with the assumption that Henry James well may have, in his own words, "produced…a result beyond his conscious intention" ("The Middle Years" 214). As much as I am able, I exclusively conduct my analysis based only on the text.

However, reading consciousness differs from New Criticism in the sense that it approaches literature with a predetermined agenda. I disregard elements of the narratives that do not contribute to my objectives. Consequently, a literary theory of consciousness falls short of New Criticism's organic evaluation even if it works exclusively with the text.

I attribute my reasons for adhering to the text to my initial studies in music prior to "converting" to literature. Music students typically do not mix theory, history, and criticism. Each focus has its own domain and responsibility. History focuses on the context in which composers create their pieces, theory picks apart compositions to discover how they "work," and criticism evaluates the quality of a composition. I discovered as an English student that my new discipline's survey and theory courses jumbled all of these concentrations together into a motley conglomerate. I do not mean to subjugate history or criticism. In fact, I esteem them as highly as theory, and I continue to write essays in those genres as well as any possible combination of the three. However, the following readings consist of strictly theory. Hence, I do not comment on William's influence, autobiographical implications, the value of the works, or anything irrelevant to examining characters' consciousnesses within the literature.

Whether the reader agrees with my philosophy or not, my application directly proceeds from it. I stated in the last chapter that, similar to psychoanalytic readings, reading consciousness figuratively puts at least one character "on the couch." The theorist may lay as many characters on the couch as he or she pleases. My first reading contrasts Christopher Newman's and Benjamin Babcock's selective consciousnesses, and my

second reading examines the ways memory operates in the consciousnesses of the "Brooksmith" narrator.

2. Investigating "Mighty Mysteries[14]":

Contrasting the Attention of Newman and Babcock in *The American*

Discussing his fifth character of consciousness, William James constructs a scenario illustrating how consciousness selects some objects and dismisses others:

> Let four men make a tour in Europe. One will bring home only picturesque impressions – costumes and colors, parks and views and works of architecture, pictures and statues. To another all this will be non-existent; and distances and prices, populations and drainage-arrangements, door and window-fastenings, and other useful statistics will take their place. A third will give a rich account of the theatres, restaurants, and public balls, and naught beside; whilst the fourth will perhaps have been so wrapped in his own subjective broodings as to tell little more than a few names of places through which he passed. Each has selected, out of the same mass of presented objects, those which suited his private interest and has made his experience thereby. (1: 286-87)

A strikingly similar episode occurs in Henry James' 1877 novel *The American*. Christopher Newman, an enormously successful American businessman, has grown tired of his hectic life and has embarked on a tour of Europe. After visiting an American couple in Paris, Newman sets out to explore the rest of the continent and meets a Unitarian minister from Massachusetts named Benjamin Babcock. Despite their remarkably different personalities, the two men enjoy each other's company and enter into "a sort of traveller's partnership" (68). They spend almost a month together,

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[14] While reflecting on Babcock's letter, Newman tries to determine the accuracy of Babcock's assessment of their friendship and concludes that "these are mighty mysteries" (73).

sightseeing through Germany and Switzerland. When they arrive in Venice, however, Babcock confesses that he has been carrying a burden regarding their friendship. Troubled that Newman "take[s] things too easily," Babcock parts from Newman and leaves for Milan (71). After a few days, Newman receives a letter from Babcock, who explains that, although he has a "great personal esteem" for Newman, the businessman does not recognize the seriousness of life and art.

Babcock's anomalous behavior has elicited varying reactions. J.P. Telotte observes that Babcock suffers from "a fixed perspective on things" (30), and Alan Holder attributes his conduct to an "anxious, vigilant conscience" (493). Alfred Habegger describes him as one of Henry James' "unprepossessing New England clerics" (68), and even William James considered Babcock "a morbid little clergyman" Henry modeled after him (qtd. in Torsney 169). Regardless of what one thinks of Babcock's resolution, the reader does him an injustice if he or she simply writes him off as an uptight curmudgeon.

Taking William James' thoughts on attention into consideration, the reader can contrast Newman's consciousness with his traveling companion's, discovering a reasonable explanation for Babcock's departure and Newman's inability to "[resent] the young minster's lofty admonitions" (73). Furthermore, a broader application of examining Newman's attention reveals a more subjective central conflict. Given thought's personal form, neither Newman nor the de Bellegardes can any longer serve as consummate, cultural tropes in James' international theme.

Recognizing that consciousness selects certain objects over others, we have yet to determine how or why consciousness attends to these selected objects and ignores others.

William James defines attention as "the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought" (*Principles of Psychology* 1: 403-04). In truth, the senses register many things, but only what one pays attention to determines one's experience. James states that "only those items which [we] *notice* shape [our] mind[s] – without selective interest, experience is an utter chaos. Interest alone gives accent and emphasis….without it the consciousness of every creature would be a gray chaotic indiscriminateness, impossible for us even to conceive" (1: 402-03). The selected ways and directions of our attention affect our lives and shape the manner in which we perceive the world so that we cannot accurately predict what distant impact our attention will have on our lives. Consequently, "subjective interest" engenders experience rather than the converse (1: 403).

James contends that one may focus on as many objects as his or her mental capacity is capable of. Nevertheless, James' second character of thought reminds us that the mind processes only a single idea even if that idea ponders multiple or complex objects. In other words, we can pay attention only to a few sensory stimuli at one time. Although the mind frequently "oscillates" between separate thoughts, it can concentrate only on one thought at a time (1: 408-09). When multiple events occur simultaneously or in rapid succession, the most significant or interesting event captures one's attention. As a result, only one object or thought, no matter how complex, draws one's attention at one time.

In light of these remarks, the objects Newman and Babcock take interest in determine what kind of impact their tour will have on them. Although they visit the same places at the same time and see the same things, their respective attentions gravitate

toward what naturally interests them. In itself, this principle reveals no earth-shattering epiphany. But its implications lead to significant results, as a deeper look into William James' theory reveals.

Addressing the varieties of attention, William James claims that the attention tends toward either sense or intellect. In either case, attention's character can be "immediate" and "passive" when the object is interesting in itself (1: 416). Most of the time, the stream-of-thought proceeds unobstructed, and one's attention is primarily passive. Even when one encounters an obstacle, the stream-of-thought naturally and passively flows over or around it. Sensorial attention is passive when the senses perceive an intense stimulus, such as a loud noise, or detect a strong instinct, such as a strong craving for a certain type of food. Children most frequently display immediate, passive attention because their experiences are new and exciting to them. As they grow to adulthood, however, they "organize" their interests, devoting more attention to some objects than to others (1: 417).

Newman's nonchalant attitude toward art and life results from his interests' organization. This fact makes sense after one reviews Newman's character up to this point in the novel. The narrator immediately attests that Newman is "extremely intelligent," but some of his characteristics do not support others' praise of his intellect (19). The plot begins as Newman purchases a Murillo copy from Noémie Nioche in the Louvre. When Noémie's father learns of the price Newman has agreed to, M. Nioche declares that Newman is "a man of *esprit*…an admirer of beauty in every form" (24). Shortly thereafter, Newman incidentally encounters an old Civil War friend named Tom Tristram, who invites him out to a nearby café. Ascertaining Newman's motives for

visiting Europe, Tristram states that the entrepreneur displays "refined tastes" and represents what his wife "would call an intellectual" (33). By his own account, Newman believes he is "very deep. That's a fact" (41). When M. Nioche delivers the Murillo copy later in the novel, he also comments that Newman is a "man of taste" (52). Perhaps the characters make these estimations out of jest or flattery. Regardless, Newman is certainly intelligent, but he possesses a certain type of intelligence.

Newman is not "intellectual" in the sense that he loses himself in deep, reflective reveries concerning life's great mysteries. On the contrary, Newman sees the world, even the Old World, very pragmatically. Newman's worldview partly derives from his natural disposition, but Newman also concentrates on certain features because of his professional history. The narrator informs us that Newman "had known bitter failure as well as brilliant success" and that "at one time failure seemed inexorably his portion; ill-luck became his bed-fellow, and whatever he touched he turned, not to gold, but to ashes" (31). Newman overcame these obstacles by means of inherent "exertion and action" (31). He moved to San Francisco with "one simple, practical impulse – the desire…to see the thing through" (32). This compulsion explains why "Newman's sole aim in life had been to make money; what he had been placed in the world for was…simply to wrest a fortune, the bigger the better, from defiant opportunity. This idea completely filled his horizon and satisfied his imagination" (32). Newman excels at solving problems by means of hard work. He is not necessarily greedy; he seeks out challenges to overcome, specifically challenges involving business ventures. Just because he exhibits great prowess in this regard, however, does not mean he is equally gifted in "scholarly" or "academic" pursuits.

Newman even admits his insecurity about his aesthetic judgment. In a conversation with Mrs. Tristram, Newman confesses, "I am not intellectual….I am not cultivated, I am not even educated; I know nothing about history, or art, or foreign tongues, or any other learned matters" (42). But notice that Newman does not say he does not respect "learned matters"; he merely attests to his own ignorance. This cursory review of how Newman's consciousness has organized his interest helps us understand his reaction to European culture.

Babcock, on the other hand, travels to Europe with not only a different agenda but also a different organization of interests. We can deduce that Newman's consciousness consists of primarily passive attention. But William James describes another form that attention may take. He explains that sensorial attention can also assume a "derived" or "active" quality when only the perceived object's *relation to another object of interest*, or "motive," generates interest in the perceived object (1: 416). In this case, we take interest in something not because it interests us on its own but because it connects with or constitutes or reminds us of an independently interesting object.

Young love serves as a case study in active interest. A young man may memorize the lyrics to every song of a pop group that he abhors simply because the young woman he is interested in loves the group. The young man still hates the music, but he *actively* attends to it because his motive, the young woman, inspires him to concentrate on everything he associates with her. In this sense, attention *derives* its interest in an uninteresting object *from* an interesting one somehow related to it.

Newman's appreciation of Europe, uncultivated as it may be, shows that he takes a passive interest in his surroundings. However, Babcock cannot make the same claim.

Shortly after introducing Babcock, the narrator divulges that "in his secret soul he detested Europe" (69). In particular, Babcock "mistrusted the European temperament, he suffered from the European climate, he hated the European dinner-hour; European life seemed to him unscrupulous and impure" (69). Be this the case, why does Babcock go through the trouble to take "the Grand Tour" (66)?

