

Narratives of Mental Fragmentation: The Containment of Mental Illness in Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

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I don't know why I should write this.

I don't want to.

I don't feel able.

-from Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (173)

The abnormal is exploited and exploitative, read and interpreted, and can give an entire subpopulation a voice. This narratorial voice both brings the group to light and serves to create bounds within which it can exist without stepping into the world of reason. Read simply as allegory, "Strange Case" and "Yellow Wallpaper" largely ignore the mechanism that allows these texts to survive in the canon of academia and college reading lists. This mechanism is that of the narrative freedoms which give space to the parts of humanity which are difficult to speak of, madness and mores. The fact that these texts are still canonized and studied shows the vast power that authorship has. In both stories, we see the negotiation of agency through the act of writing. The status of authorship gives the character in mental turmoil some space to allow for his or her Otherness. Writing is a claim at selfhood, where selfhood has been repressed and discouraged from existing due to social constraints. Writing has been, and is, that space wherein the abnormal comes out, thrives, and makes it into larger schemes of discourse. Abiding by Foucault's analysis of the "Repressive Hypothesis," that which is repressed and pushed out in these narratives is just that which emerges in these narratives and becomes a topic of discussion, while coming into public eye.

I will intentionally use the word "madness" in my discourse, so as to draw attention to the insensitivity of the language, and perhaps the necessity of this insensitivity, for there seems to be

no other proper way to speak on this topic except by use of the words we are familiar with. In the Lacanian sense, it is words that reveal the limited information we have on a subject, but that are also necessary if we are to have the discussion in the first place. This familiarity of our vocabulary for mental illness is what I will exploit in order to address this topic in a way such as not to discount the experiences of the mad, but to legitimize them. This will be done by correlating the narrative's function and its existence with the process of madness. By process, I refer to the intensification and change of the mental state of the characters as the narrative progresses and moves forward. What emerges is what I will refer to as the "voice of the mad." This "voice" comes from a variety of places. Sometimes it comes from the mental illness itself which infiltrates the narrative and distorts it. This voice can also come from an induction of the state of "madness" which can be achieved, for example as in "Strange Case," by taking a drug that provides an altered state of consciousness.

The voice of the mad is one that is both romanticized and stigmatized. When considering the voice of the mad, it is important to recognize it as a relatively recent concept. This is because the narrative of the mad person has for long been looked upon as an allegory for female oppression in "Yellow Wallpaper" and a representation of the dual nature of man in "Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." It is important to create an alternate discourse and interpretation of these texts, particularly considering the neglect that this topic has suffered in literary studies. To give these texts over to a purely allegorical reading is to disregard the discourse the texts encourage on the presence and exploitation of states of abnormal mental functionings. This is a trial at the acknowledgement of mental illness in these texts, and a look at the convergence between nineteenth century public opinion on madness and representations of

madness in the literature of the time period. It is also about the way in which the narrative as a structure can provide insight into the mental states of the characters, and how the narrators grasp at agency through the power gotten by authorship. I will be focusing on the narrative structure and how it relates with the mental state of the narrator, that which is induced in "Strange Case" and that which is exacerbated by modes of repression in "The Yellow Wallpaper."

In the nineteenth century, the limitations in medical knowledge of mental illness produced a culture of fear and distrust around those suffering from "madness." What survives of this period is a work of documentation of the difficulties of living in a society that could not, and would not, acknowledge mental illness as a legitimate mental disorder that impacted the sufferers' everyday lives. Here I will look at ways in which mental illness exists in the nineteenth century Literature tradition, and focus on targeting the illness as one unburdened by stereotypes of gender and criminality normally associated with the madness narrative. Narratives of deviant mental states both construct and contain madness, especially within the parameters of narrative functions, which force into being the ways in which the mentally ill influence and manipulate their narratives and contain the abnormal within a body of text. The exploitative nature of the texts to be examined are not only like this because of the tradition in which they are created and read but also because they are constructed from the narrative lens of states of consciousness that are considered to be abnormal. When I say abnormal, it is in the sense that the characters, during states of Otherness, act in a way that does not fit into the cultural and social framework of the "normal."

In "Strange Case" the Jekyll induces the state that allows him freedom, whereas in "The Yellow Wallpaper" Gilman's heroine seems to come to her abnormal state in a progressive

manner, aided by her husband's disbelief. The analysis of these texts as first-person narratives can be seen in contrast with the text written from the viewership and penmanship of the "analyst" figure. For example, Sigmund Freud writes a case study on a young woman he calls Dora. In this narrative, he takes a historically real figure, renames her, and recreates her through the medium of text. In doing so, he sections her off as abnormal and study-able. In this way he also institutionalizes her by making her into a model that can be normalized and tranquilized by diagnosis and study. The labeling somehow strips her of power, and so does the non-existence of a first-person narrative from her perspective. Freud at once constructs Dora and enables discourse on a particular form of madness he deems to be hysteria, and at the same time controls this very figure through diagnosis and by holding the authorial power of creating her as a figure within the text which does not exist, as he has created her outside of the text. He allows space for the madness and contains this space within a narrative framework that is also dictated by his methodology. This methodology is based on Symbolic Order (linguistic thought system), which structures and restricts all of our thoughts, and by surrogacy, actions, for it constructs "normal" and "abnormal."

