

“TWO WARRING IDEALS”: DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS AND MASCULINITY FROM
EMERSON TO DUBOIS

by

DEBORAH MANSON

(Under the Direction of Richard Menke)

ABSTRACT

During the second half of the nineteenth century in both America and Britain, psychological phenomena such as mesmeric trances, spirit possession, and double consciousness were prominent in the case studies of physicians and psychologists and in fictional literary texts. Alternate consciousness was most often a side effect of hysteria, which Victorian physicians and authors associated with women. A number of case studies from this time period, however, suggest that double consciousness was not uncommon in men, and several novels depict such cases. For fictional male characters, the split most often organizes itself around issues of success and failure in the masculine world of social and economic achievement; failure in the public sphere could cause private distress. Mental disease held connotations of weakness and effeminacy, but in these novels double consciousness allows middle-class men to imaginatively separate private mental disease from public hegemonic masculinity. Through double consciousness, Victorian authors represent the tensions between private and public selves and the psychological division that results when a character's masculinity is inadequate to social norms.

In this dissertation, I examine the intersection between Victorian standards of masculinity, the psychological phenomenon of double consciousness, and narrative

representations of consciousness in fictional texts by Herman Melville, George Eliot, Robert Louis Stevenson, Henry James, and W.E.B. DuBois. Double consciousness, hysteria, neurasthenia, and hypochondriasis were all terms used by the medical community, often synonymously, to describe mental diseases, but double consciousness was most easily adopted by authors of fiction because of its dual physiological and metaphorical connotations. In crafting characters who experience double consciousness, these authors not only represent a contemporary cultural phenomenon, but also experiment with unique methods of representing consciousness, methods that go beyond linear depictions of thought. Through their varied representations of consciousness, these authors heralded the arrival of literary modernism.

INDEX WORDS: Double consciousness, Multiple personality, Split personality, Masculinity, Nineteenth-century literature, Consciousness, Narration

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CHAPTER 1

DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS: THE MALE MALADY

In an article in the 1845 edition of the *Northern Journal of Medicine*, Dr. David Skae describes intense physical and mental distress in one of his male patients. The patient was “an unmarried gentleman, in the prime of life, connected with the legal profession, of a leucopneumatic temperament, regular in his habits, which have always been retired, and extremely temperate in his mode of life” (Skae 10). This moderate, reserved gentleman experienced digestive problems and other pains, along with “feelings of gloom and despondency” (11). His physical and mental health problems intensified over the course of ten to twelve years, and he became plagued by alternating personalities:

On each alternate day, the patient . . . will neither eat, sleep, nor walk, but continues incessantly turning the leaves of a Bible, and complaining piteously of his misery. On the intermediate days, he is, comparatively speaking, quite well, enters into the domestic duties of his family, eats heartily, walks out, transacts business, and appears to entertain no apprehension of a return of his complaints.

(12)

This man’s case was augmented by double memory, for in neither state did he remember the other self. Dr. Skae described this patient’s condition as double consciousness: “he appears, in short, to have a double consciousness—a sort of twofold existence—one half of which he spends in the rational enjoyment of life and discharge of its duties; and the other, in a state of hopeless hypochondriacism, amounting almost to complete mental aberration” (12). Double

consciousness, then, allowed this young man to maintain a rational, temperate existence in one state, while the other housed irrational impulses and emotional excess.

The double consciousness, or dual personality, that Dr. Skae describes was a mental disease that surfaced in men and women throughout the nineteenth century. In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), William James includes several similar cases of double consciousness, which he most often refers to as alternating personality. In one case, the subject is guilty of uncharacteristic criminal behavior while occupying his second self. This man's case was first reported by a French physician, Dr. Reiger, in 1876. The subject had lived for seventeen years with

his character being orderly enough in the normal state, but alternating with periods, during which he would leave his home for several weeks, leading the life of a thief and vagabond, being sent to jail, having epileptic fits and excitement, being accused of malingering, etc., etc., and with never a memory of the abnormal conditions which were to blame for all his wretchedness. (1.380)

Seemingly in response to rebellious impulses, this patient's mind fractured into a respectable self and a deviant self who alternated control over his body. James likens this condition to entrancement, except that the alternate self emerges pathologically rather than hypnotically.

Perhaps the most famous American case of double consciousness is that of Ansel Bourne, also included in *The Principles of Psychology*. In January 1887, Bourne left home, withdrew his money from a bank in Providence, Rhode Island and disappeared. A couple of months later, Bourne awoke in Norristown, New Hampshire. He was disoriented and, upon confronting a neighbor, shocked to learn that he had been living there as a shopkeeper named A.J. Brown. Social anthropologist Michael G. Kenny has linked Bourne's double consciousness to

occupational and family stresses: “when he became A.J. Brown he was sixty-one years old and going through a period of distress correlated to economic loss, his second marriage, and abandonment of his evangelistic career” (78). Thirty years prior, Bourne had felt called to abandon his profession as a carpenter and serve as an itinerant preacher, a choice which had cost him a steady income and even some possessions. Under hypnosis, Bourne confessed to William James that he had “passed through a great deal of trouble . . . Losses of friends, losses of property . . . Trouble way back yonder. All mixed up, confused. Don’t like to think of it” (qtd. in Kenny 78). While occupying his second self, Bourne gave vent to his frustrations; James writes that “the Brown-personality seems to be nothing but a rather shrunken, dejected, and amnesiac extract of Mr. Bourne himself” (*Principles* 1.392). In his second consciousness, Bourne’s suppressed feelings found a home.