The most obvious reason for which Babcock visits Europe may stem from his "exquisite sense of beauty" (69). The narrator states that Babcock "was extremely fond of pictures and churches…he delighted in æsthetic analysis, and received peculiar impressions from everything he saw….as he was, furthermore, extremely devoted to culture" (69). Contrast this disposition with that of Newman, to whom "an undue solicitude for 'culture' seemed a sort of silly dawdling" (67). Yet Babcock's perspective so occupies the obverse extreme that, rather than touring his native land in order to satisfy his passions, he travels in Europe because "beauty was often inextricably associated" with the continent (69). But we discover a deeper motivation than aesthetic appreciation in his letter to Newman.

When parting with Newman, Babcock says, "I don't think you appreciate my position" (71). In some ways, the reader shares Newman's confusion. Newman is an "excellent, generous fellow" (69) who thinks Babcock is "a very plucky fellow" (71). Reiterating Newman's lack of appreciation in his letter, however, Babcock provides greater insight regarding his trip's objective. He explains, "I am travelling in Europe on funds supplied by my congregation who kindly offered me a vacation and an opportunity to enrich my mind with the treasures of nature and art in the Old World. I feel, therefore, as if I ought to use my time to the very best advantage. I have a high sense of

responsibility" (72). Babcock continues, "I feel as if I must arrive at some conclusion and fix my belief on certain points. Art and life seem to me intensely serious things, and in our travels in Europe we should especially remember the immense seriousness of Art" (72). As to whether Babcock senses the gravity of Art and life due to his natural proclivity, his sponsoring congregation's expectations, or his educational upbringing, one can only speculate. Nevertheless, Babcock's intense sense of obligation is undeniable.

Babcock *passively* attends to pictures, churches, aesthetic analysis, and culture, but he travels with a foreboding sense of duty. So heavy-laden, Babcock pays *active* attention, *derived* from this sense of obligation, to his environment. Under different circumstances, he might passively be able to attend to his journey, but given his congregation's patronage, his more pressing object of interest concerns their expectations. Thus, he fears he "over-estimated" Luini and must return to Milan in order to evaluate the artist properly (72). Consequently, Babcock's "vacation" becomes a pilgrimage.

Babcock's anxiety also inspires his evangelistic efforts. Debating whether or not he should continue "to associate with our hero," Babcock asks himself, "Would it not be desirable to try to exert an influence upon him, to try to quicken his moral life and sharpen his sense of duty" (69)? The narrator shares that Babcock "often tried, in odd half-hours of conversation, to infuse into Newman a little of his own spiritual starch" (70). Like Sabiston observing Isabel Archer, one perceives that Babcock embodies "a New England tradition that began in Puritanical soul-searching and continued through Unitarian private worship and emphasis on reason and individualism to Transcendentalism. From a self-reliant religion to a self-reliant philosophy was a very

short step" (37). Whatever the source of Babcock's apprehension may be, it affects not only his experience of Europe but also his relationship with the people he encounters there.

Delving further into William James' study of attention, one acquires a deeper understanding of why Newman does *not* practice active attention. James proposes that one cannot even passively pay attention to an unchanging object for a significant amount of time. In order to hold one's interest, "the object must change" (1: 421). If the object does not change, the attention wanders and latches on to the most interesting object it encounters. James supports Helmholtz's claim that the only means by which to concentrate continuously on a static object is to find new thoughts to think or different aspects to consider about the object. Geniuses possess this ability to a significantly greater degree than the average man or woman. They either regularly fix their attention on changing objects or find a seemingly endless array of thoughts to think about an unchanging object. The advantage the average man or woman has over the genius is that the average man or woman acquires more experience cultivating active attention and, in that respect, develops a more disciplined mind.

Although I would not consider Babcock a genius, Newman's sharp mind, having so long concentrated on business affairs, stands as a hindrance to his active attention's development. True, he displays a fleeting concern for Europe's many cultural trophies and is "not given to cross-questioning the amusement of the hour" (66). In fact, Newman approaches Europe from an egocentric, almost utilitarian perspective, believing "that Europe was made for him, and not he for Europe" (66). However, Newman is far from absent-minded.

Newman reveals his depth when his "genius" is at work. Reviewing what his passive attention ushers into his consciousness, the reader sees that Newman focuses on a number of Europe's features – just not the features on which one might initially expect him to concentrate. When Newman accepts M. Nioche's offer for free French lessons, he desires to apply this knowledge to unusual aspects of French culture. The narrator shares that "Newman was fond of statistics; he liked to know how things were done; it gratified him to learn what taxes were paid, what profits were gathered, what commercial habits prevailed, how the battle of life was fought" (55). M. Nioche is so eager to accommodate his pupil that "he scraped together information, by frugal processes, and took notes, in his little greasy pocket-book, of incidents which might interest his munificent friend" (55). Although these considerations may not appeal to the average tourist, that Newman should consider them only makes sense when the narrator later explains that Newman is not "conscious, individually, of social pressure" (66). Although Newman intends to observe European "forms and customs," he does not fear "fumbling" over them (43). He is not inconsiderate so much as confident. Hence, statistics excite his curiosity more than cultural particulars.

Another example of Newman's practical interests appears when he begins his journey abroad. Arriving in Brussels, "he asked a great many questions about the street-cars, and took extreme satisfaction in the reappearance of this familiar symbol of American civilization; but he was also greatly struck with the beautiful Gothic tower of the Hôtel de Ville, and wondered whether it would not be possible to 'get up' something like in San Francisco" (66). Just when Newman seems to admire architecture for the sake of its beauty, he contemplates the more utilitarian possibility of erecting a similar

structure in the United States. A great deal of his meditation concerns what he can "take back" with him. He exhibits an acquisitive inclination in the sense that he wants to apply his experience to his own country. He wants not only to *see* "the mysterious, satisfying *best*" but also to *have* it – to add a Gothic tower to the San Francisco skyline. Of course, as the novel develops, this tendency culminates in his pursuit of Claire de Cintré – the only "object" Europe denies him and, therefore, the one he most desires.

Thus, even though Newman almost exclusively exercises passive attention, the substantive parts of his consciousness fill his stream-of-thought. His multiple questions concerning the street-cars show that his genius finds new things to think about regarding certain objects. Therefore, these objects change within Newman's mind. However, he can find only a limited number of ideas to entertain regarding European culture, so they quickly pass out of his consciousness.

But why should this proclivity surprise us? That a man who has spent his life administering business transactions should wonder how he might collect the biggest and best for himself only makes sense. In fact, the more appropriate question would be, why *should* he take Art and life seriously?

The reader may be tempted to conclude that Newman has no reason to appreciate culture. Yet such an answer would force one to ask why Newman came to Europe in the first place. The text provides no evidence that he came on a business venture. However, as Newman converses with Tristram at the Palais Royal café, we learn of an incident that inspired his extended vacation. Conducting his business in the United States, Newman jumped at the opportunity to deprive a professional rival of $60,000 in the stock market. He travelled through the night from San Francisco to New York in order to have his

revenge on his foe who had "once played [him] a very mean trick" (34). While riding in a taxicab, the exhausted Newman suddenly felt "a mortal disgust for the thing [he] was going to do" (34). Newman elaborates,

> I couldn't tell the meaning of it; I only felt that I loathed the whole business and wanted to wash my hands of it. The idea of losing that sixty thousand dollars, of letting it utterly slide and scuttle and never hearing of it again, seemed the sweetest thing in the world. And all this took place quite independently of my will, and I sat watching it as if it were a play at the theatre. I could feel it going on inside of me. You may depend upon it that there are things going on inside of us that we understand mighty little about. (34)

Due to fatigue or not, Newman experienced an epiphany. As time passed, he did not regret his decision; in fact, he continued to act upon his revelation. Newman relinquished control and began asking questions:

> Life had been for him an open game, and he had played for high stakes. He had won at last and carried off his winnings; and now what was he to do with them? He was a man to whom, sooner or later, the question was sure to present itself, and the answer to it belongs to our story. A vague sense that more answers were possible than his philosophy had hitherto dreamt of had already taken possession of him, and it seemed softly and agreeably to deepen as he lounged in this brilliant corner of Paris. (32)

Newman declares, "I seemed to feel a new man inside my old skin, and I longed for a new world" (35). Ironically, Newman begins the quest for his new world in the Old

World. He sets out with a broad itinerary, travelling to Europe in order "to rest awhile, to forget the confounded thing, to look about [him], to see the world, to have a good time, to improve [his] mind, and, if the fancy takes [him], to marry a wife" (30). Newman presents these objectives to Tristram at the café. By the time he visits the Tristram home some days later, however, he has already sifted out his most prominent goal.

Conversing with Newman and her husband on the veranda, Mrs. Tristram informs their guest that "it [is] high time he should take a wife" (43). Newman agrees, claiming that he is "sternly resolved" on marrying and is "in a great hurry" to do so (43). In the ensuing discussion, the epiphany's question reemerges with a more defined reply. Newman professes, "I want a great woman. I stick to that. That's one thing I *can* treat myself to, and if it is to be had I mean to have it. What else have I toiled and struggled for all these years? I have succeeded, and now what am I to do with my success? To make it perfect, as I see it, there must be a beautiful woman perched on the pile" (44).

Before long, Mrs. Tristram introduces Newman to a woman, narrowing his consciousness even further. Because Claire de Cintré greatly impresses Newman, he fixes his attention upon her, especially her eyes, which he finds "both brilliant and mild" (49). When Claire spends the summer at her family's country estate, Newman embarks on his European tour, thinking of those eyes, which "had become very familiar to his memory, and he would not easily have resigned himself to the prospect of never looking into them again" (64). Even before Babcock enters the story, thoughts of Claire attract Newman's attention, and they continue to fill his consciousness even after Babcock departs. Between reading Babcock's letter and returning to Paris, Newman reflects over his memory of Claire's eyes: "Four months had elapsed, and he had not forgotten them yet. He had

looked – he had made a point of looking – into a great many other eyes in the interval, but the only ones he thought of now were Madame de Cintré's" (74). By the time Newman returns to Paris in Chapter VI, the revelatory moment he experienced in the New York hack has been fulfilled.