Dora strives for independence but does not get it, especially in the text, where she is limited by the perceptions and narrative capabilities of Freud, the author. While the narrative form limits Dora in many ways, it also allows her the space of focality. She gains the space on the pages of a potent discourse, and thereby becomes a powerful figure in the conversation as a subject. Jekyll similarly creates this space of experiment in Otherness and containing this creation when he releases Hyde, who takes on potent allegorical meaning: he is the persona in the text who is able to go outside of "normal" social mores and interactions. But as the narrator

of his Statement, he never allows Hyde to emerge with a voice in the text beyond mediations imposed on him.

The relevance of this argument in present time is born from the idea that there is still no space for a discourse on those abnormal behaviors of humans, and that the space allotted this "power" of discourse is illusory in that it is constrained to narrative conventions and cannot remain alive outside of these constraints which include coherence, linearity, and exploitation of the topic for entertainment purposes. Note that madness is only deemed permissible to be spoken of in obvious circumstances -in the eventhood of the writer being an artist- for otherwise the writing of experience would need to be taken out of the context of fictionalization and into the realm of "real" experience, and perhaps set aside frivolously as a text that is marred by the stigma it gets from being recognized as a text from the perspective of a person in an altered state of consciousness.

During the eighteenth century, madness was perceived as a threat to the normal person. Madness was also a source of entertainment. For a period of time, the mental hospital Bedlam charged an admission fee to those members of the public interested in viewing those institutionalized. There was also a time in which madness was believed to be spread by "bad air," a gross misconception of the source of mental illness. The threat and the entertainment value of mental illness reduced it to something that simply could not be taken seriously as a social and biological issue. Slowly, there emerged narratives describing the experience of these institutions and of mental illness in its manifest state, including *Perceval's Narrative: A Patient's Account of His Psychosis 1830-1832*. The narrative of Perceval is an autobiography written by a man institutionalized against his will for what future analysts looked at as schizophrenic symptoms,

which included hallucinations, hearing voices, and evidently distorted ideas of reality.

Perhaps those writing fiction got a voice because their narrative voice is deemed far enough from the truth to take on romanticized qualities and it still provides somewhat of a warning of the mad. With these narratives also comes a sense of the safety of being removed from the mad subject, who like those people institutionalized for their eccentricities, is contained within the "safe" parameters of the text. It is not the individual who retains a voice through this "language" spoken but it is "madness" itself which gets the voice. Reviewers of "The Yellow Wallpaper" jumped on the opportunity to morally reprimand the author and her publisher for bringing the conversation of mental illness into light, and others seemed misinformed as to the discursive potential of those sensitive topics brought up in the text. A reviewer for *The New England Magazine* (1892) going by simply "M.D" describes the narrative as follows: "It is a sad story of a young wife passing through the gradations from slight mental derangement to raving lunacy....It certainly seems open to serious question if such literature should be permitted in print...To others, whose lives have become a struggle against an heredity of mental derangement, such literature contains deadly peril. Should such stories be allowed to pass without protest, without severe censure?" (Dock 103). He labels the story as being written in "a sensational style" and as "holding the reader in morbid fascination to the end" thereby defining it as *entertainment*, which was what the mad were for a great deal of time. "M.D" also involves in his review a question of the moral obligation of those people in power of censoring what is published, thereby alluding to the industry governing publication, and in this, making it liable for the information (even fictional) that is available to the public for consumption. The reviewer perhaps feels threatened by the opening of this discourse.

Another reviewer, Henry Blackwell, this time writing for *The Woman's Journal* (1899), says "[t]his is a most striking and impressive study of morbid psychology, in the shape of a story" (107). Blackwell goes on to discredit the legitimacy of the mental illness in the tale by ascribing the problem as one stemming from woman's position. He says "[n]othing more graphic and suggestive has ever been written to show why so many women go crazy, especially farmers' wives, who live lonely, monotonous lives." He goes on to contradict the censorship that "M.D" advocates. He says "these books [The Yellow Wallpaper and Miserrimus] deserve to be perpetuated and widely circulated." Either way, the consensus among reviewers of the time heavily blames the wallpaper itself as the culprit of this mental spiral into madness, which very much goes to show the ignorance of the times in regards to mental illness. The focus of the wallpaper as entity takes away from a reading that would legitimize the mental struggle of the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper." And part of this displacement of blame onto the wallpaper as the cause for her illness may well fit into the culture of fear built around mental illness. To ascribe the mental illness as derived from something within the control of humans makes the illness less threatening because it can be controlled. Especially for those of the nineteenth century time period, the mentally ill were seen as fear-inducing creatures, barely human, for they were interpreted to lack that thing called "reason." Displacing the blame for the illness onto something that is changeable (one can always pull down the wallpaper) is much easier than admitting that the "cure" for this disorder is not readily available, and not readily understood as a disorder. Society would much rather believe that this illness is easily curable, and that it cannot happen to a seemingly "normal" housewife.

For so long, and still, society forced stagnation onto the mad, by using tactics including

the "rest cure" which Gilman and her heroine received. In *Madness and Creativity*, a compilation of essays edited by Saunders, Robin Downie provides some valuable insight into the verbal emissions of the mad. She says "[m]adness, or the cries of madness, were a bit like (if you like) a belch, or a fart" and continues that "[t]here was nothing in [the speech of the mad] to listen to and decode" (23). So the vocalizations of the mad were reduced to simply that, vocal emissions with little or no substance. Some went as far as to attempt to discredit authors like Jonathan Swift as having a madness that was akin to him being but a child, hence a being with no legitimate voice. Even when considering the role of Sigmund Freud in providing an awareness of the mentally ill, his talking cure was not about listening but "decoding" those images of the subconscious. This serves to show that even when the mad were allowed a place of speech in a social context, their verbal (and later, written) emissions were believed to be in need of translation or interpretation.