The cases of double consciousness that Skae and James describe had become increasingly commonplace since the concept of psychological division emerged in the experiments of Franz Anton Mesmer and his followers.¹ One of Mesmer’s pupils, Marquis de Puysegur, first recorded this phenomenon when, in the 1780s, he tried his hand at mesmerizing Victor Race, a shepherd on his estate in France. Upon so doing, Puysegur realized that “Victor Race appeared to have an alternate personality within him, which emerged when he was in magnetic sleep” (Waterfield 107). While he had shown affection for his older sister in the waking state, the mesmerized Victor expressed resentment towards her. Not only was he more candid, but he was also more clever: “Victor’s intelligence and general mental alertness improved radically when in the magnetic state” (Crabtree, *Multiple Man* 5). The oppositions in Victor’s behavior would become a hallmark of double consciousness.

¹ For a full discussion of the historical roots of double, or alternate, consciousness, see Crabtree’s *From Mesmer to Freud*.

Mesmer and Puysegur had introduced a new kind of case, a way to categorize the psychological distress that could arise when one was torn between internal impulses and external behaviors. Although Mesmer himself was more interested in physical healing than psychological access, those who followed him and employed his methods were intrigued by the alternate consciousness that emerged as a result of magnetic passes. The passes that initiated a trance state supposedly transferred magnetic force from the mesmerist to his subject, into that individual's mind. Before Puysegur's discovery, mental illnesses were thought to be caused by external forces of physical affliction or demonic possession, but with Mesmer's experiments came "a third paradigm of mental illness, the alternate-consciousness paradigm" (Waterfield 107). The concept of consciousness expanded to include mental states that were distinct from waking consciousness. In this way, mesmerism served as a transition between the paradigm of external forces and that of internal forces shaping mental states.

Double consciousness did not depend upon mesmerism, however, for "just after Puysegur had come across the phenomenon of double consciousness and the second stream of thought and memory, pathological instances of second consciousness began to be noted" (Crabtree, *Mesmer to Freud* 289). The term "double consciousness" was first recorded in the case of a young Pennsylvania woman, Mary Reynolds, whose second self emerged from a deep sleep rather than a mesmeric trance.² While double consciousness maintained some association with mesmerism

² In 1817, an article in the *Medical Repository* reported that Reynolds fell into a "profound sleep" and awoke with no knowledge of her former life and a personality distinct from her former self (Plumer 807). Her physician, Dr. Samuel L. Mitchell, described her condition as "double consciousness." For the next sixteen years, Mary alternated between two personalities. She was somber and even melancholy in her original state, but, like Victor, she was more verbose and outgoing in her altered condition: "in her second state she was gay and cheerful, extravagantly fond of society, of fun and practical jokes, with a lively fancy" (Plumer 808). Mary Reynolds, a nice young girl raised in a Christian home, would ordinarily be expected to marry and settle into a domestic life of piety, purity, and submissiveness. Instead, "Mary found an active social life that would have been denied to her for good if she had entered into marriage with a rural farmer" (Kenny 58-59). Mary Reynolds's case suggests that double

throughout the century, it was also considered a symptom of hysteria, which had become a prominent diagnostic category for female illness.³ Because mesmerism was sometimes used as a method of treating hysteria, the relationships between mesmerism, mental disease, and double consciousness were far from clear or consistent. At the end of the century in Freud and Breuer's groundbreaking *Studies on Hysteria*, double consciousness remained a chief feature of hysteria.⁴ Most generally, double consciousness required either a mesmeric trance or an intermediary sleep state and was characterized by distinct personalities and discontinuity of memory between the two conscious states. Used by both amateurs and an emerging body of professional psychologists, the term "double consciousness" "became the diagnostic category, in English, for most of the nineteenth century" to describe this kind of alternation in consciousness (Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul* 150).⁵

The discovery of alternate consciousness and subsequent studies of individual consciousness by physiologists and psychologists such as Henry Holland, William Benjamin Carpenter, William James, and Jean-Martin Charcot transformed the way we conceive of human character. Cases of an alternate level of consciousness opened a new venue for understanding the individual psyche, for they suggested that the mind is not a singular, insulated, self-controlled entity. Mesmerists discovered "a second consciousness secretly existing below the surface in an

consciousness was liberating, for it allowed her second self to rebel against social expectations while her waking self was absolved of responsibility.

³ For historical accounts of mesmerism in America and Britain, see Fuller's *Mesmerism and the American Cure of Souls* and Winter's *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain*.

⁴ In *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), Freud and Breuer wrote of double consciousness as the basis of hysteria:

The splitting of consciousness which is so striking in the well-known classical cases under the form of "double conscience" is present to a rudimentary degree in every hysteria, and that a tendency to such a dissociation, and with the emergence of abnormal states of consciousness (which we shall bring under the term "hypnoid") is the basic phenomenon of this neurosis. (46)

The term "double conscience" was the equivalent of the French term "double consciousness." While Freud and Breuer were most concerned with hysterical women, their assessment connects double consciousness more generally to mental disease.

⁵ Later in the century, as additional personalities emerged in some individuals, the term multiple personality became more common.

individual, which can suddenly break through into waking awareness,” a source of mental illness that came from within the individual (Crabtree, *Mesmer to Freud* 289). The term double consciousness emphasized this new dimension of human character, for “the word *consciousness* directs attention inward, to the self-awareness of the individual” (Hacking, “Double Consciousness” 136). Psychological conflict could now come from within the individual, as a response to social forces or buried ideas to which the individual was oblivious.