Newman's epiphany sets into motion a progressive narrowing of his consciousness. It first raises the question, what will he do with his winnings? Newman's response involves going to Europe, but initially, he does not know exactly what he hopes to accomplish. His experience sharpens his focus on marriage, and meeting Claire provides his attention with a specific object. A broader perspective reveals that not only street cars and Gothic towers draw Newman's attention during his Grand Tour but also his romantic interest in a specific woman. Ironically, the fulfillment of the epiphany that compels him to visit Europe also distracts him from a number of Europe's treasures.

Yet Newman is not the only distracted traveler; Babcock's attention also drifts toward a very different diversion. As soon as Babcock appears on the scene, the narrator reports that

> his digestion was weak, and he lived chiefly on Graham bread and hominy – a regimen to which he was so much attached that his tour seemed to him destined to be blighted when, on landing on the Continent, he found that these delicacies did not flourish under the *table d'hôte* system. In Paris he had purchased a bag of hominy at an establishment which called itself an American Agency…and he had carried it about with him, and shown extreme serenity and fortitude in the somewhat delicate position of having

his hominy prepared for him and served at anomalous hours, at the hotels

he successively visited. (68)

No wonder Babcock "hate[s] the European dinner-hour" (69)! Rather than sampling the

exquisite European cuisine, Babcock must exist on hominy and Graham bread, which he

cannot find readily available. So he must haul his food around with him, whereas

Newman can simply order any meal of his choosing. Furthermore, Babcock must

undergo the awkward embarrassment of imposing upon the hotel staff to cook his food

for him wherever he goes. So every new place he visits means not only new sights and

experiences but also a new kitchen staff to inconvenience in a new language. All these

encumbrances plague him, adding to the physical discomfort his indigestion causes him.

To say that Babcock's consternation issues partly from his ailment is a fair assumption.

His letter's postscript to Newman confirms this supposition. Despite returning to Milan

without his recent acquaintance, Babcock remains "greatly perplexed by Luini" (73). He

must continue to practice active attention in order to ignore his digestive problems and

focus on Art and life. Hence, Babcock cannot enjoy his vacation with or without

Newman.

Chapter V's amazing feature is not that Babcock inexplicably forsakes Newman;

it is that Babcock and Newman ever become friends to begin with. But given the fact that

they *do* strike up a friendship, their parting seems inevitable when we analyze their

respective attention. Thoughts of statistics and marriage clutter Newman's stream-of-

consciousness whereas Babcock struggles to keep thoughts of obligation and physical

discomfort from spilling into the substantive parts of his consciousness. Instead of being

so hard on the "morbid little clergyman," William James should have realized that

Babcock oscillated between the first and fourth man of his own analogy, whose only companion was the second man.

Although I have only interpreted five of 26 chapters, Newman's relationship with Babcock foreshadows his tumultuous interactions with the de Bellegardes. Like Babcock, Claire's mother and oldest brother do not make the most affable impression. However, they also perceive the world according to organizations of interest that drastically differ from Newman's. To read the characters' consciousnesses throughout the novel may reveal that Henry James' international theme is as personal as it is cultural. Newman's relationship with Babcock, another American, demonstrates that the displaced American's experience in Europe is not predetermined. Under these circumstances, the major conflict of the novel shifts from "American vs. European" or "New World vs. Old World" to "Newman vs. Urbane and Madame de Bellegarde." Newman is no longer an archetype but a specific individual who perceives the world by means of a subjective consciousness. However cliché, each character represents a personal, independent consciousness that cannot possibly represent culture by and large. Thought's tendency to personal form disqualifies any consideration of "metaconsciousness." Even when a character supposedly embodies cultural stereotypes, as an individual, the character becomes an individual *being* possessing an individual, unified *consciousness*. In short, reading consciousness transforms Newman from *the* American into *an* American.

3. Cathartic Reflection:

Examining Narrative Consciousness in "Brooksmith"

Millicent Bell addresses a noteworthy concern in *Meaning in Henry James*. She observes that "centralizing consciousness" restricts the reader's perspective to the viewpoint of one character – the narrator. In contrast to the omniscient narrator, the subjective narrator cannot possibly know everything. Therefore, the reader cannot confirm the validity of the narrator's account. On the one hand, this issue corresponds with the modernist reluctance to trust the narrator while, on the other hand, the reader still must question the fallibility of the character-narrator. Bell finds this predicament especially troubling in Henry James, who "still gave his receptive source in the novel, the perceiving *character*, more than common powers of observation and understanding" (14).

The consciousness theorist confronts the same issue when focusing on the narrator's consciousness. Henry James' 1892[15] short story "Brooksmith" presents this very problem. Although not as widely anthologized as more popular works such as "Daisy Miller" and "The Real Thing," "Brooksmith" provides interesting material for conducting an analysis of consciousness. In my first reading, I analyzed characters' attention. In contrast, the present reading examines the *narrator's* consciousness. By treating the narrator as another fictional character with his or her own consciousness, I demonstrate that narrative consciousness "tends to personal form" as much as any other character's and, therefore, functions independently from the consciousnesses of the story's other characters.

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[15] I cite the work's publication in *The Lesson of the Master* although "Brooksmith" originally appeared in *Harper's Weekly* and *Black and White* in 1891 (Wegelin 173).

"Brooksmith" follows a butler's social and emotional decline. The narrator fondly remembers bygone days spent in the society of a "retired diplomatist," Mr. Oliver Offord (173). The narrator frequented the "*salon*" Offord regularly held at his house on Mansfield Street (174). The narrator tells us that he and the other denizens took the salon's perfect conditions for granted, but upon some reflection, he concludes that Offord's butler, Brooksmith, "had been somehow at the bottom of the mystery. If he had not established the *salon* at least he had carried it on" (175).

Refined and somewhat educated, Brooksmith delights in listening to the conversation of the guests he waits upon even though his social standing prevents him from personally participating. Over time, Offord grows ill and can neither hold the *salon* as often nor maintain the quality of conversation. When Offord eventually dies, the narrator pities Brooksmith and tries to secure him a comparable position at another estate. Over time, Brooksmith finds employment serving in Bayswater but then moves on to a household in Chester Square before disappearing for a while. Six months later, Brooksmith's aunt seeks out the narrator with an invitation from her nephew, who is now "out of place, and out of health" (184). The narrator finds Brooksmith recovering from his sickness and living with his mother and his aunt in Marylebone. The following year, the narrator encounters Brooksmith serving as an attendant at a dinner party but fails to attract his attention. After three years, the narrator learns from Brooksmith's aunt that the old butler had gone out to work one night and was never heard from again. The narrator assumes the worst and consoles himself with his belief that "with characteristic deliberation, [Brooksmith] is changing the plates of the immortal gods" (187).

One of the narrative's most remarkable features concerns the way the narrator presents the plot from his memory. The narrator tells his story's events in the first person after many years have elapsed. Although most narrators write in the past tense, the narrator of "Brooksmith" calls the reader's attention to the time that has passed. In fact, the story's opening line gives us the impression that the narrator recounts his tale after several years. The narrator proclaims, "We are scattered now" (173) and likens Mansfield Street to Arcadia, the "barren region of central Greece that poets early turned into a Utopia of rural bliss, an innocent Golden age" (Wegelin 173n). Furthermore, the narrator writes, "I remember" eight times throughout the narrative, which interrupts the story's continuity. The narrator momentarily extracts the reader from the plot and reinforces the fact that he recalls the account from his memory. Consequently, I take not only the narrator's reliability into consideration but, more specifically, his *memory's* reliability. Evaluating the narrator's reflective consciousness, I also consider some of William James' theories of memory.

Much of William James' stream-of-thought theory, especially consciousness' sensible continuity, heavily relies on memory. Furthermore, memory plays an important role in the way we construct reality, which we base on the projection and ordering of the past and future in "the immense region of *conceived* time" (*Principles of Psychology* 1: 643). Rather than addressing William James' entire explanation of memory, I confine my discussion to his ideas that are relevant to literary analysis. The first exclusion involves James' own concession that we cannot definitively explain the "metaphysics" of memory any more than we can fully explain why the brain retains knowledge at all (1: 689). He insists that the most that psychology can hope for is to distinguish what the "brain-

processes" are (1: 689). The brain process with which I begin answers the question, how does one remember to begin with?

James attributes memory's cause to a "*psycho-physical* phenomenon" comprised of the neural activity in the brain and the mental *belief* in the recalled idea (1: 655). The "*retention* of the remembered fact" (1: 653) depends on the "persistence" of one's brain-paths (1: 659). Persistence refers to the enduring physiological impression an idea makes on the brain. Persistence results in "desultory memory," and the facility of acquiring this lasting knowledge varies from person to person (1: 660). When one calls forth thoughts of past events or their associations, his or her nervous system develops a habit of thought that gives rise to retention and recollection (1: 120, 653). One recalls a past idea when one searches his or her associations with it and locates the idea. When one achieves recollection, one affirms the retention of that idea. We recall ideas, whether quickly or slowly, through the neural "brain-paths" we have conditioned by repeatedly thinking of an object or event (1: 654-55). Repeated contemplation "wears down" a brain-path the same way one wears down a path by repeatedly taking the same route through a forest or a field. One more or less readily recalls an idea and its associations according to how "worn" the corresponding brain-path is (1: 655).

These processes transfer to literary consciousness theory in certain elements the reader searches for in the text. First, the reader recognizes that the reflective narrator recalls only the events that he or she has revisited many times. So the events constituted significantly substantive parts of the narrator's consciousness that have left a lasting impression. This impression arose from the event's initial appeal to the narrator's attention. In other words, the narrator most vividly remembers those events in which he

or she was and continues to be most interested. Hence, the reader asks what the importance of an event says about the narrator's priorities. The mind retains memories by a few other means as well. The number of brain-paths one can link together also affects memory. One's memory is only as strong as one's ability to connect as many associations together as possible. "Thought-relations" create a mental web consisting of various points of ideas (1: 663). The number of ideas on the web depends on the web's "size," or the number of associations connecting the ideas. A greater number of associations results in securer mental organization and a greater number of brain-paths.

One incorporates thought-relations into consciousness theory by recognizing that the narrator recalls events through a network of associations. The reader must look for evidence of associations the narrator either explicitly states or implicitly reveals through the sequence by which he or she presents the content. The reader also contemplates the significance of the associations themselves in order to discern the means and methods by which the narrator organizes his or her thoughts.