There is a progression of the voice of the mad, but it is dependent on the social role of the mad person more so than him claiming a voice and using it. Beginning in the eighteenth century, was "the first time since the Great Confinement that the madman had become a social individual; it was the first time that anyone had entered into conversation with him, and that, once again, he was questioned" (200). Here he was allowed a context in which to speak, but always with the label of "madness" attached to him. Their language must have been limited in some ways, but the way in which I have mentioned has been in the narrative's interpretations, which indeed contribute to prescribing limitations onto the texts. They were always looked upon through the lens of this categorization. There also seemed always to be the looming threat of confinement, so perhaps those providing madness narratives were also limited as to what extent they could really

emit their stories. The voice of the mad may have been allowed as a station in society because it was separated off under labels and thereby pacified as something other than an immediate looming threat. Madness seemed to have been used as a social mechanism to encourage reason.

One of the most accessible way in which the mad communicate is through the written word and particularly the first-person narrative, which surpasses the other perspectives of narrative in "closeness" to the narrator. It seems as if the primary reason why the mad communicated in this way was because it was deemed the only outlet for them. It also works to provide a physical remnant of a mental state, which is highly important to consider in this conversation. Such narratives, particularly those written in the first-person, even if fictionalized, provide valuable semblances of the lives of those mentally ill in the time period. The written word also functions to separate the self into at least two parts: the narrator of the story in the story, and the narrator of the story outside of it telling the story, which is fabricated by the author. Further there is the perception of the self as a character of the written work, among other identities that become convoluted the more we delve into this issue.

The speech, or that information which is given to us via quotations, in "Strange Case" provides us with an introduction to Hyde. Both are meditations on the perceptions of the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" and Hyde by the Other and provide one with a colored idea of what the mad are like. Hyde is described in animalistic and otherworldly terms, he "trampled calmly over the child's body....It wasn't like a man; it was like some damned Juggernaut" (9). We get our first encounter with the character of Hyde through the narrative voice of Enfield, who is in dialogue with our primary narrator, Mr. Utterson. Our introduction to Jekyll is through the character of Hyde. His name is on the check that Hyde writes to the family of the child who he

has harmed. Interestingly, while his actions are considered morally unacceptable, it is not that which Hyde is preoccupied with. Instead, he is clearly concerned with the soiling of his name. Enfield narrates that "[w]e told [Hyde] we could and would make such a scandal out of this" (9). So then Hyde is concerned with the verbal repercussions of his actions, and uses another name and signature to get himself out of this trouble, that of Dr. Jekyll. It is then that one truly sees the significance of the written word. Hyde brings out a check signed with "a name very well know and often printed" (10). This is the first instance one receives of the power of the written word in "Strange Case" and it has to do with agency and authorial consent. We will see later that indeed writing the narrative of madness is that which gives the mentally ill agency, so it is appropriate here that writing is equated with the giving of agency.

Language can also be seen to subdue and to convolute ideas, so as to make them less potent. For example, the word "nervous" is recurring in "The Yellow Wallpaper" which according to Furst is "in attempts to fathom enigmatic conditions for which no acceptable explanation was available" (94). The word "nervous" is thereby a stand-in or surrogate for what cannot otherwise be described. The word Delirium works like "nerve" and "nervous" do. James Cowles Prichard explicates the term Delirium in *Cyclopaedia of Practical Medicine*: "The term delirium has either been employed without design in a *vague* and indefinite manner, or it has been purposely used in a very comprehensive sense, and made to include every mode and degree of mental disturbance" (emphasis added, Wood 116). Michel Foucault makes this point in his *Madness and Civilization*, wherein he makes note of this grouping of that which he calls "unreason" which encompasses all abnormal social behaviors, including madness. Foucault also points to the vagueness of this categorization of those things considered under the umbrella of

“unreason.” In the following, Foucault points to the selectivity of the social atmosphere in who they wanted to hear speak. He poses the following rhetorical inquiry: “If a whole range of unreason was reduced to silence, but madness left free to speak language of its scandal, what lesson could it teach which unreason as a whole was not capable of transmitting” (78). In this Foucault points to a particular social dynamic that is exploitative of those people afflicted with mental illness. He refers to the output of madness as “scandal” therein drawing attention to the dramatization of their experiences. In addition, Foucault emphasizes that there were restrictions on who was “left free” to communicate. He also goes on to identify a key turning point in history prior to the period that I am analyzing as “the first time since the Great Confinement that the madman had become a social individual; it was the first time that anyone had entered into conversation with him, and that, once again, he was questioned” (200). The “madman” interestingly remained a figure and a subject, more so than a person. This figure also stayed in the haze of ambiguity, just like the words used to describe the madman; “it is difficult to say whether they are mad, sick, or criminal” (201). Seemingly, all of these identifiers were applicable, hence the vague categorizations such as delirium and nervous.

As mentioned before, the ways in which the mad could communicate was very much restricted by social influences. Freud provides an example of one social influence, that of the institution, in this case Charcot Clinic, and how those restricted in them could communicate when restricted by their own illnesses: “in people with hysterical mutism, writing became a vicarious substitute for speech. They wrote more fluently, faster, and better than others, and better than they themselves used to....In the first days of her aphonia [Dora] found that 'writing was always particularly easy for her' " (Freud 33). We see even here that when speech is literally

not possible, and in “The Yellow Wallpaper” when it is discouraged, the outlet for those words unspoken remains that of writing. The significance of the writing greatly increases when it is the only viable form of communication and its importance as an interpretive material becomes more apparent. But note that Freud's approach is highly interpretive, it relies little on the content of the narrative itself and more on where the manifest content is emerging from within the psyche and what it is hiding. Like Freud, I argue for an entity other than the one speaking. Especially in consideration of the power of the personal narrative, I draw attention to the presence of three personas of the person afflicted with mental illness: the person who experiences the mental illness first hand, the person who writes the narrative, and that person who lives through the narrative. Then the narrative itself is a separate entity that borrows from the other personas but also becomes its own for it is a physical product of the person. They are divided intentionally within the text so as to accentuate the disparity of identities at play.