Case studies provide interesting information about the psychological distress that some individuals suffered during the nineteenth century, but they do little to advance our knowledge of the social pressures that could cause psychological fractures. Fiction, however, provides just this arena for study, enabling authors to place characters in a social setting and therefore to examine the social forces that contribute to psychological disease. Furthermore, through fiction authors can represent both the public and the private sides of individual characters, narrating action, dialogue, and thought. As the growing science of psychology led physiologists inward, then, literary texts led authors inward, and uncontrollable or indecipherable mental states became a common source of conflict for a central character.

Stories of individuals who experienced dual selves became increasingly prevalent in a cultural climate in which “‘double consciousness’ formed part of a much wider discussion of hidden traces within the mind, and it is on the relationship between conscious and unconscious memory that debates on the nature of identity ultimately turned” (Taylor and Shuttleworth 71). Double consciousness, with its oppositions and memory lapses, could complicate a hero or heroine’s quest towards individual identity, for duality is “a way of writing in which character has been succeeded by consciousness, by an internal contention and inconstancy” (Miller 153). Double consciousness revealed the inconstancy of the human mind and forced authors to

reconsider realism, or what it meant to mimetically represent human consciousness. Influenced by psychological literature, Victorian authors began to experiment with the narrative voices of central characters who must confront or decipher their own internal conflicts and consequent double consciousnesses. The authors I will examine—Ralph Waldo Emerson, Herman Melville, George Eliot, Robert Louis Stevenson, Henry James, and W.E.B. DuBois—were avid readers and active in contemporary intellectual circles; from philosophy and psychology, they gained awareness of the mind’s capabilities and tendencies, and through literature, they expanded the study of the human mind.

Double consciousness is at the center of this study, then, because of its myriad applications in nineteenth-century culture: the term double consciousness was used by mesmerists, philosophers, physiologists, psychologists, and authors of fiction. Duality was so common in British and American culture after mid-century that, according to Showalter, “we think of the late nineteenth century as the age of split personalities who solve their social and sexual problems by neatly separating mind and body, good and evil, upstairs and downstairs” (*Sexual Anarchy* 118). The concept of split personalities gained cultural currency during the second half of the nineteenth century, as psychology became a scientific discipline. While double consciousness, hysteria, neurasthenia, and hypochondriasis were all terms used by the medical community, often synonymously, to describe mental diseases, double consciousness was more easily adopted by authors of fiction because of its dual physiological and metaphorical connotations. It was a contemporary diagnosis of mental distress, and it was also descriptive of the dual identity, or internal conflict, that some individuals felt. Nineteenth-century double consciousness frequently split the individual into a socially conforming and a rebellious self; because social conformity had different connotations for middle-class men and women of the

Victorian age, their experiences with this split differed significantly. For middle-class men, on whom this study will focus, the split typically organized itself around issues of success and failure in the masculine world of social and economic achievement. In an era in which mental disease held connotations of weakness and effeminacy, double consciousness allowed middle-class men to imaginatively separate private mental disease from public hegemonic masculinity. Through double consciousness, Victorian authors represent the tensions between private and public selves and the psychological division that resulted when a character's masculinity was inadequate to social norms. Through these representations, they also redefine the realistic depiction of human consciousness through narrative inconstancy or experimentation.

The perceived division between separate, gendered spheres during the nineteenth century in both Britain and America coincided with and contributed to the splintering of consciousness. While individuals might have some biological predisposition to double (or multiple) consciousness, "multiple personality is a culturally specific metaphor, not a universally distributed mental disorder. Like spirit possession it is a way of representing distress embedded in the circumstances of time, place, and culture" (Kenny 3). Social forces play a crucial causal role in the fracturing of consciousness, so when examining double consciousness one must consider the cultural norms that might contribute to this psychical phenomenon. During the nineteenth century, society increasingly insisted on gender difference. Thomas Laqueur has studied the historical emergence of gender binaries and argues that "by around 1800, writers of all sorts were determined to base what they insisted were fundamental differences between the male and female sexes, and thus between man and woman, on discoverable biological distinctions . . . Not only are the sexes different, but they are different in every conceivable

aspect of body and soul, in every physical and moral aspect” (5). Before the Enlightenment, a hierarchical, one-sex model was more common, according to Laqueur. At the turn of the century, masculinity became associated with the public sphere, and consequently, men were “understood to be active, strong, independent, powerful, dominant, and aggressive,” while women, “associated with the private sphere, are seen as passive, weak, dependent, powerless, subordinate, and nurturing” (Adams and Coltrane 232-233). The attribution of opposite characteristics to opposite sexes that is a commonplace in nineteenth-century studies today was a re-thinking of gender in Victorian Britain and America at a time when the Industrial Revolution was transforming the world of work for middle-class individuals. The independence and dominance attributed to men suited them for public roles in the growing bourgeoisie.

Emphasis on sexual difference was directly related to the rise of a middle class; accordingly, the male characters that I will examine who struggle with prescribed gender roles are all members of the middle class, and all feel pressured to establish themselves in the public arena. In both Britain and America, the Industrial Revolution and turn of the nineteenth century brought a transition from a landed, gentrified masculinity to one that was measured by independence and success in a tumultuous marketplace (Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 6, Tosh 63). While managing land had previously kept men at home, middle-class employment took them away and therefore emphasized man’s place as outside the home. Davidoff and Hall have discussed the importance of gender distinctions for the bourgeoisie:

A heavily gendered view of the world was utilized to soften, if not disavow, the disruption of a growing class system as the master and household head was transmuted into employer on the one hand and husband/father on the other.