Moreover, William James proposes that one remembers impressions according to how long ago one experienced them, how much attention one pays to them, and how much one rehearses them. I established in the last chapter that one pays attention to an object of interest. Interest makes a deeper impression; therefore, one more easily remembers an object of interest. One's interest creates a "discriminative sensibility" that enables him or her to remember an object longer and more easily (1: 684). In the extreme opposite case, one forgets events by never thinking about them. In not paying attention to acquired knowledge, one basically erases the brain-paths through which he or she recalls

memories. Having determined some of memory's causes, another question comes to mind: Of what does memory consist?

In response, James differentiates between memory proper and "elementary" or "primary memory" (1: 646). Primary memory "makes us aware of…the *just* past" and consists of thoughts that have yet to leave consciousness (1: 646-47). However, in memory proper, or secondary memory, an object "has been absent from consciousness altogether, and now revives anew" (1: 646). One truly remembers something only if it has passed out of one's field of consciousness and returns again. In order for the thought of an object to return as a memory, the thought must linger as a substantive part for a certain amount of time. In fact, a state of mind only has "intellectual value" if it remains in the consciousness as a memory (1: 644). Transitive parts pass through consciousness too quickly to take root and return as memories. In other words, one can remember only the substantive parts of the stream-of-thought whereas the transitive parts evaporate, and one cannot recall them. Forgetting does not adversely affect the consciousness, for although the capacity of memory may be much larger than we realize, one typically forgets most of what happens in his or her life.

On the contrary, James contends that "forgetting is as important a function as recollecting" (1: 679). If one remembered everything from one's life, his or her mind would become so crowded with information that he or she could not recall anything in a timely manner. Consequently, the knowledge one does not regularly revisit fades out of his or her memory. Thus, only secondary memory remains, of which narrative consciousness exclusively consists.

Accordingly, the consciousness theorist is aware that the narrator's consciousness retains only secondary memories. Because the narrator cannot remember *everything*, the reader pays as much attention to what is absent as to what is present. The narrator forgets not only elusive transitive parts but also substantive parts that he or she has not revisited since the events transpired. If discriminative sensibility allows one easily to remember something for a longer amount of time, then a sort of "discriminative *in*sensibility" facilitates one's forgetfulness. This approach can lead to excessive speculation. But a limited, reasonable evaluation of the missing pieces of the narrator's memory can reveal the *kinds* of memories the narrator remembers as well as the kinds of memories that he or she forgets or even willfully dismisses.

The final feature the reader must consider when following memory in the narrator's consciousness is intuitive memory. James contrasts intuitive memory with conceptual or symbolic memory, which requires no recalled, corresponding mental image of an object or event. Memories of ideas or abstractions, for instance, constitute conceptual memory. Intuitive memory, on the other hand, consists of "those memories in which the past is directly imaged in the mind, or, as we say, intuitively known" (1: 649n). Intuitive memory first retrieves a mental "image or copy of the original event" (1: 649). This retrieval constitutes a second event, independent of the original. One must go a step further, recognizing the image in the context of the past. In "Time-perception," James establishes that our primary memory, or immediate consciousness of the past, only goes back a few moments. Accessing secondary memory, one remembers the "remote past" by means of associated symbols or concrete events (1: 650). James' third and final criterion

of memory necessitates that one must recognize the event or object as belonging to his or her personal past.

Thus, memory consists of the mental copy as well as its associations, constituting a completely new and singular thought. The memory of an event is neither the event itself nor even the original thought of the event. One believes an event occurred in reality because the memory evokes a feeling of connection with the event. One knows when one *imagines* a past event when he or she does not sense this connection and, therefore, does not *believe* in it.

The consciousness reader applies these final principles by remembering that the narrator's memory of an event is not the event itself. Furthermore, when the narrator reflects on his or her previous thoughts, he or she is not "rethinking" the same thoughts. Returning to William James' second character of thought, we recall that the narrator thinks a *new* thought *about* the previous thoughts. This lack of duplication heightens the reader's awareness that the narrator's representation of past events is only as accurate as he or she has accurately rehearsed the event in his or her mind. The wise reader looks for indications of the narrator's integrity throughout the text. If the narrator is prone to telling lies, for example, the reader must be suspicious of how truthfully the narrator relates his or her story.

Finally, the narrator must believe that the events actually happened in order to *remember*, rather than *imagine*, them. The conclusion the reader draws from the former principle largely depends on this consideration. The narrator presumably erects his or her reality, including his or her self-perception, on the foundation of his or her belief. Belief also involves the narrative's rhetorical dimension. From all the events in which the

narrator believes, he or she selects this particular story to tell. The need to share the events constitutes the exigence. But we also ask who the narrator perceives as his or her audience and what he or she assumes of his or her reader. Among the constraints include the reason *why* the narrator feels he or she must share the story. Critics often weigh the *author's* rhetorical intentions in the "real world," yet one can justifiably make these deductions regarding the narrator as well.

Of course, the reader must make his or her peace with the irony that he or she is assessing the "reality" of a fictitious work. Lloyd Bitzer insists that a situation must be "located in reality" in order to be rhetorical and that we must, therefore, distinguish it "from fantasy in which exigence, audience, and constraints may all be the imaginary objects of a mind at play" (11). Even he, however, concedes that "the speech of a novel or play may be clearly required by a fictive rhetorical situation – a situation established by the story itself….It is realistic, made so by fictive content" (11). Many psychological theorists presuppose that they analyze fictional characters as if they were real subjects while still observing the distinction between reality and real*ism*. One way to come to terms with this issue is to examine the literature from the perspective that the fiction is a product of the *author's* imagination and the *narrator's* memory. Accepting the fact that the "Brooksmith" narrator is as fictional as the title character, we can place him "on the couch" and listen to what his consciousness tells us of him.

As the reader sifts through the "Brooksmith" narrator's consciousness, a few prominent issues come to the surface. The first trait the narrator's memory reveals is his perception of class distinctions, implying his acute social awareness. For example, he occasionally references Brooksmith's height. By itself, the fact matters little, but the

narrator gives it significance by contextualizing it: "The utility of his class in general is estimated by the foot and the inch, and poor Brooksmith had only about five feet two to put into circulation" (176). We see "the inadequacy of this provision" after Offord dies (176). The narrator tries to help Brooksmith find employment in other houses but soon learns that "he was too short for people who were very particular" (183) so that the narrator's noble intentions turn out to be "a very difficult case" (182).

In addition to Brooksmith's stature, his familial fidelity works against him. Despite his difficulty securing a position at an estate, Brooksmith still supports his mother and aunt. Brooksmith inherits £80 upon Offord's passing, but the narrator speculates that Brooksmith's aunt frequents the "public-houses" surrounding their rented room in Marylebone, which could account for an unnecessarily expedient depletion of funds (184). Even if this were the case, however, Brooksmith does not forsake her or his mother. At the story's close, we learn that Brooksmith "had always looked after [his aunt] a bit – since her troubles" (186).

Although this may not overtly appear as an indication of class, contrast Brooksmith's obligation to family with the narrator's. From the first sentence to the last, the narrator does not breathe a word about his family. In fact, the greatest absence, or "discriminate insensibility," the reader notices is any physical or social detail concerning the narrator at all. He not only neglects to inform the reader of his family but also fails to mention his age, his stature, his specific social position, or even his name. Practically the only thing the narrator divulges about himself is that he visits dinner parties, "live[s] in two rooms in Jermyn Street and [does not] 'keep a man'" (179). The dinner invitations indicate that the narrator enjoys a respectable social standing. Thus, he would never find

himself in the position in which he must support his elders. In fact, he more than likely has received his provision from *them* in either the form of an allowance or an inheritance. So the reader can be certain that the narrator belongs to a higher social class than Brooksmith, but beyond that, one cannot conclude much about his social standing or his physical appearance.

Perhaps the most telling sign of the narrator's social awareness involves the settings he remembers (and has, therefore, mentally revisited). Sabiston comments that, in *The Portrait of a Lady*, "action takes place in houses that are almost personified as emanations of their indwellers" (32). Similarly, the reader can see how physical structures in "Brooksmith" represent social structures. Confining the entire narrative to the various strata of London civilization, the narrator begins with Mansfield Street and descends, socially speaking, through Bayswater and Chester Square to the depths of Marylebone. And whom do we find residing on the bottom tier of the narrator's settings? Brooksmith.

Yet before the narrator guides us down through London society, he shares something of his social awareness in his descriptions of the other houses as well. Brooksmith makes his initial impression on the narrator at the Mansfield door. Obviously, the various doors the narrator leads us through represent portals, framing the narrative as the reader passes through each. Even more significantly, however, the doors in "Brooksmith" also open up a common ground upon which two classes may momentarily meet. Despite his subservient status, Brooksmith meets Offord's distinguished guests face to face and looks them in the eye when they call. His charge involves permitting or denying entry into his master's house. Although the ultimate

decision lies with Offord, Brooksmith must execute that decision and, in this limited context, exercise authority over his social superiors.

The dependent nature of this authority becomes clear when Offord falls ill. The door corresponds with his health, which is why "the first day Mr. Offord's door was closed was therefore a dark date" (178). The reasons the date is dark vary depending on the character. For Offord, the date is dark because he is slowly dying. For the narrator, the date's darkness derives from the loss of a friend and the fellowship of the *salon*. For Brooksmith, however, the date is dark partly because he is Offord's "most intimate friend" and partly because the closed door foreshadows his own end (173). The closed door supplies Brooksmith no opportunity to face his superiors and reinforces his servility. Within the house, he carries out his master's bidding and coordinates the house staff, comprised of fellow members of his own class. Hence, the closed door not only shuts out the narrator from the *salon*'s society but also closes Brooksmith within the confines of his servitude.

Breaching the threshold, the narrator repeatedly presents another symbolic feature. Much of the narrator's interaction with Brooksmith takes place "at the familiar foot of the stairs" (179). Whereas doors in "Brooksmith" represent a meeting-ground, stairs mark a point of departure or a reversal of power. At the door, Brooksmith stands as a sort of gatekeeper, yet ascending the stairs, he reverts to a domestic servant. Brooksmith intimates this transformation when conversing with the narrator after Offord's funeral. Reluctantly facing an uncertain future without a hospitable employer or any social standing to speak of, the butler tells the narrator, "You go back to conversation, sir, after all, and I go back to my place….I just go downstairs, sir, again,

and I stay there" (182). The narrator observes that Brooksmith states this "without exaggerated irony or dramatic bitterness" (182). Brooksmith does not feel sorry for himself; he merely anticipates his life's conditions after having worked for Offord. More profoundly, "with a flat, unstudied veracity," Brooksmith foreshadows his fate as well (182).