While in a narrative like “The Yellow Wallpaper,” the narrator wrote partly out of spite and also as an activity to release her from her surroundings, "Baudelaire [who induced madness] uses poetry to explore states of elation and depression that are rooted in the body" (Thiher 210). And "[i]n denigrating scientific thought and rationality, [authors Lautreamont and Rimbaud] made madness into a positive achievement, an ultimate experience...[for those who] wanted to overcome the limits of reason" (Thiher 214). Here we see dueling ideas of madness, that which needs to be controlled like in the primary literary sources, and that which wants to be released for the sake of greater intellectual perusal. In terms of the narrative as a way of explicating this madness, "[a]s a narrative device, *delirium* enables revelations and transformations that would seem implausible in realist plot" (emphasis added, Wood 113). Interestingly, these tales could

well be taken as gothic and hence not based in a realistic world, and are often taken as allegory. The way I am reading the texts straddles the lines between these two; it is the interpretation of these surreal events in Jekyll and the narrator of “The Yellow Wallpaper” as experiences of altered states of consciousness like the sufferance of madness, and still, the nod at the allegorical meaning of these hallucinations and ideas of dualism.

On a topical level, the narrative of “Strange Case” begins with Jekyll referring to himself in the first person, and continues on in the third person, until it ends with Jekyll's final transformation into his alter ego, Hyde. Dissociation comes through as an event and as a narrative force. The eventhood of dissociation is described in the following, when Jekyll/Hyde looks into a mirror: "when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself" (Stevenson 51). Here Jekyll both combines his identities into one being and differentiates them. He calls Hyde "that ugly idol" thereby estranging himself from that figure in the mirror. But he adopts this persona as his own. The disparity between the consciousness of Jekyll, the consciousness of Hyde, and the physical bodies of each remains at the forefront of the story.

A similar instance of external association occurs in “The Yellow Wallpaper.” Her obsessive interest in the wallpaper, and the woman she seeing trapped inside of it becomes who she identifies with. The narrator says "I wonder if they all come out of that wall-paper as I did?...I suppose I shall have to get back behind the pattern when it comes night, and that is hard!" (Gilman 181). At the beginning of the story, she is completely separate from this figure, but she and the woman in the wallpaper seemingly become one entity by the end of the narrative yet close reading suggests that a single identity emerges, that of the alter persona. The narrative

functions very similarly with the way in which the narrator of “Strange Case;” it begins with the two separate identities, and cycles through various intimate associations before coming to a tentative resolution of selfhood. In “The Yellow Wallpaper” the narrator’s identity becomes synonymous with that of the woman in the wallpaper temporary, and then she says something which suggests that she has given over agency to the alter-persona of the woman in the wallpaper and forsaken her own, original persona. She says “I’ve got out at last in spite of you and Jane. And I’ve pulled off most of the paper, so you can’t put me back!” (182) Here, the narrator is in the presence of her husband, and thereby it can be deduced that “you” is referring to him. Further, “Jane” can be speculated to be the name of the narrator because it is not John’s sister’s name, and this is the first and only mention of a “Jane” in the story. The timing heavily suggests that this is a point at which the narrator no longer identifies as the woman who narrated the journal-like entries and instead has become the woman in the wallpaper, who proclaims to have emerged. Another indicator is that rather than remaining in the first person, the narrative here is told through quotations, as if distancing the narrator even more from the initial identity.

What draws the narrative forward is the explanation of her internal state, but this internal state, like in “Strange Case,” takes an external object: Hyde in “Strange Case” and the woman trapped in the wallpaper in “The Yellow Wallpaper.” What remains, aside from the identification, is the recording of the mental workings of these “original” personas, or the narrator of “The Yellow Wallpaper” and Dr. Jekyll. They are seemingly the default characters given that in the stories, they hold the authorial voice of the narrative, thereby have the chance to direct the narrative as they please. Perhaps here we can establish the existence of a double presence or double existence. There is that of the person who resides within the narrative, the

constructed mad or criminal person, and there is the person outside of the narrative, or the author, whose mental state can only be gotten at through mediation of text. Here the focus is on the former two, for the connection to the narrative by author is only present in "The Yellow Wallpaper," which Gilman used as a place to address her issues with the "rest cure" and even sent the story to her doctor, who eventually changed his practices. In addition to this double existence of the mad person inside or outside of the narrative, there is also a double existence within the texts: "Jane" the narrator and the woman in the wallpaper, and Jekyll and Hyde. These identities eventually encounter one another at the end of the narrative, just as we could propose that through writing, those multiple identities are able to come together and co-exist within this space of the text, at least momentarily. Perhaps it is just that space of the narrative that facilitates the convergence of identities and creates a "whole" person. If the narrative is where the identities converge, it is also where the identities fight. The resolution of each story actually comes from the convolution of these identities after a conflict, seen in form of a physical altercation, and with an attempt at identification with the alter-persona.