Masculine identity was equated with an emerging concept of “occupation,” while women remained within a familial frame. (30)

Thus, while men came to dominate the public sphere of business and labor, women assumed roles as domestic goddesses. The Cult of True Womanhood was promoted in both Britain and America: “the linking of women’s well-being to contented domesticity was a concept which held considerable sway at the time, not only in middle-class advice literature but also in influential medical literature and social commentary” (Wood 9). If a Cult of True Womanhood was a social force in nineteenth-century culture, then a Cult of True Manhood was as well: “between approximately 1850 and 1940 the cult of manliness became a widely pervasive and inescapable feature of middle class existence in Britain and America,” with success in the workplace the principal barometer of manliness (Mangan and Walvin 2).

Like the Cult of True Womanhood, ideals of manhood are cultural formations, however, and while nineteenth-century masculinity was not nearly as restrictive as femininity, in either case gender norms are an imposition of ideals. As Michael Kimmel has eloquently stated, “manhood is not the manifestation of an inner essence; it’s socially constructed. Manhood does not bubble up to consciousness from our biological constitution; it is created in our culture” (*Manhood in America* 3). Overprescribed gender roles created behavioral norms for men as well as women, and at the turn of the nineteenth century, “the marks that once indicated status, privilege and affiliation were increasingly replaced—or at least supplemented—by a whole range of degrees of normality indicating membership of a homogeneous social body” (Foucault 184). Individual behavior was regulated by a desire for social acceptability, and for the middle-class man, social acceptability came from one’s occupation. Writing in 1904, Max Weber found that “the Puritan *wanted* to be a person with a vocational calling; today we *are forced* to be” (123).

Work, and the accumulation of material goods that followed, had become the benchmark of a successful life. Pressures to be successful were inescapable, for “to the extent that people are interwoven into the context of capitalism’s market forces, the norms of its economic action are forced onto them” (Weber 18). This shared code of masculine conduct emphasized a man’s role as a competitor, which translated to his ability to provide for his family and his capacity for rigorous physical and intellectual activity.

Victorian men faced significant pressure, for those who failed in the public sphere not only jeopardized their own well-being and reputation, but that of their families as well. In general, men found that

to become adult men within their own terms they must provide a livelihood which made possible a domestic establishment where they and their dependants could live a rational and morally sanctioned life. The masculine persona which emerged within this group was organized around a man’s determination and skill in manipulating the economic environment. (Davidoff and Hall 229)

Success in the workplace translated to a healthy, happy home; success was a man’s duty. Along with new opportunities for success, however, came increased opportunities for failure. The ideal of the self-made man was exciting and motivating, but “the flip side of this economic autonomy is anxiety, restlessness, loneliness . . . Success must be earned, manhood must be proved—and proved constantly” (Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 17). Failure in the workplace equated to a failure of masculinity for the middle-class man, for “nineteenth-century masculinity was a masculinity defined, tried, and tested in the marketplace” (Kimmel, *History of Men* 8).

Regardless of their own sense of identity, middle-class men had to prove themselves capable of economic combat, an imperative that privileged the public self and neglected the private.

Success in a competitive market required men to be independent, in addition to hard-working, and historians of masculinity have noted that this independence required a repression of emotions that might create dependence or vulnerability. Rotundo has described the “Masculine Achiever” as a man who “needed more than independent thought or action; he also had to have freedom from emotional dependence on others, freedom to be clear-headed and rational” (37). Emotional attachments might hinder a man’s ability to compete with others, and, furthermore, his supposed intellectual superiority implied “a rational outlook [that] increasingly restricted the expression of men’s feelings” (Davidoff and Hall 451). As adolescent boys began to internalize gender norms, they also learned to internalize their emotions through self-control. Many men successfully asserted control over their emotions, but such subjection could be psychologically damaging: “the stresses of maintaining an external mask of confidence and strength led to nervous disorders, such as neurasthenia; suppressing ‘feminine’ feelings of nurturance and affection created problems for many men” (Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* 9). Pressures of masculinity could lead to a fracture between the social self and private self, as many men maintained a veneer of stoicism that was at odds with private emotions.

A number of critics such as Sedgwick, Showalter, and Cohen have convincingly argued that homosexual and homosocial desires were a source of mental distress for Victorian men, but, as I have shown, civic pressures were also a significant force. James Eli Adams has likewise argued that ideals of masculinity impose more than sexual orientation upon men: “regimens of masculinity regulate more than erotic desire; they are many-faceted constructions of identity and social authority” (2). Furthermore, because the economic imperative was inescapable, “even traditional associations of manhood with sexual prowess were weakened by the pursuit of middle-class standards of living” (Adams 5). Danahay similarly claims that the Victorian man is

marked by his “belief in the centrality of work for manliness and the need to repress desire in favor of sustained, self-denying labor” (9). Pressures of the public sphere played a significant role in shaping the Victorian man’s consciousness, as will become apparent in the chapters that follow.

The workplace was a public arena in which men became more conscious of appearances and of the public self. Judith Butler’s argument that gender is “an ‘act,’ as it were, which is both intentional and performative, where ‘*performative*’ suggests a dramatic and contingent construction of meaning” (190), is especially potent for men in the public sphere, whose actions were visible to all. As more and more men entered middle-class occupations, they became vulnerable to the gaze and judgment of the many men with whom they came in contact:

The increasing social and economic mobility brought about by the Industrial Revolution made the interpretation of strangers an increasingly frequent and significant challenge. As a result, men caught up in such mobility experienced with corresponding frequency and anxiety a sense of putting themselves on display, imagining themselves as spectacles offered up to an unfamiliar gaze. In the process they found themselves enacting rituals of manly self-display under intensified pressure . . . (Adams 27)

When the performance failed, so, too, did the man. Following Adams, I will focus on the public demands on manhood, apart from sexuality. While Adams focuses on the roles available to Victorian men, however, I will study the psychological effects of failed masculinity in the public sphere and its representation through double consciousness.