While Brooksmith explicitly acknowledges the social notion of "place," the reader sees that the narrator is implicitly just as aware of it. When attributing the *salon*'s success to Brooksmith, the narrator metaphorically proclaims, "Mr. Offord's drawing-room was indeed Brooksmith's garden, his pruned and tended human *parterre*, and if we all flourished there and grew well in our places it was largely owing to his supervision" (174). Even the narrator's praise of Brooksmith ironically establishes the butler's place. As a metaphorical gardener, Brooksmith remains a caretaker. Even figuratively, Brooksmith does not labor for his own enjoyment or even the public's; he works for the sake of the *garden's* beauty so that Offord's "*habitués*" can "flourish" and "grow well in their *places*."

While visiting Brooksmith in Marylebone, the narrator envisions "the *salon* of which [Brooksmith] had been an ornament" hovering before him (185). In this metaphor, Brooksmith becomes a spectacle – an ambient accessory. Without overtly insulting the butler, the narrator nevertheless relegates Brooksmith's contribution to Offord's *salon* to service and embellishment. His engrained sense of place prohibits the narrator from even considering Brooksmith as a participant and, therefore, a social equal.

The narrator does not restrict his classist mentality to Brooksmith. He ascribes to a few gender, cultural, and broader social tropes as well. Reflecting on the nature of the Mansfield Street house, the narrator notes,

> Many persons have heard much, though most have doubtless seen little, of the famous institution of the *salon*, and many are born to the depression of knowing that this finest flower of social life refuses to bloom where the English tongue is spoken. The explanation is usually that our women have not the skill to cultivate it – the art to direct, between suggestive shores, the course of the stream of talk. (174)

In one comment, the narrator manages to slight not only women but also his own culture.

Later, when recalling Brooksmith's options proceeding Offord's death, the narrator shares that Brooksmith "was to leave the house for ever that night (servants, for some mysterious reason, seem always to depart by night)" (181). Even when discussing an individual he personally knows, the narrator cannot refrain from associating him with a stereotype. Including this aside demonstrates that the narrator cannot think of Brooksmith apart from his place.

Recalling his final encounter with Brooksmith, the narrator wonders from whence Brooksmith receives his "reciprocity" as a waiter (186). The narrator concludes that Brooksmith finds it "only in the bottoms of the wine-glasses and five shillings (or whatever they get), clapped into his hand by the permanent man" (186). The narrator subtly distinguishes Brooksmith's place from his own in two ways. First, he shifts his pronouns, referring to Brooksmith as "he" in the previous sentence only to disregard his individuality with the collective "they." Again, the narrator's focus blurs until

Brooksmith becomes but one of many faces. Second, the narrator unabashedly displays his ignorance, not even knowing the pecuniary value of Brooksmith's service. The narrator's mind has so interwoven Brooksmith and his "place" that the narrator cannot untangle the association. As a result, the narrator's memory reaches not only over the span of time but also over a substantially developed social rift.

The narrator's network of associations also reveals that Brooksmith's descent is two-fold. On the one hand, he moves down the social ladder with each new job he assumes while on the other hand, the position he fills steadily declines. The narrator remembers the neighborhoods in which he encounters Brooksmith over the years, but he also recounts the positions Brooksmith holds in each location. Brooksmith remains a butler at Bayswater and Chester Square, but by the end of the story, he serves as a lowly waiter. His professional descent compares to serving as the maî·tre d' at an elegant restaurant only to end up filling orders at a drive-thru window. Metaphorically speaking, when Brooksmith "goes downstairs," he simultaneously descends two staircases – the social staircase as well as the occupational. The narrator remembers that the last time he saw him, Brooksmith

> wore, in an exceptionally marked degree, the glazed and expressionless mask of the British domestic *de race*. I saw with dismay that if I had not known him I should have taken him, on the showing of his countenance, for an extravagant illustration of irresponsive servile gloom. I said to myself that he had become a reactionary, gone over to the Philistines, thrown himself into religion, the religion of his "place." (186)

Brooksmith undoubtedly inhabits a very real place in society. However, his abstract social place corresponds with just as real a place in the physical world.

When Brooksmith invites the narrator to visit him, the narrator describes Brooksmith's living conditions: "I…found my friend lodged in a short sordid street in Marylebone, one of those corners of London that wear the last expression of sickly meanness….There was a great deal of grimy infant life up and down the place, and there was a hot, moist smell within, as of the 'boiling' of dirty linen" (184). The narrator tells us that this is Brooksmith's "new address," and we can deduce from Brooksmith's deteriorating health and employment status that Marylebone is not an "upgrade." Descending the social and professional stairs has brought Brooksmith to Marylebone and convalescence.

But "going downstairs" affects Brooksmith on a deeper level as well. Brooksmith's mother tells the narrator that her son "would come round if he could only get his spirits up" (185). But Brooksmith has fallen ill precisely because of his inability to "come round," and when one's prospects fall, one's psychological and emotional states are sure to follow. Thus, Brooksmith descends a third set of stairs – a spiritual staircase. When Brooksmith tells the narrator that he will go back to his place – back downstairs to stay – he essentially pronounces his own fate. Brooksmith goes down from Mansfield past Bayswater and Chester Square to Marylebone; he descends from butler to waiter, from "a deep and shy refinement" (176) to an "irresponsive servile gloom" (186). Interestingly, when Brooksmith's aunt, despite her "troubles," informs the narrator that her nephew is "out of place and out of health," she accurately assesses Brooksmith's condition on multiple levels.

In addition to unveiling his social awareness, the narrator's memory exposes his proclivity to speak for others, though this trait is not immediately apparent to the reader. At first glance, the narrator seemingly defers to his title character. He directly quotes Brooksmith more than any other character, including himself. Yet a closer look reveals this assumption's inaccuracy. Of the 7,075 words comprising the text, only 428 of them contribute to direct quotations. Although the reader "hears" Brooksmith speak almost six times more words than the narrator speaks, the overpowering narrative voice nevertheless makes up 94% of the text. Granted, the reader expects the narrator to provide physical details, contextual information, and even a certain amount of subjective contemplation. The plot of "Brooksmith," however, is far from complex, and the narrator devotes much of his attention to interpretation.

Combing through the narrator's memories, the reader realizes how speculative and, at times, presumptive the narrator's language is. Aside from the nine times Brooksmith speaks, the narrator paraphrases the butler's thoughts and emotions, including many phrases such as "I am sure," "[It] must…have been," "I guessed" (176), "He seemed" (178), "I think" (179) "It was doubtless" (182), "I gathered," "I felt sure" (183), and the like. Before long, the narrator no longer bothers to conjecture; he simply expresses Brooksmith's opinions in his own words as though they are irrefutable facts.

Offord's illness marks the point in the plot when the narrator takes possession of the story. When Offord admits guests during a reprieve in his affliction, the narrator observes that, despite his host's efforts, the conversation leaves something to be desired. He reflects, "The talk became ours, in a word – not his; and as ours, even when *he* talked, it could only be inferior" (178). In admitting this, the narrator describes the majority of

his narrative. Remembering that a thought of an object is not the object itself, this statement applies to virtually all narrative consciousness. When a narrator relates a story, he or she writes others' words in his or her own words; the narrator thinks other characters' thoughts as his or her own thoughts. In short, the narrative "talk" becomes the narrator's – not the characters'. And although the narrator's talk may not necessarily be inferior to the characters', it is different and, therefore, runs that very risk.

Although the narrator acknowledges this risk, he shows little concern for it throughout the remainder of the tale. A short while after the previous scene, Offord relapses, and Brooksmith informs the narrator that the old man can no longer receive visitors. The narrator goes on to describe Brooksmith in a rather peculiar fashion: "I half expected to hear him say after a moment: 'Do you think I ought to, sir, in his place?' – as he might have asked me, with the return of autumn, if I thought he had better light the drawing-room fire" (178).

First, notice the speculative language. "I half expected" and "as he might have asked" indicate that Brooksmith asked no such question. For all the reader knows, the thought may have never crossed the butler's mind. Furthermore, the narrator provides no further evidence that Brooksmith feels this way. Again, absent details such as Brooksmith's facial expression or body language may have bolstered the narrator's interpretation of Brooksmith's attitude. And yet the narrator exercises his characteristic, discriminative *in*sensibility once more.

Another peculiarity lies in the way the narrator presents his assumption. He begins the sentence in his own words but at least attributes them to Brooksmith. Yet the dash indicates another voice shift. The narrator extracts the thought from the quotation

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marks and finishes it in his own words. On a smaller level, the narrator carries out what he will eventually accomplish over the course of the entire story. By the end of "Brooksmith," the reader clearly recognizes, as I shall discuss later, that the narrator has taken possession of the narrative, making it more about himself than about Brooksmith.

The very next sentence drives my point home. The narrator tells us that Brooksmith "had a resigned philosophic sense of what his guests – our guests, as I came to regard them in our colloquies – would expect" (178). Once more, the narrator displays an acquisitive tendency concerning his story. He goes from possessing Offord's "talk" to finishing the thoughts he projects onto Brooksmith to sharing Brooksmith's already dubious claim over the guests. That he is the sole authoritative voice in the story does not suffice; he must continue to sequester words, thoughts, and people from even the characters in his own work.

Although the narrator imposes his own thoughts upon other characters, especially Brooksmith, he is not the only one who speaks on the butler's behalf. Before falling ill, Offord discusses Brooksmith with the narrator:

> I was rather puzzled when…Mr. Offord remarked: "What he likes is the talk – mingling in the conversation." I was conscious that I had never seen Brooksmith permit himself this freedom, but I guessed in a moment that what Mr. Offord alluded to was a participation more intense than any speech could have represented – that of being perpetually present on a hundred legitimate pretexts, errands, necessities, and breathing the very atmosphere of criticism, the famous criticism of life. "Quite an education, sir, isn't it, sir?" he said to me one day at the foot of the stairs, when he

was letting me out; and I have always remembered the words and the tone as the first sign of the quickening drama of poor Brooksmith's fate. It was indeed an education, but to what was this sensitive young man of thirty-five, of the servile class, being educated? (176)

The narrator confesses much of himself in this passage. Offord's comment initially puzzles the narrator and, therefore, attracts his attention. It lingers in his mind as a problem to solve, indicating that he regularly revisits the statement. Most importantly, the narrator assumes that Offord is correct. Otherwise, he may have dismissed the thought altogether and forgotten it. Because the narrator believes it, however, Offord's observation shapes the way the narrator views Brooksmith all the way up to the story's composition.