Part of the culture of madness and altered states of consciousness involves its purposeful cultivation, and with this comes another convolution of identities, in way of perceiving sensory experiences. Further, part of this cultivation includes being able to describe those very experiences. Dr. Jekyll describes his first physical transformation into Hyde in the following:

There was something strange in my sensations, something indescribably new and, from its very novelty, incredibly sweet. I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill race in my fancy, a solution of bonds of obligation, an unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul (Stevenson 50).

There is an aesthetic quality to the recounting of his transformation, and this in a way is an

exploitation. But then again, this is based on the assumption that we should be hypersensitive to the condition of madness or altered states of consciousness. Then there is the allowance of some people to speak of madness and other states openly, while others are not given this ability. These aesthetic qualities perpetuate this culture of exploitation because they encourage the romanticized rendering of madness and altered states. Perhaps part of this has to do with the subject matter at hand, and maybe the subject matter seems to further the beauty of the language, due to its contrast with the horror of the subject matter. To aestheticize something is to control it in many ways, for it makes it something to be interpreted, which goes back to Freud's theories which rely on interpretive measures as opposed to truly taking in the story of the mad-person. If something is "aesthetic" it is interpretable, for it works as a piece of art.

Part of this issue of the reliability of the first-person narrative written by the mad person also has to do with the largely believed in notion that madness could be *controlled*. This idea is brought up in the following by Churchill in the anthology *Madness and Morals*:

The surest road to health, say what they will,  
 Is never to suppose we shall be ill;  
 Most of those evils we poor mortals know  
 From doctors and imagination flow (176).

Here the emphasis is on *self-control* over the ailment. Connect this with the following from "The Yellow Wallpaper": "[John] says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let any silly fancies run away with me" (173). The power struggle comes from falsely assigning the mad a sense of control where they have none, and making them feel more out of control, and by rejecting their capacity to create a narrative. The narrator of "The

"Yellow Wallpaper" says "I did write for a while in spite of them; but it does exhaust me a good deal - having to be so sly about it, or else meet with heavy opposition (166-7). And later, "he hates to have me write a word" (168). John continues to enforce not only narrative constraints but false ideals of mental control: "He says that my imaginative power and habit of story-making, a nervous weakness like mine is sure to lead to all manner of excited fancies, and that I ought to use my will and good sense to check the tendency" (170). Here I put pressure on some of the vocabulary used, which points to John's ideas of the narrator's illness. He uses terms that suggest his disapproval of what he seems to believe is a behavioral problem rather than something which is uncontrollable and biologically based. Of course, he dismisses alongside this the environmental factors leading her to her breakdown. The vocabulary that is particularly lending itself to these conclusions include: weakness, excited, and fancies. These suggest a degree of control is applicable to the situation.

John heavily suggests in "The Yellow Wallpaper" the false idea that she has control over the imagination which plays to his idea of reason's equation with scientific and concrete thought. And as Churchill would have it, Freud says of Dora that "[w]e have to begin by trying to convince the patient herself of the existence of her intention to be ill" (37). A way in which John, the narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper's" husband, delegitimizes her experience is by subscribing to the idea that the mental illness can be controlled by the sufferer, and further, that there is a simplistic explanation of the disorder: letting one's imagination run wild. In Conrad Shumaker's "Too Terribly Good to Be Printed," he says that "[f]or John, mental illness is the inevitable result of using one's imagination, the creation of the attractive 'fancy' which the mind then fails to distinguish from reality" (592). Fiction as a genre likewise plays with this idea,

providing “realistic” social scenarios, and even if through allegorical means, that provide the need for interpretation and placement into the “real” world. The fiction becomes so conducive to real situations that it can no longer be distinguished from it. With mental illness, the addition to the fictional narrative would be considered those romanticising factors that provide for a purposeful narrative form. The fiction and the power of imagination confront John’s idea of the world, his view through the lens of his profession as a physician who believes in physical symptoms to an ailment. Shumaker continues “[i]magination and art are subversive because they threaten to undermine [John’s] materialistic universe” (592). As shown, literary forms of expression are highly involved in the idea of madness, and if the two go together, so does materialism and sanity, according to this form of logic.

The canon of the narratives of the mad served not only the community of the mad, but also pleased a particular sector of society, “[w]e must doubtless take into account an entire literary development, a whole emotional, perhaps political exploitation of vague fears” (Foucault 204). It is uncertain as to the source of these narratives, whether they were fictionalized accounts of mental illness, or legitimate accounts, and perhaps this is not the significance of this culture of inducing fear. The mere fact that it existed provides us with a talking point on the exploitation of the mad for the sake of narrative, in the hopes of satisfying a want of the public, to fulfill and legitimize this feeling that they should fear a part of the population, and further, to sanction their maltreatment. The madness narrative potentially perpetuates these false ideas of mental illness while simultaneously bringing the conversation into the eye of the public. This works in the same way as Foucault’s analysis of the Repressive Hypothesis, which while applied to sexuality, can be equally useful here. The complicated line between these two consequences of the madness

narrative converges when we attempt to identify the function of the narrative in coordination with the experience of madness. In Bearhs' 1982 work called *Unity and Multiplicity*, the author names the types of alter-personalities:

"Psychoanalysts like Kernberg (1975) and others describe one of the defining characteristics of borderline patients as exaggerating within themselves what they perceive as good and bad. In general, both poles of the good/bad split are so overemphasized that they share one common feature - they are not real. Whether good or bad at a given moment, the individual's sense of real selfhood is distorted" (147).