Throughout this study, I will use the term “public sphere” to refer not to Jürgen Habermas’s definition of an open space for bourgeois debate and discussion, but rather to the

public arena of the marketplace that was inhabited primarily by men during the Victorian period. Historians and literary critics have readily associated Victorians with separate gendered spheres, but recently, a number of critics have challenged separate spheres as *the* organizing metaphor for identity and social relations in Victorian society.⁶ Separate spheres ideology conditions us to think of male and female characters in particular, limiting ways, and “reading the nineteenth century through these inflexible binaries . . . creates a structural disincentive for thinking about nation in relationship to home, politics in relationship to privacy, femininity in relationship to reason, and so on” (Davidson and Hatcher 20). Likewise, the equation of men with the public sphere has in some ways hindered exploration of private, psychological distress in male characters. Because men have been associated with the public sphere and its privileges for so long, that relationship has been taken for granted rather than analyzed. Following on the heels of feminist theorists, however, who have shown that “whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed” (Butler 8), historians of masculinity have recently drawn critical attention to social constructions of Victorian masculinity.⁷ Most middle-class men were indeed active participants in the public spheres of Britain and America, but cases in fiction and non-fiction reveal that a propensity for public life and workplace competition did not come naturally to all men. Instead, public pressures were stressful for some and contributed significantly to mental disease.

Those authors who represent double consciousness in a male character lift the veil of the public self, revealing the private distresses that some men experienced. Their stories are

⁶ Essays addressing the limitations of separate spheres ideology were published in a special edition of *American Literature* in 1998. These essays have been collected into a book entitled *No More Separate Spheres!*, edited by Cathy N. Davidson and Jessamyn Hatcher.

⁷ David Leverenz, John Tosh, and Michael S. Kimmel have all provided insight and analysis of Victorian masculinities.

particularly striking because during the nineteenth century, women were considered the primary sufferers of mental disease. Elaine Showalter has shown that “the mid-nineteenth century is the period when the predominance of women among the institutionalized insane first becomes a statistically verifiable phenomenon,” commonly considered by nineteenth-century physicians to be a consequence of women’s mental and physical frailty (*Female Malady* 52). Just as biological difference translated into social difference, it also indicated psychological difference: “because the brain responded to the operation of the reproductive organs (as it did to the other organs of the body), the *mentalities* of the sexes differed as well” (Showalter, *Female Malady* 122-23). A man lacked the female reproductive organs to which many physicians attributed nervous conditions, so he should be immune to such mental distress. Furthermore, he should have a stronger will than that of women, granting him power over disturbing emotions. William Carpenter celebrated the difference in the mental natures of men and women in *Principles of Mental Physiology* (1874):

There is nowhere, perhaps, a more beautiful instance of complementary adjustment between the Male and the Female character, than that which consists in the predominance of the Intellect and Will, which is required to make a *man* successful in the “battle of life,” and of the lively Sensibility, the quick Sympathy, the unselfish Kindliness, which gives to *woman* the power of making the happiness of the home, and of promoting the purest pleasures of social existence. (Carpenter’s emphasis, 417)

The sympathy and susceptibility to strong emotions that made women domestic goddesses also made women *naturally* vulnerable to mental illness. On the other hand, “the perception of the male nervous sufferer was one of a social, sexual, and psychological anomaly in a culture of

robust and resolute manliness” (Wood 60). Titles such as John Barlow’s *On Man’s Power over Himself to Prevent or Control Insanity* (1849) affirmed that the mind was subject to moral management; just as men managed their businesses, so too should they manage their minds.

Fictional accounts and case histories such as those recorded by Skae and James, however, demonstrate that men too experienced psychological distress, though perhaps from different causes. In examining cases of double consciousness, Ian Hacking finds that “whereas . . . other cases concern young women who have not made peace with the social role into which they were born, the mature men of Skae and Abercrombie have wearied of occupations at which they were unsuccessful” (“Double Consciousness” 141). While women prominently suffered hysteria and mental distress from the restrictions of domesticity in Victorian society, men were likewise vulnerable to the pressures of prescribed roles and expectations of the marketplace. A psychologically-troubled man had lost control over his mind and public persona in a culture in which “men were constantly being reminded that will-power was the property which gave them a natural advantage over women and beasts, and that the prevention of nervous disease was a matter of exerting their superior will” (Wood 76). Not only did masculine stereotypes cause mental distress, then, but they also created a need to suppress the very distress they caused.

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, Jean-Martin Charcot challenged the popular conception of hysteria as a female disease, conducting a study of male hysteria in his work at the Salpêtrière hospital in France. After gaining prominence for his use of hypnosis to treat female hysterics in the 1860s and 1870s, “during the 1880s, Charcot published the case histories of more than 60 male ‘hysterics’ and treated countless others in his daily hospital practice . . . by the time of his death, in 1893, the idea [of male hysteria] was widely accepted

within mainstream European medical communities” (Micale 365). Charcot disputed gendered assumptions about psychological disease, maintaining that

adult men who are prey to the hysterical neurosis do not always present characteristics of femininity. Far from it. They are, at least in a majority of cases, robust men presenting all attributes of the male sex, soldiers or artisans, married and the fathers of families, men, in other words, in whom one would be surprised, unless forewarned, to meet with an illness considered by most people as exclusive to women. (qtd in Micale 380)

In this statement, Charcot acknowledges the association of hysteria with femininity and asserts that the stereotype is simply false. He emphasizes that his male patients are not weakling recluses, but active participants in society, with occupations and families. While some cases of male hysteria could be attributed to heredity or physical trauma, in other cases “it was ultimately the power of an idea or emotion—fear, rage, grief, anxiety—that ‘caused’ hysteria” (Micale 389). Men were not immune to the powers of emotion; instead, they, too, could be victimized by internal forces.