The narrator admits that he has "never seen Brooksmith permit himself this freedom," but he begins to look for proof that Offord correctly assesses his butler. The narrator finds his proof, but the reader justifiably questions the evidence. The narrator reads Brooksmith's "hundred legitimate pretexts, errands, [and] necessities" as an excuse to eavesdrop and breathe "the very atmosphere of criticism, the famous criticism of life." Dismissing the fact that the narrator may have a biased opinion of the quality of the *salon*'s discussions, we plainly see the potential for misinterpretation here. Had Offord not "puzzled" him, the narrator very well may have perceived Brooksmith's activities as the fulfillment of a butler's duties. That Brooksmith may have just been doing his job serves as the more practical, if not obvious, of the two explanations. Sure, he may have enjoyed overhearing the conversation, but to ascribe his behavior to an obsession with "the famous criticism of life" is a stretch to say the least.

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So what does Brooksmith have to say for himself? If we go to the source, we find that the narrator does not quote most of Brooksmith's contributions to their dialogue. Again, the narrator offers his own interpretations of Brooksmith's thoughts in place of Brooksmith's articulation of them. In all fairness to the narrator, Brooksmith *does* display an appreciation for "the talk." When the narrator discovers that Brooksmith has accepted the position in Bayswater, Brooksmith admits, "I daresay it will be rather poor, sir…but I've seen the fireworks, haven't I, sir? – it can't be fireworks *every* night. After Mansfield Street there ain't much choice" (183). But even in this concession, Brooksmith seems to have a realistic attitude about the opportunity. He acknowledges that Bayswater cannot compare to Mansfield, but he seems grateful to have acquired a position after other households dismissed him on account of his height or because they "couldn't take a servant out of a house in which there had not been a lady" (183).

We hear Brooksmith speak the most after Offord's funeral. Returning to the "downstairs" passage quoted earlier, let us examine Brooksmith's entire monologue, consisting of over half the words the narrator permits him, that the narrator has "always remembered as the very text of the whole episode" (182):

> Oh, sir, it's sad for you, very sad, indeed, and for a great many gentlemen and ladies; that it is, sir. But for me, sir, it is, if I may say so, still graver even than that: it's just the loss of something that was everything. For me, sir...,he was just all, if you know what I mean, sir. You have others, sir, I daresay – not that I would have you understand me to speak of them as in any way tantamount. But you have the pleasures of society, sir; if it's only in talking about him, sir, as I daresay you do freely – for all his blessed

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memory has to fear from it – with gentlemen and ladies who have had the same honour. That's not for me, sir, and I have to keep my associations to myself. Mr Offord was my society, and now I have no more. You go back to conversation, sir, after all, and I go back to my place....I just go downstairs, sir, again, and I stay there. (182)

Although Brooksmith's speech made enough of an impression for the narrator to revisit and, therefore, remember its content, the narrator seems to take away from it only on two words – "conversation" and "society." But a closer look at Brooksmith's phrasing emphasizes a different point that encompasses conversation and society.

Half of Brooksmith's comments in the story pertain to how he will miss Offord's employment and friendship, and I argue that his monologue does as well. Brooksmith's "loss of something that was everything" is not an "it;" the something-everything he has lost is a "he." *Offord* "was just *all*," not conversation or society. Moreover, Brooksmith attests that Offord constituted the whole of his society. The narrator's privilege is not that he has other houses to visit; it is in "the pleasures of society" that allow him "freely" to talk about Offord. Brooksmith, on the other hand, must "keep [his] associations to [himself]." Perhaps the only reason Brooksmith shares so much with the narrator in this scene is that the narrator has been kind to him, and he knows that this may be the only opportunity he will ever have to grieve aloud to anyone. To be seen and not heard constitutes another quality of Brooksmith's "place."

Brooksmith's silence stands out as another example of the narrator's discriminative insensibility. Even after Offord falls ill, the narrator continues to call at Mansfield Street; "the difference simply came to be that the visit was to Brooksmith"

(179). Nevertheless, the narrator shares very little of the dialogue he exchanges with Brooksmith. Once more, he speaks for Brooksmith, speculating or summarizing, but *always* interpreting. Consequently, the reader cannot definitively determine whether or not society is as important to Brooksmith as the narrator assumes.

When pondering the inevitability of Offord's death, the narrator concerns himself with Brooksmith's future. The "great point," as far as the narrator is concerned, is that Brooksmith cannot inherit society from Offord, "and society had become a necessity of Brooksmith's nature" (179). The reader notices, of course, that the *narrator* deems it a necessity; how crucial society is in Brooksmith's own mind remains indiscernible. The narrator qualifies this pronouncement: "I must add that he never showed a symptom of what I may call sordid solicitude – anxiety on his own account" (179). I credit the narrator for his admission. However, he does not take the next step and consider that Brooksmith may be concerned with his professional future and not fretting over the echelon of society in which he will find his next appointment. This further illustrates the narrator's detachment from Brooksmith's class. Just as he has no idea how much Brooksmith earns as a waiter at the end of the story, he may be just as oblivious to the concerns of "the servile class."

When the narrator calls on Brooksmith's later in the story, he reports, "[Brooksmith] was vague himself, and evidently weak, and much embarrassed, and not an allusion was made between us to Mansfield Street" (185). Because Brooksmith does not narrate the story, the reader cannot confirm whether or not he is "vague," "weak," or "embarrassed." The reader can, however, reasonably speculate that Brooksmith's sullenness results from the fact that he is attempting to recover from an illness in a

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"sickly," "discoloured," "grimy," "hot," "greasy" environment that smells of dirty linen with "vague, prying, beery females" silently lurking in his doorway. He may be dealing with stress due to his sickness and, assumedly, corresponding unemployment while trying to support a mother and an alcoholic aunt in a squalid habitat. Perhaps Brooksmith does not mention Mansfield Street because it is not his first priority. Maybe Brooksmith has gotten over it and moved on with his life. Perhaps he invites the narrator to visit, not so that he can breathe "the very atmosphere of criticism," but because the narrator is his friend and he misses his fellowship. None of these considerations occur to the narrator, however. Once more, his discriminative sensibility testifies to his own obsession with society rather than Brooksmith's. What *does* occur to the narrator, however, is his missed opportunity to scold Brooksmith for "the levity which had led him to throw up honourable positions" (185), which leads me to the narrator's final defining feature and the very reason he tells the story.

I conclude that "Brooksmith" serves as a literary "confession" by means of which the narrator seeks to mitigate a burden of guilt he has carried since Brooksmith's death. The narrator's "neglected…opportunity" above may surprise the reader the first time through the story. In truth, the narrator's desire to hold Brooksmith accountable for his own ill fortune does not materialize *ex nihilo*. The narrator lays the groundwork for assigning the blame to Brooksmith from the outset. Initially, the narrator seems complimentary when he credits Brooksmith as "the artist" responsible for the *salon*'s success. Again, however, the wise reader is suspicious. The narrator reflects on his pronouncement, "We felt this, covertly, at the time, without formulating it" (175). In other words, the *narrator* covertly felt that Brooksmith was the artist. The others may

have silently felt the same thing, but without formulation, we can have no confirmation of the others' opinions.

Even if Offord's *habitués* would have agreed with the narrator, their consent would not have made the fact true. In fact, the reader has every reason to doubt the narrator's opinion because when Offord reconvenes the *salon* after his sickness, "the spell was broken, and the great sign of it was that the conversation was, for the first time, not directed" (178). Had Brooksmith truly been the artist responsible for the *salon*'s success, Offord's illness would not have broken the spell. The narrator even goes so far as to determine that the source of the spell was Offord's direction of the conversation. Hence, Offord is the artist rather than Brooksmith.

Yet the narrator continues to assign responsibility to Brooksmith. After Brooksmith informs the narrator that Offord has fallen ill again, the narrator recalls, "[Brooksmith] seemed to wish to take counsel with me about it, to feel responsible for its going on in some form or other" (178). Again, Brooksmith may well have enjoyed serving Offord's guests and may have wished that the *salon*s could have continued. However, that his primary concern would be Offord's poor health and recovery seems far more likely.

Yet, influenced by Offord's judgment that Brooksmith likes the talk, the narrator convinces himself that Brooksmith is capable of impressive feats. So when Brooksmith falls ill after leaving his positions at Bayswater and Chester Square, the narrator concludes that he had voluntarily abjured his "fine, stiff, steady berths" (185). The narrator supposes Brooksmith's motives "had been profane and sentimental" (185). Once more, he assumes Brooksmith's mind and relates his thoughts to the reader: "He doubted

now even of my power to condone his aberrations. He didn't wish to have to explain; and

his behaviour in the future, was likely to need explanation" (185). Brooksmith never tells

the narrator why he left his positions at Bayswater and Chester Square, yet the narrator

has figured it out – "profane and sentimental" reasons. Somehow the narrator seems to

have forgotten what he, himself, told us – that Brooksmith had been turned away from

houses for being too short and for not having served in a house with a lady. The narrator

even seems to have forgotten why Offord's *habitués* refused to take Brooksmith:

> The people who knew him and had known Mr. Offord, didn't want to take
>
> him….I spoke to many of our old friends about him, and I found them all
>
> governed by the odd mixture of feelings of which I myself was conscious,
>
> and disposed, further, to entertain a suspicion that he was 'spoiled,' with
>
> which I then would have nothing to do. In plain terms a certain
>
> embarrassment, a sensible awkwardness, when they thought of it, attached
>
> to the idea of using him as a menial: they had met him so often in society.
>
> (182-83)

No one can bear the thought of employing Brooksmith because they are too embarrassed

or the experience would be too awkward. But instead of dealing with the embarrassment

and working through the awkwardness, everyone comes to the same conclusion: "He was

'spoiled.'"