The narrative exploits this allegorical personality conflict by creating three characters: the ideal Dr. Jekyll, the living Dr. Jekyll, and the wholly evil Mr. Hyde. It is not enough that the narrative deals with this disparity between characters who share a consciousness in realistic terms, it overemphasizes and exaggerates the separateness by giving each a different body, except in the case of the ideal Dr. Jekyll, who exists only in Dr. Jekyll's fantasy. In his confessional "Full Statement of the Case," Dr. Jekyll says he "learned to recognize the thorough and primitive duality of man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both" (49). He suggests a tertiary (and more!) persona when near the beginning of his narrative when he says "man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" (48). Therein he acknowledges his scientific and philosophic limitations, but does suggest at one point in the narrative an alternative to the binary men within him. In order for Hyde to be wholly evil, and for this to fit within the paradigm of the two-sided man, Dr. Jekyll would need to be wholly good, which he is not. First of all, the yearning of Dr. Jekyll to

release the inner evil would not qualify him as wholly good, but understood as a way to segregate out the evil, my idea of the third persona still stands. He says: "My two natures had a memory between them. Jekyll (who was a composite) now with the most sensitive apprehensions, now with a greedy gusto, projected and shared in the pleasures and adventures of Hyde" (55). The narrator, who is indistinguishable at this point, clearly identifies Jekyll as a "composite."

Part of the problem with the madness narrative is that it in some ways romanticizes the experience, and thereby creates a false representation of it. This romanticization erupts from the attempt to induce and exploit the state of mind in order to achieve a creative product. Thiher's *Revels in Madness* deals heavily with this topic. He names a group of authors who induced madness for creative purposes like writing their poetry. Madness was for them something almost required of an artistic mind; "[t]o defend madness, their own madness as well as madness they cultivated, poets tried to overload the circuits of rationality and to revel in the free play of the irrational joys of madness conceives as the supreme poetic experience" (205). Perhaps a major difference would be in the mentality associated with each, the former being of a sense of pride for being mentally insane, and the latter would involve a lack of recognition of the illness on some levels.

Much of the interpretations of "romanticization" is subjective, but there are signifiers of this that create the mode of the romanticized lifestyle of the mad person. The very beginning of *The Yellow Wallpaper* puts forth this idea of romanticization, even including a direct reference to it. "A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity - but that would be asking too much of fate!" (1). Since much of her madness

seems to be put off onto the environment, this situation seems relevant as a way to set the mood of the story. It hints at the strong ties that the narrator has with the way her environment is constructed and how it seems to dictate her livelihood.

Authorship can itself be seen as a fixation of the mind into a product, a type of monomania in itself, but one that is also helpful in putting forth the narrative that otherwise could not be accessed. Not only do we have a discourse of the language used to speak of the mad, but we must have a discourse of the way in which the madness is exploited by the mad and the sane in order to achieve some sense of higher meaning, or in order to create meaning. After all, madness is said to be the excess of meaning. Thiher speaks about this in her section on the author/poet Nerval. She says "[i]n Nerval's case madness is the excess of meaning" (209). This seems applicable to both literary texts, which attribute an immense amount of energy in seeking information, an alternative state, or something along those lines. She continues that "[m]adness is the possibility of discovering an infinite amount of sense by applying the principle of correlation to every phenomenon" (209). Here, we have two layers, the narrative, and the illness behind the narrative that manipulates it. And we have in addition to this, a seemingly external exploitation of the self and formation of the narrative as a manifestation of this exploitative measure of producing a text based on a mental state considered "abnormal." The exploitation of madness is nothing new. Thiher names a handful of authors who exploited alternative states of mind in order to get to a more creative place. Thiher says "Baudelaire's deviance seeks to flaunt bourgeois cultural norms, through his active search for madness, for drug-induced delirium and 'expansion' of consciousness" (210). It is evidenced that Baudelaire exploited madness by trying to falsely induce the state through external means like drugs. This conversation is relevant because the

means by while Jekyll becomes Hyde is also induced. Madness is also exploited through the act of inducement.

Beyond this, there is the "drama of shifting relations between Jekyll and Hyde [as] played out in terms of grammatical and narrative positions, the permutations of "I," "he," and "it" (Garrett, from J and H 189). And this leads on to ask a larger question at hand: "[w]ho writes 'Henry Jekyll's Statement?' " (190). With the convolution of authorship comes a further question of general origin of the writing, which Garrett addresses in the following: "[The narrative] not only disrupts the projection of a stable subject; it makes speech and writing irresponsible by preventing us from determining their origins" (191). Then the implication is that a piece of writing must have an author in order to be "responsible." This idea of responsibility could have something to do with the subject matter at hand. During Shakespearian times, it became more and more important that a text be given an "author" so that the author could be held accountable for what he or she wrote. But this is not an entirely satisfying answer as to why we are bothered with the questions of authorship in these two works of "The Yellow Wallpaper" and "Strange Case." The more pertinent question is indeed not about the "true" author in the sense of the author defined by Roland Barthes, but of the "author" within the text, that is, the figures of Jane, the woman in the wallpaper, Jekyll, and Hyde.

Further on the narrative style, Garrett says "[o]n the level of character and action as well as on the level of narration, we find neither unity nor purified duality but a complex weave of voices that resists conservative simplifications" (193). He says the narrative fails us because "the tale releases a force that cannot be mastered" (196). Then perhaps Hyde and the narrative are a place or body of greater freedom of expression and of internal states. In some ways, the narrative

fails and confuses us by being suspect of unreliability, by failing to clearly delineate the speaker/control of words at a given moment wherein it is crucial to know this, and by manipulating the course of the illness by taking out chunks of the story. This will have to do also with the problem we encounter in medical psychology wherein the professional must diagnose the patient with a non-comprehensive idea of the person, and this person will notably not have access to that information which is not disclosed, and will have no access therefore to the private life of the individual as we have a glimpse of in these narratives.