Charcot’s work did not erase the association of hysteria and mental disease with women, for in the work of his successors—Binet, Janet, and Freud, among them—the female case would remain prominent. Because of his standing in the medical community, however, Charcot’s work did much to illuminate male psychological distress during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the second decade of the twentieth century, further light would be shed on the subject. In her account of hysteria, Showalter recounts the emergence of male hysteria, or shell shock, during World War 1, and she finds that Victorian masculinity played a crucial role:

The Great War was a crisis of masculinity and a trial of the Victorian masculine ideal. In a sense, the long-term repression of signs of fear that led to shell shock in war was only an exaggeration of the male sex-role expectations, the self-control and emotional disguise of civilian life . . . Both men and officers internalized these expectations as thoroughly as any Victorian woman had internalized her lesson about feminine nature. (*Female Malady* 171)

While the sheer volume of shell shock cases in the early decades of the twentieth century drew attention to male psychological distress, smaller numbers of individual men had similarly suffered from the pressures of public representation in previous decades. Jeremy Hawthorn's study of their cases highlights "war, unemployment, financial crisis: these seem to be the sources of personality dissociation for men" (17). Similar to hysterical women whose consciousness rebelled against the limitations of femininity, men who suffered mental distress, in one way or another, did not live up to society's expectations of manliness.

The most common medical term for male mental illness in the nineteenth century was "hypochondriasis," a category of disease that allowed physicians to diagnose male patients' mental disorders and yet distinguish them from hysterics. In 1835, Benjamin Rush described it as a disease that affects "men more than women," and he insisted on the significant difference between hypochondriasis and hysteria, male and female, disorders: "hypochondriasis . . . has sometimes been confounded with hysteria, but differs from it in being induced chiefly by mental causes, and particularly by such of them as act upon the understanding, through the medium of the passions and moral faculties. Histeria [*sic*] is produced by corporeal causes" (Rush 75, 74). While men were affected by their minds, women were afflicted by the "wandering wombs" in their bodies, according to Rush. At the end of the century, *Dictionary of Psychological Medicine*

admitted a closer connection between the two diseases, defining hypochondriasis as “a disease occurring mostly among men of middle age, and [which] has been compared with hysteria, being considered by some as the equivalent of that distress among men” (Savage 611). Despite the gender differences that hypochondriasis reinforced, it was through this disease—“a notion that among other things allowed doctors to acknowledge a similar pathology in both sexes while retaining a less pejorative designation for male patients—that the idea of masculine hysteria first entered medical history” (Micale 367). While gender stereotypes influenced physicians of the mind throughout the century, there was a gradual move towards an understanding of male and female minds as similar structures, susceptible to similar disorders.

A significant symptom of hypochondriasis was the “splitting of the brain” that appeared in cases of double consciousness (Savage 614). Historians disagree, however, over the prevalence of double consciousness (which would come to be known as multiple personality disorder by the end of the nineteenth century) in men. Hacking writes that “nine out of ten patients who have been diagnosed with multiple personality disorder are women” (*Rewriting* 69), but Goff and Simms of Harvard University found that male cases were once much more prevalent than Hacking suggests. In a study of cases published in the English language “that described multiple personality, dissociated personality, split personality, or dual personality,” they find that those reported before 1900 demonstrate “a relatively high proportion of male patients (75%) and a tendency for the primary personality to be inhibited and ‘proper’ while the alternate personality was disinhibited and violated social codes” (596, 597). A range of variables may account for this difference. Goff and Simms looked only at English-language cases, while Hacking’s study includes the numerous cases of multiple personality from French and German literatures. The former study was limited to published cases, while the latter might include

accounts that were found in physicians' notes, letters, and journals. What the study of Goff and Simms makes clear, however, is that the male case is prominent in the history of double consciousness and that social codes played a causal role in psychological division.

If hysteria was the "female malady" of the nineteenth century, as Showalter has argued, then dual personality, or double consciousness, was the corresponding male malady. While women also experienced double consciousness, it may be seen as the male malady because it describes not merely a disorder but the essential split that many men experienced between public and private selves, resulting from the pressures of the public sphere. If "hysteria was at best a private, ineffectual response to the frustrations of women's lives" (Showalter, *Female Malady* 161), then hypochondriasis, including double consciousness, was a similar response to the frustrations of men who felt limited by gender norms. This formulation of double consciousness as the male malady may seem inaccurate, for while fictional accounts of double consciousness feature both male and female subjects, a disproportionate number of these are young women. Cultural assumptions of man's intellectual and psychological independence explain this trend, however, for when a female character experiences double consciousness, she is usually the victim of mesmeric manipulations. Popular-culture mesmeric demonstrations most often featured a male mesmerist and female subject, and "men's superior physical strength and intellectual powers were often given as reasons why they were usually the mesmerists and women usually the subjects" (Winter 215). Reaffirming cultural assumptions about gender identity, a number of fictional texts include a male mesmerist, a mesmeric trance, and a passive female.