This attitude comes to a head during the narrator's final encounter with

Brooksmith. Trying in vain to attract Brooksmith's attention at the dinner party, the

narrator surmises, "He had become a mere waiter, had joined the band of the white-

waistcoated who 'go out.' There was something pathetic in this fact, and it was a terrible

vulgarisation of Brooksmith. It was the mercenary prose of butlerhood; he had given up the struggle for the poetry" (186). The narrator fails to consider that Brooksmith's struggle may not be "for the poetry." Brooksmith may well contend with a far more practical struggle – to make ends meet. That Brooksmith is "spoiled" and resigns from positions because he requires greater refinement from his employer seems far less likely than that his employers dismiss him for arbitrary reasons so that he must take whatever positions he can. Throughout the story, the narrator holds Brooksmith more and more accountable for situations beyond his control.

The narrator's conclusion that Brooksmith is spoiled ranks among a sequence of excuses appearing around the time of Offord's death. Just before Offord dies, the narrator wonders what will become of Brooksmith afterwards. He realizes that he cannot afford to hire Brooksmith, but goes on to say, "Even if my income had permitted I shouldn't have ventured to say to Brooksmith…'My dear fellow, I'll take you on'" (179). So even if the narrator *could* afford to hire Brooksmith, he would find a reason to refrain.

After Offord's funeral, the narrator mitigates his anxiety regarding Brooksmith's precarious future: "I wanted to ask him if there was anything I could do for him, tainted with vagueness as this inquiry could only be. My wild dream of taking him into my own service had died away; my service was not worth his being taken into. My offer to him could only be to help him to find another place" (181). The narrator berates his own desire to hire Brooksmith even at the cost of degrading his own home.

Considering Brooksmith's other possible options, the narrator thinks of a "little shop" Brooksmith could set up with his inheritance. But he quickly dismisses this alternative as well: "That would have been dreadful; for I should have wished to further

any enterprise that he might embark in, yet how could I have brought myself to go and pay him shillings and take back coppers over a counter?" (181). He briefly revisits the notion, "Eighty pounds might stock a little shop – a *very* little shop; but, I repeat, I couldn't bear to think of that" (181). The narrator does not disregard the idea because it is unreasonable. Whether or not Brooksmith could have made a living managing even a "*very* little shop" is not in question; the narrator simply could not bear to patronize the shop after knowing Brooksmith in society.

Brooksmith proceeds to ask the narrator to inform him if he hears of any open positions. But the narrator stops him short, explaining, "I couldn't let him finish; this was, in its essence, too much in the really grand manner. It would be a help to my getting him off my mind to be able to pretend I *could* find the right place, and that help he wished to give me, for it was doubtless painful to him to see me in so false a position" (182). As the episode progresses, the narrator devotes less and less effort even to disguise his self-absorption. He will offer Brooksmith false assurance in order to get him off his mind, or more specifically, his conscience. The narrator cannot escape his own discomfort and even goes so far as to impose his own self-pity upon Brooksmith. He assumes that the butler who has just lost his friend and, consequently, his job cannot bear the pain of seeing the narrator in such an awkward situation.

A faint undertone seems to whisper from beneath the narrative surface. Whenever the narrator finds himself in a position in which he might be able to offer some practical assistance to Brooksmith, he constructs a reason through which he can escape and still claim that he did all he could for the butler. This attitude imbues the story with an almost fatalistic tone. Like the narrator's "foot of the stairs" conversations with Brooksmith, the

story has "the air of being already over – beginning, as it were, at the end" (179). The narrator's deterministic voice once again calls the reader's attention to the fact that the story proceeds from the narrator's memory. All the events having already transpired, the plot literally *does* begin at the end.

Interestingly, however, the narrator seems to respond to blame that no one places on him. Recognizing the narrator's apologies for his actions, or more accurately, his *in*actions, the reader cannot find a soul in the story who holds the narrator responsible for Brooksmith's unfortunate end. So to whom does he respond?

Early in his meditations, the narrator confesses, "I am reminded by some uncomfortable contrast of to-day how perfectly we were handled then" (174). Although no living person points a finger of accusation at the narrator, "some uncomfortable contrast" nevertheless provokes, if not *demands*, a response from him. Arcadia comes to the narrator's mind because he associates his present circumstance with it. The uncomfortable contrast evokes an emotional wasteland within him that leads him back to the Golden Age of Mansfield Street. Perhaps he simply suffers from a case of wistful nostalgia. But the title of the story is not "Offord" or "The *Salon*;" it is "Brooksmith." For some reason, the narrator associates his uncomfortable contrast with the butler.

I argue that the narrator struggles with guilt because of this very association. Of all the characters in the story, Brooksmith certainly endures the worst fate. In the penultimate line of the tale, the narrator says, "the dim ghost of poor Brooksmith is one of those that I see" (187). The narrator acknowledges that he did not appreciate Offord's society as much as he should have. He reflects, "I ask myself once more what had been the secret of such perfection. One had taken it for granted at the time, for anything that is

supremely good produces more acceptance than surprise. I felt we were all happy, but I didn't consider how our happiness was managed" (174). Offord's assessment of his butler certainly influences the narrator to develop a very inflated estimation of Brooksmith's powers. But the narrator finds that he cannot credit Brooksmith for his fond memories without also condemning Brooksmith for his own tragic demise.

The narrator's memories reveal that he is socially conscientious, wrestles with control issues, and is prone to making excuses. The latter of these takes the reader one step further, implying that the narrator has a latent, though pronounced sense of justice. He must find someone or something guilty for Brooksmith's regrettable fate. The story acts as a sort of confessional in which the narrator probes his memory for a subject on whom he can place the blame. He toys with the idea that perhaps he and his fellow *habitués* may have failed to do something more or different in order to spare Brooksmith those final difficult years. Unable or unwilling to do so, he concludes in his last line that Brooksmith "had indeed been spoiled" (187).

Whether or not the narrator's conclusion is accurate, the reader cannot confidently say. Since the story consists of *thoughts* of past events rather than the past events themselves, even the narrator cannot confidently say. However, the narrator *can* acquire some peace of mind by arriving at some resolution regarding his thoughts. Hence, "Brooksmith" is a cathartic exercise through which the narrator attempts to confront his dim ghost and lay it to rest. Consequently, a story the narrator names for the butler ironically concerns himself. Appropriately, by reviewing how the narrator associates various memories together and excludes certain details, the reader can learn as much, if not more, about the narrator as he or she does about Brooksmith.

In closing, I conclude that "Brooksmith" reveals the narrator's inability to deal with the age-old problem of why bad things happen to good people. His domineering narrative voice demonstrates his compulsion to maintain order and control. His exaggerated sense of propriety shows that he believes that events should proceed in certain ways and that everyone has his or her appointed place. But when effects do not correctly proceed from their corresponding causes, he must find an explanation. The "Brooksmith" narrator carries a burden because he has not been able to account for the events of Brooksmith's life after Offord passed away. He tries to relieve himself of that burden through writing the story. That Brooksmith's dim ghost will rest for long is doubtful, however.

The central conflict the narrator fails to address and overcome is that life can be difficult. Sometimes we know exactly why people suffer and die and unfortunate outcomes prevail, but many times we can provide no explanation. With the information the narrator has shared, Brooksmith seems to me to have been an unfortunate victim of circumstance. This conclusion, however, does not satisfy the narrator's need for an explanation. In thus examining the narrator's consciousness, I do not agree with his verdict. But his verdict and all the substantive parts comprising his secondary memory convince me that the theme of "Brooksmith" does not concern a butler's social and emotional decline as I stated earlier. Rather, the theme of "Brooksmith" concerns an obsessed man who prefers an erroneous solution to an ambiguous truth.

V. Closing Remarks

"Life is consciousness crowded with discriminations of subtle shades of character and mood, temperament and attitudes" (Vivas 581).

For decades, the interdisciplinary phenomenon the James brothers embodied has fascinated scholars. This fascination has produced insightful work regarding Henry and William's personal and professional relationship. However, few scholars have objectively reviewed Henry's fiction through William's psychological theories. I throw in my lot with the few critics who have and find that the reader can discover fresh literary perspectives when permitting William James' psychology the same literary privileges critics have granted psychoanalysis over the years.

James' ideas made a lasting impression on the world's conception of consciousness, even leading to a genre of modernist literature – the stream-of-consciousness novel. James' theory of consciousness consists of five defining characters. Thought is personal; no one consciousness ever thinks any thoughts that are not its own even if those thoughts correspond with others' thoughts of the same object, event, or concept. Thought also constantly changes. Even when someone revisits a previous thought, he or she thinks a new thought in the altered context of every thought they have entertained since the original thought. James' renowned stream-of-consciousness theory emphasizes that consciousness never stops or breaks up. Even after sleep, the final thoughts prior to losing consciousness flow into the first thoughts upon waking so that consciousness experiences no seam or gap. Additionally, consciousness focuses only on objects other than itself. Even when one thinks about consciousness, he or she does not "think consciousness," so to speak, but thinks a thought *about* consciousness that is an

entity independent of consciousness itself. Finally, consciousness pays more attention to some objects, events, or concepts more than others. Although all the elements of an experience fill the internodal consciousness, only some elements fill the consciousness' substantive parts according to that consciousness' organization of interests. These characters are conducive not only to creating literature but also to reading literature.

Literary theorists have recognized the value of Freud's psychoanalytic principles and have developed creative methods of applying them to identifying and interpreting the unconscious in literature. I can think of no reason why theorists cannot just as productively identify and interpret consciousness in literature as well. Although Freud and James focused on different areas of the mind, their theories are not necessarily in disagreement. In fact, one may simultaneously conduct a psychoanalytic reading and a consciousness reading of the same work and arrive at different, though not necessarily opposing, conclusions.

Analyzing two pieces of Henry James' literature demonstrates this assertion. By confining analysis exclusively to the consciousness the text provides, the reader can discover character traits that might not otherwise be apparent. In *The American*, consciousness theory reveals that Babcock does not part ways with Newman because of an innately fussy temperament. The two men's attentions naturally select diverse elements from their environment that lead them to a different set of priorities and perspectives. A close reading of narrative consciousness in "Brooksmith" reveals that the narrator is actually the main character rather than the title character. The narrator's memory indicates that he is a socially conscientious man who displays a compulsion to control the tone and language of a tale that serves as a confession more than a memoir.