Throughout "The Yellow Wallpaper" we also see a connection between narrator and paper, and beyond the use of it to record experience. It serves as a holder or encapsulator of thought and perhaps as a way to achieve sanity. The narrator speaks of the transference of the mind-state onto paper: "this is a dead paper and a great relief to my mind" (166). It goes beyond that though, for the paper comes to allegorize the ideas we have about narrative structure. The wallpaper in this sense can stand in for a narrative text. There is an analogy of text and subtext, and their relationship in the following: she lay there for hours trying to decide whether that front pattern and the back pattern really did move together or separately" (175). Here, the narrator points to two distinct but overlapping patterns of the wallpaper. There is the front, which appears at the forefront and seems to hold some semblance of precedence, and there is the back, which is not only hidden behind the front pattern, but it is also visible. Along with being visible, it is that which is trapped by the front pattern, and tries to shake off the front pattern. It is as if through the act of creating the narrative form of mad, one can somehow transcend and emerge from the narrative, and thereby be free of impediments. The narrator of "The Yellow Wallpaper" promotes this idea of emergence from the front pattern, and its possible connection with

emergence from the text, from the constraints of madness. She says "I wonder if they all come out of the wall-paper as I did?" (181). Here, she not only points to the convolution of the narratorial voice that becomes more apparent as the story comes to a close, but also to the merging of the two characters that she is. This "coming out" also makes physical the idea of paper as liberation. She not only uses paper to legitimize her existence and selfhood, but emerges from the paper thereby drawing the connecting between paper, emergence, and legitimacy of personhood.

The thematic and metaphorical significance of the physical paper in both texts is strong, for it prompts reading the texts as commentary on authorial power attained through the act of writing. If we use the wallpaper as model, it is that which contains the woman. But it is also that space which she is able to inhabit and that which allows her existence. Like the group of the "mad" on a larger spectrum, paper and writing serve a conflicting, paradoxical dual purpose. On another level, the outer pattern would metaphorically correspond with writing, the physical words on the page in ink. The woman beneath them is inscribed with them and only gets out by getting outside of these lines. "Strange Case" offers a similar reading; Hyde exists because of Jekyll in the sense that he is his creation. He is also born through the other narrators of the story, but not on his own terms, for he does not construct his own narrative. As I will go into more depth later, Hyde attempts to destroy at the end of the story the narrative of Jekyll. In this narrative, Jekyll recounts the story of his personas. Thereby, when Hyde attempts to destroy the narrative, and if he were to succeed, he would in effect also be destroying his own narrative, for it is the only way through the narrative that Hyde is allotted personhood. The theme of destruction and creation of narrative proves prevalent in both texts as a commentary on the

strong tie between the creation of personhood and the creation of narrative. Both are so much intertwined that it remains important for the main character's adversaries to repress the authoring of selfhood narratives. Additionally, the narrative creates the self, and creates relationships between personas inhabiting the same cognitive space.

The merging of the selves is in essence the creation of the self, and this is done through the form of narrative. "Goncalves, Machado, Korman, and Augus contend that 'the introduction of narrative order is probably the most fundamental aspect of human knowing' " (Adame and Hornstein 136). Then we could ask what defines the narrative order, and at least as we see here, the narrative order is defined by its beginning and end. The narrative of the mad person may be defined by the momentum of the illness. And in these specific narratives of "Strange Case" and "The Yellow Wallpaper" the momentum force of the narrative may well be the conflict between the two sides of the self, or the self and the Other with which one associates oneself, and its resolution may be defined as the morphing of the two sides into one entity, even if this is just an imagined coming together. "Schafer defines the creation of the "self" as 'a set of narrative strategies or storylines each person follows in trying to develop an emotionally coherent account of his or her life among people' " (Adame and Hornstein 136). This bodes well with the progression of the narrative as I have just described it, as the process of the coming together of two sides. "In the most basic sense, the act of writing one's life narrative allows a person to reconstruct what events led up to his or her emotional distress and try to make sense of them" (151). In these cases, perhaps the narrative functions more so in identifying with the Other and bringing this identity into the "self." Additionally, the madness "narrative gives authority to the voices of the 'mentally ill' and puts their accounts of personal suffering on an equal plane with

the medical/psychiatric master narrative" (151). It provides the mentally ill a space wherein the "master narrative" has little power, or power only to the extent to which the writer allots it. And the "master narrative" spoken of here is that which dictates the institutional and societal treatment of the mad.

There is a master narrative and subordinate narrative relation within the very character of Jekyll/Hyde. Their conflict centers around authorial control. When Hyde has taken over the shared body and is unwilling to forsake the body in order to give Jekyll a turn at having physical and mental control, Jekyll finds that he is still conscious inside of Hyde's body, and "I remembered that of my original character, one part remained to me: I could write my own hand" (58-9). It is not insignificant that what remains of Jekyll is his power of authorial communication. This aspect of Jekyll is somehow transcendent of the physical body that he is trapped inside of. This portion of Jekyll's narrative is also intriguing because it is the voice of Jekyll inside of the body of Hyde, whereas before this transformation, Jekyll suffered amnesia during the periods of time in which Hyde "borrowed" his body. It is also pertinent to include information about the Will of Jekyll here, which is a written statement relinquishing power. It is questioned whether the Will was written in a state of emotional duress. A will written under duress will not be a legitimate will. For we know that he still retained the ability of handwriting in the style of Jekyll. There is another point in the short story that speaks of Jekyll creating the handwriting of Hyde by simply learning the letters the opposite way; "[b]y sloping my hand backward, I had supplied my double with a signature" (53). Hyde gains some power with this because the handwriting of Jekyll is associated with a handwriting of power. But Jekyll's handwriting is recognizable, and Jekyll wants to mask this association between the two of them.