For example, in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), Matthew Maule's mesmeric manipulations of Alice Pyncheon's psyche inadvertently lead to her death; in

The Blithedale Romance (1852), Hollingsworth must rescue Priscilla from the machinations of a stage mesmerist.⁸ Robert Browning's poem "Mesmerism" (1855) features a male speaker who uses his psychic power to render a woman "Breathing and mute, / Passive, and yet aware, / In the grasp of my steady stare—." In Henry James's *The Bostonians* (1886), Verena Tarrant's consciousness is alternately controlled by her father, Olive Chancellor, and Basil Ransom,⁹ and in George du Maurier's wildly popular *Trilby* (1894), the title character is transformed into a singing sensation while under Svengali's hypnotic spells. Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) also features entranced females; once attacked by Dracula, Lucy Westenra alternates between waking and trance states, and Mina Murray's telepathic connection with Count Dracula and her susceptibility to Van Helsing's hypnotic passes are crucial to the resolution of the plot.¹⁰ In these texts, the female characters experience double consciousness after being entranced by a (usually male) mesmerist; the male characters' psyches, meanwhile, are powerful enough to control both self and other.

The passivity of entranced women in literary texts reinforces the man's position of psychological strength and thereby affirms his dominant social role. The fact that the male malady of double consciousness is comparatively underrepresented in contemporary literary texts says much about nineteenth-century expectations of masculinity and the taboo of mental distress. The narrative trajectory of a male protagonist in a Victorian novel was likely to be the bildungsroman, a tale of growth in which "one must *internalize* [social norms] and fuse external compulsion and internal impulses into a new unity until the former is no longer distinguishable

⁸ For a discussion of mental control in Hawthorne's works, see Samuel Chase Coale's *Mesmerism and Hawthorne: Mediums of American Romance*.

⁹ For a discussion of Verena's "possession" by other characters, see Susan Wolstenholme's "Possession and Personality": Spiritualism in *The Bostonians*."

¹⁰ Roger Luckhurst has described Mina's as "that terrifying state: the remote-controlled Victorian" (164). Nevertheless, Luckhurst finds that, unlike Lucy, Mina's "trance-states and telepathy work *for* the powers of modernity and progress" (165).

from the latter . . . [T]he *Bildungsroman* . . . succeeded in representing this fusion with a force of conviction and optimistic clarity that will never be equaled again” (Moretti 563). The fusion of self with social norms is a necessary step on the path to success in the bildungsroman, and, as Moretti argues, “there is no conflict between individuality and socialization, autonomy and normality, interiority and objectification” (562). Because no psychological conflict exists, these novels tend to focus on a male character’s external conditions, on his actions and on obstacles that he must overcome. This focus on male action translates to literary and historical criticism; historian John Tosh has noted that “much of the best work on masculinity in our period has treated it primarily as a public discourse . . . there has been much less interest in the terms on which individual men internalized the discourse” (72). Non-fictional and fictional literatures featuring male double consciousness suggest that men did internalize the discourse of masculinity, but that internalization was not without conflict. Instead, some suffered psychologically from feelings of inadequacy.

The trope of double consciousness enabled those authors who did approach the internal, private man to represent his conflict between the separate spheres of public and private life. When fictional men suffer from double consciousness, the source is usually pathological rather than mesmeric, which poses less of a threat to their assumed psychological independence. While psychological distress is a sign of mental weakness, these men are not as weak as their female counterparts, for they do not become susceptible to the manipulations of another individual. Instead, their distress remains internal and private. Double consciousness, for the male character, creates a division between public and private selves so that he can preserve his public image.

Matthew Arnold's "The Buried Life" (1852) captures the notion that a man cannot express the totality of himself in Victorian culture. Instead, his identity is splintered and a portion hidden from sight:

I knew the mass of men conceal'd
 Their thoughts, for fear that if reveal'd
 They would by other men be met
 With blank indifference, or with blame reproved;
 I knew they lived and moved
 Trick'd in disguises, alien to the rest
 Of men, and alien to themselves . . . (lines 16-22)

Masculinity dominates this poem, which refers only to men and uses masculine pronouns, and the weight of social pressures is evident as men feel the need to disguise themselves for a public audience. The speaker fears the indifference or admonishment of his fellow men, so he buries a part of himself. Kimmel acknowledges similar pressure in American culture: "in large part, it's other men who are important to American men; American men define their masculinity, not as much in relation to women, but in relation to each other" (*Manhood in America* 5). Arnold's poem suggests that these masculine assessments were also critical for British men: they are defined by the public persona they exhibit before other men, and must shape their external behavior accordingly. If success in the public sphere includes competition with one's fellow man, then that fellow man will also serve as the judge of masculinity.

Accommodation to social expectations results in a separate self that remains hidden, both from the conscious self and from society, and double consciousness seems to be a solution. The buried self will not remain silent, however:

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
 But often, in the din of strife,
 There rises an unspeakable desire
 After the knowledge of our buried life. (Arnold lines 45-48)

The “buried life” suggests that the speaker wishes to conceal a part of himself that cannot be entirely eradicated. Instead, as with individuals who experienced double consciousness, the suppressed self exists below waking consciousness and can resurface and cause mental strife; it can “convey/ A melancholy into all our day” (lines 75-76). Arnold’s speaker has divided himself to accommodate social expectations, and he is seeking rest from the mental distress that results. In an article in *Scribner’s Magazine* nearly forty years later, titled “The Hidden Self,” William James would similarly describe “a split-off, limited, and buried, but yet a fully conscious self . . . the buried self often comes to the surface and drives out the other self” (370). James’s description refers to cases of hysterical young women, but a comparison of the two disparate works illustrates the prevalence of the divided self in nineteenth-century thought.