Contrasting these readings with possible psychoanalytic interpretations, we find that we may arrive at remarkably different conclusions. Say, for example, I were to conduct a psychoanalytic reading of the Babcock episode in *The American*. I could easily interpret Babcock's behavior as anxiety resulting from socially unacceptable, and therefore repressed, homosexual urges. Babcock actually suffers from denial and rationalizes that his troubled disposition proceeds from Newman's insufficient appreciation of culture rather than from his own longing for romantic companionship. Because Newman, who the narrator informs us is "in the first place, physically, a fine man" (18), stirs up these cumbersome tendencies, Babcock practices avoidance by separating from his traveling companion.

Cheryl B. Torsney interprets Babcock's behavior from this very premise. Torsney locates a homoerotic subtext in Chapter V of *The American*, interpreting the episode as an autobiographical dramatization of what she believes to have been a romantic affair between Henry James and Charles Sanders Peirce in Paris during the winter of 1875-76. Torsney argues that James modeled Babcock after Peirce, who could be disagreeable at times, rather than after his brother William, as many readers, including William, have assumed. She completes the comparison, proposing that "the fear experienced by both Peirce and Babcock is a terror of the homoerotic, which may manifest itself as homosexual panic" (171). Torsney continues, "James' fictional portrayal of Peirce, Babcock, does not separate from Newman so much because of a distaste for his personal philosophy as because he suffers from a panic borne of his homoerotic attraction to Newman" (172). After Babcock leaves, Newman sends him a statue of a monk, which Torsney reads as "a fetish that plays a key role in the the [sic] sexual economy of the

novel" (173). The statue represents Newman's feminization of Babcock. Through a gap in the gown, a capon hangs from the monk's waist. Torsney interprets the capon as a Freudian fetish, or "supplemental phallus," onto which Babcock can displace his repressed desires (173). Establishing that a capon is a castrated male chicken that, afterwards, takes on hen-like characteristics, Torsney proposes that "castration=feminine=homosexual," implying that the Unitarian minister is a "*Bad*cock" (174). She likens Chapter V itself to the gap in the monk's gown, serving as "an erotic interlude whose meaning is embodied in the figure of a castrated chicken" (175).

Although my reading leads to a drastically different conclusion, plenty of room for Torsney's argument exists alongside mine. I claim that Babcock carries the burden of his congregation's expectations while suffering from poor digestion. Torsney posits that he grapples with repressed homoerotic desires. That Babcock may be a high-strung homosexual with an upset stomach is entirely possible. In other words, I do not dismiss other readings; I only demonstrate the alternative interpretation consciousness theory offers the reader. Psychoanalytic theory and consciousness theory constitute two psychological lenses that lead us to diverse conclusions without necessarily displacing each other. Theory has room for both methods, and each method contributes to a more diverse understanding of literature.

I have stated that consciousness theory is dynamic and flexible. It can enhance a number of theoretical approaches. We can read as I have read, laying characters or even the narrator "on the couch" in order to explore their consciousnesses. We can use the same methods to make historical speculations about the *author's* psychology during the time of composition. We can even put ourselves "on the couch" and perform an

introspective examination of what transpires in our own consciousnesses as readers while we read literature. In this case, consciousness theory nicely lends itself to practicing cognitive poetics, which focuses on "the cognitive processes which are made evident in the reader's decoding of the content" (Barry 312) in order to "give a psychological account of the whole problem of aesthetic and artistic experience, or, another hot issue, literary invention" (Gavins 2).

Psychoanalytic critics have demonstrated various other methods of application. While scholars such as Julia Kristeva, Slavoj Žižek, and Harold Bloom have devised creative psychoanalytic approaches to not only literature but also gender and socio-political issues, one thinker has left a particularly indelible mark on the history of psychoanalytic thought.

French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan reframed the unconscious in terms of the language we use to analyze and express it. He advanced Saussure's argument that meaning proceeds from conflicts between *words* rather than between words and objects (Barry 106). Consequently, language "becomes an independent realm" (Barry 107). The self exists only in the already established language into which we enter. Thus, identity resides in the unconscious, which deconstructs the notion of the individual subject (Barry 108).

In Lacan, displacement and condensation become metonymy and metaphor, and the psychosexual stages give way to the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. In the Imaginary, a child cannot conceive of himself or herself as a being apart from his or her mother. In the mirror stage, however, the child perceives himself or herself as a complete, autonomous individual. Lacan calls this epiphany *méconnaissance,* or the misrecognition

of an identity erroneously founded on an imaginary, epistemologically incomplete construct, which prepares the child to enter into the Symbolic. Language's possibilities and restrictions teach the child the possibilities and restrictions of life that the world imposes upon him or her. Lacan replaces the ego with the subject. Once the child learns that he or she is an "other" to his or her others, the function of the ego, like the "I" in a sentence, becomes relative because one person's "I" simultaneously represents another person's "you," "he," or "she" (Richter 1113).

In the Symbolic, the child experiences lack once he or she understands that words are not the objects they describe but rather *representations* of the objects. As representations, words substitute for objects. As substitutions, words cannot contain their objects and, therefore, signify what they can neither embody nor encapsulate. Consequently, every time we use language, we communicate by means of empty signs that implicitly remind us of the object's absence and otherness (Barry 109). Feelings of lack, need, and desire motivate us to seek the *Phallus* – another consciousness that desires us in return. Disappointed desires create the unconscious as a reservoir in which to bury unpleasant feelings. As a result, the unconscious' formation corresponds with the child's entrance into the Symbolic as he or she learns language (Richter 1112-13).

Finally, everything that lies beyond the bounds of language constitutes the Real. We can only conceive of it as an abstraction without the ability to articulate or organize anything about it (Richter 1113). Although this reduction by no means encompasses the full extent of Lacanian thought, it adequately provides an example of the fact that psychology does not exist in a vacuum. On the contrary, it imbues and informs other, seemingly unrelated, aspects of life.

In "Metaphors and the Discourse of Consciousness in William James," Jill M. Kress also addresses the delicate relationship between the mind and the language with which it must communicate to the outer world. Resembling elements of Lacan's "return to Freud" (Lacan 107), Kress examines James' problematic, interdisciplinary treatment of consciousness as he struggles to balance science and metaphysics. The language with which James describes "the mind-body problem" eventually assumes control and complicates his theory of consciousness (264). In *Principles of Psychology*, James' figurative examples result in metaphors that discuss "a landscape for consciousness," which is altogether different than consciousness (266). In trying to describe consciousness, James only succeeds in creating consciousness while insisting that consciousness, itself, creates its own reality. James precariously bases much of consciousness' construction on feeling. Fourteen years after publishing *Principles of Psychology*, James betrays his suspicions regarding consciousness, nearly dismissing it altogether in "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" James identifies consciousness as a function and replaces its existence with pure experience. James relocates consciousness to the spiritual realm while asserting that thoughts remain concrete. Thus, by his career's end, James constructed a theory of consciousness only to deconstruct it without arriving at any definitive conclusion on the matter.

Nevertheless, I still contend that applying consciousness theory yields significant insights whether practiced as a primary or supplemental tool. The rest of William James' psychological and philosophical treatises contain several other concepts the reader can apply to literature. For example, James evaluates how our beliefs influence our perception of reality. Our habits of attention select not only from the outer world of

experience but also from among the many inner "worlds" into which we relegate our thoughts (*Principles of Psychology* 2: 291-92). Essentially, we *are* our realities insofar as reality is subjective and indicative of its believer's personal character. As a result, the reader can piece together how a literary character perceives reality by taking inventory of the character's belief, will, emotion, action, and aesthetic sensibility, or vice versa.

One of James' most provocative theories involves the emotions. He proposes that human emotion is so entangled with instinct and habit that it arises from physiological reactions rather than the converse. He claims that "we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and not that we cry, strike, or tremble, because we are sorry, angry, or fearful, as the case may be" (2: 450). James reasons that the events that elicit within us an emotional response first excite a physiological reaction that leads to the emotion. Weeping must therefore cause sadness rather than result from it. Thus, emotional temperament largely depends upon physiological constitution so that "we immediately see why there is no limit to the number of possible different emotions which may exist, and why the emotions of different individuals may vary indefinitely" (2: 454). Considering this theory would reframe the way scholars evaluate literary characters' emotional responses to events in the plot.

Even regarding the whole of James' writings, however, we would only skim the surface of the different schools of psychology. William James belongs to the functionalist school, which concentrates on "how mental and behavioral processes function – how they enable the organism to adapt, survive, and flourish" (Myers 4). Along with James, other notable functionalist thinkers include John Dewey, Harvey A. Carr, Hermann Ebbinghaus, and Ivan Pavlov. In addition to functionalism and psychoanalysis, the

psychological tradition also includes structuralism[16], behaviorism[17], humanism[18], and Gestalt[19] psychology to name a few. Developing literary methods of analysis from the spectrum of psychological thought would be well worth the required time and intensive study.

We read diverse genres from diverse fields and disciplines for equally diverse reasons. The news informs us of current events; history presents an account of our past; philosophy seeks an applicable understanding of life, and the list goes on. Literature grants us the opportunity to experience the author's imaginative microcosm for leisure or study. Although even the most mimetic literature can never equate to real life, it still represents fictive truths that correlate with experiences the reader encounters every day. As we learn to read literary text, we develop the necessary skills that enable us to read the text of life. When we learn to analyze a work of fiction from several different perspectives, we hone perspectives by means of which we can evaluate situations that do occur in reality. If properly reading literature instructs us how to read life properly, then how much could we benefit from a better psychological understanding of each?

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[16] Structuralism was one of the earliest schools of psychology, using "introspection to explore the elemental structure of the human mind" (Myers 4). Structuralist psychologists include Edward B. Titchener and Wilhelm Wundt.

[17] Behaviorists such as John B. Watson, Edward Thorndike, and B.F. Skinner believe that "psychology should be an objective science that studies behavior without reference to mental processes" (Myers 312).

[18] Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and other humanist psychologists focus on "human experience, problems, potentials, and ideals" (Coon 25).

[19] Gestalt psychology emphasizes "our tendency to integrate pieces of information into meaningful wholes" (Myers 236). Wolfgang Kohler, Max Wertheimer, and Kurt Koffka rank among its most prominent practitioners.

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