Hyde uses this remainder of Jekyll to try to enrage Jekyll, by way of "the ape-like tricks that he would play me, scrawling in my own hand blasphemies on the pages of my books, burning the letters and destroying the portrait of my father" (61). Jekyll here implies the correlation between the individual and his handwriting. It is a matter of identifying with that which creates, that which takes those things happening internally and expels them onto paper. He identifies with his "own hand." Interestingly too, he refers to his handwriting as the physical hand, which is part of the body. It is as if the handwriting is the extension of the self, and it is that part of the self which Hyde can control. Hyde's play at selfhood is paradoxical, he at once claims the penmanship of Jekyll, and destroys Jekyll's historical artifacts. He seeks the "selfhood" of both Jekyll and himself, it is not enough to merely be Hyde. He would like to gain control over Jekyll as an extension of himself, thereby claim individuality and command over another. At the same time, the destruction of the narrative by the hands of Hyde is paradoxical. He attempts to destroy the thing which allows him life. While stifling Jekyll's narrative, he loses his chance to have his own.

While I am attempting to avoid the shady road of diagnosis, I use the model of the Schizophrenic Narrative in the following to make points about the breaking down of narratives in both works, and how this breaking down mimics the mental instability of the narrators of the first-hand accounts, "Jane" and Dr. Jekyll (Mr. Hyde). In Roe and Davidson's "Self and Narrative in Schizophrenia: Time to Author a New Story," the authors note that there is a "diminished capacity of people with schizophrenia to create coherent narratives about their lives" and "they would still seem to have lost the ability to compose *temporally unified and coherent* autobiographical accounts" (emphasis added, no page numbers, electronic). The italicized

portion indicates the fabricated nature of the narrative. This is to say, the narrative is once-removed from the experience, thereby, through the narrative, one reconstructs the experience. Yet the focus here is not on the accuracy of the rendition of the mental disorder, but on the coherence and the linear nature of the narrative. These qualifiers can be indicative, if used, of mental stability. Adversely, the convolution of time and other incoherent factors in narrative point to the instability of the creator of the narrative. This does not mean that these narratives require dismissal, rather, the narrative can provide insight into the workings of the minds of those suffering mental illness.

In fact, narrative is just that space wherein the mentally ill can negotiate his or her illness. Roe and Davidson allow that “narrative is flexible enough both to survive and to contain the apparent contradictions between self and illness....Even when appearing delusional to others, such narratives can serve as an organising mechanism for the person, offering the possibilities for control, continuity, flexibility, and integration” (no page numbers, electronic source) which they perhaps do not hold in “real” life. Further, the narrative form provides for a place to grasp at ownership of individuality and selfhood. “[Entropy] is, as many schizophrenics tell us, hell. The selves inhabiting it seek to be understood, to be imagined and encountered as they undergo their terrible experiences....Their texts precisely claim that they are selves” (Edwards 29). The format of the texts little matter, as long as they take on some characteristics of narrative form. For it is precisely that narrative form which is used to construct the self, and its manifestations are vocal and written. Then what would create chaos for the identity is the conflict of the narrative. Thereby, the narrative events come to be intertwined with the narrative structure, and in this, the identity.

As with all discourse there is a constant tension between its creation and its destruction. In "Strange Case" this struggle for the power of narrative comes out in "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case." Stevenson recreates this tension with the end of Jekyll's personal narrative, which comes to a conclusion with: "Nor must I delay too long to bring my writing to an end; for if my narrative has hitherto escaped destruction, it has been by a combination of great prudence and great good luck. Should the throes of change take me in the act of writing of, Hyde will tear it in pieces" (61). At the very end of the narrative, Jekyll suffers the threat of his narrative being destroyed by Hyde. This signifies a couple things: the narrative has a degree of power and it is something which needs protection from destruction. It is important that Hyde wants to destroy the narrative because it is Jekyll's last power of agency, and the culture of madness depends upon its mysteriousness; without this, the culture becomes visible, comprehensible, understood, and this grants equal power to the "mad" people in society. So the culture of madness relies on the lack of information we have about the mad. It is a form of coercion to not allow a person a voice.

Mental illness and abnormal psychology are tools of narrative used by authors to form rhetorical discourses on the human condition. Part of this creation of the text involves giving up something so personal and so terrifying to society that it begs destruction. Let us for this last portion invoke Roland Barthes and say that the death of the author is present in these texts. Lest we forget the primary argument of this analytical discourse, I will reiterate that it is that, at the most basic and foundational level, writing is a way for people who would otherwise not have a voice to gain *authorial* agency. Psychology and history dictate that those things that are feared are oftentimes pushed into the periphery for the sake of the pretense of normalcy. This is why

these narratives (and the mad) have been reduced to figures and testaments of entertainment. It is unfathomable to think of a world in which people are not in control of themselves, or a world in which one seeks to segregate the Self and allow criminality and the “bad” a place in the world to play-act and to hurt others. Should we live in a world in which we can recognize abnormal psychology as a part of daily life and something that is all around us, in literature, in art, in schools, in offices, and in the general public sphere, we can come to a better place to form comprehensive discourse on how the people who experience and seek out these abnormal mental states live among us, and *are* us.

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