In the chapters that follow, I will examine double consciousness in fictional male characters as a division between public and private selves, a reaction to Victorian gender norms. In examining the internal conflicts of male protagonists, these authors bring the private experiences of men into the public sphere. Most experience occupational crises, for, as I have argued above, while “the *lack* of a public, working life” was a source of mental distress for female characters, the psychological problems of male characters “stem, typically, from the world of work, money and public life” (Hawthorn 17). These characters feel that, in one way or another, they are inadequate to the demands of masculinity, and their double consciousnesses emerge as attempts to preserve the appearance of hegemonic masculinity while managing

psychological distress. The authors that I will study bring the challenges of nineteenth-century masculinity to the fore, highlighting the intricacies of human consciousness through various and varied narrative voices.

Because America lacked noblemen, the ideal of the self-made “manly” man took hold earlier in America than it did in Britain. A wealthy elite still existed, but with the American Revolution, “British manhood and, by extension, aristocratic conceptions of manhood . . . were denounced as feminized, lacking manly resolve and virtue” (Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 14). For this reason, I begin my discussion of masculinity with American texts. Ralph Waldo Emerson’s essays, in particular “Self-Reliance” (1841) and “The Transcendentalist” (1842), emphasize the psychological independence necessary to manliness; in *Pierre* (1852), however, Herman Melville challenges Emerson’s ideal of the wholly self-reliant man. When Pierre turns his back on society, attempting to live by his own code of manly conduct and to support a newly-created family through his pen, he finds himself a social and literary reject. Double consciousness, for Pierre, is not the stoic response to materialism and social pressures that Emerson had described. Instead, Pierre’s attempt at manly double consciousness only leads to his mental, physical, and financial ruin.

In Chapter 2, I analyze Latimer’s nervous constitution and resistance to a marketable profession as deviations from masculine standards in George Eliot’s *The Lifted Veil* (1859). Latimer’s sensitivity and preoccupation with poetry feminize him and provoke feelings of social exclusion, which he nurtures into a complete division between self and society. While he claims that his double consciousness enables clairvoyant visions and telepathy, I will suggest that Eliot presents it as mental disease. Through Latimer’s neurotic, paranoid first-person voice Eliot illustrates the lack of self-awareness that accompanies Latimer’s mental collapse.

In Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), which I examine in Chapter 3, Henry Jekyll similarly falls short of masculine standards. Jekyll is a respectable, successful physician, but he no longer wants to control or repress his emotional, erratic nature. Concerned about his public persona, Jekyll creates Hyde as a solution to the double pull of respectability and rebelliousness, but he finds that by dividing his consciousness he only further surrenders control over it and becomes increasingly distressed. His obsession with performing the masculine ideal costs him his sanity and, eventually, his life.

Chapter 4 turns to a trans-Atlantic text, *The Ambassadors* (1903). Early on, Henry James's narrator announces Lambert Strether's double consciousness, and as the novel continues, it becomes apparent that Strether is torn between his own desires and society's expectations. Because he has failed to achieve occupational success in Woollett, Strether feels that he has failed as a man—that is, until he experiences a European masculinity that is associated with sociability, aesthetics, and pleasure. Through his character, James charges American masculinity with limiting one's perspective and possibilities, and thereby causing the psychological distress of double consciousness. While Strether resolves his double consciousness in Paris, however, he returns to America alone and with no real prospects for the future. Because Strether's tale lacks resolution, James suggests that no real solution exists for the crisis of masculinity that struck a number of men at the turn of the twentieth century.

My study of masculine double consciousness culminates with W.E.B. DuBois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), a hybrid text in which DuBois establishes double consciousness as a chronic condition of multicultural individuals. While in later works DuBois would advocate women's rights, in this early text he is overtly concerned with the state of black masculinity. Like white males, the black man in America had a socially prescribed role at the turn of the

twentieth century, but his was one of emasculation by the dominant white culture. He was expected to be a humble, submissive, and hard-working laborer and was denied the self-assertion that was a hallmark of white masculinity. To fulfill these expectations, intellectuals such as DuBois felt pressured to repress their internal desires for education and advancement—for equality. In “Of the Coming of John,” the title character faces a crisis of masculinity when he returns to his Southern home after attending college and finds that he can only advance himself through humility and degradation before the town’s white leader, Judge Henderson. John suffers psychological division, for black masculinity, even more so than white masculinity, was capable of causing inner discord. In placing the African American consciousness within a popular tradition of psychological splitting, DuBois provides a framework for understanding the experience of African American males and ultimately asserts their psychological equality with white men.

The chapters that follow are framed by Ralph Waldo Emerson and W.E.B. DuBois, two intellectual luminaries who are rarely studied together because of the decades and racial difference that divide them. Recently, however, Ryan Schneider has noted that both men “wrote publicly and in sentimental terms about the losses of their first-born sons” (355). While sentimental literature is generally associated with women writers, Emerson’s and DuBois’s essays of personal loss show that “women writers were not the only practitioners of sentimentality and that sentimentality itself cannot adequately be addressed using a separate spheres model based on an unqualified gender binary” (Schneider 355). By publishing such personal emotions, Emerson and DuBois bridged the divide between their public roles as writers and their private grief. The fictional characters I will examine, however, do not successfully merge the public and private man. Instead, their feelings of inadequacy in the public sphere

cause them to foster the division between selves and to develop psychologically devastating double consciousnesses.

The texts that I study here reinforce the findings of nineteenth-century psychology, representing human consciousness as more than a coherent, linear progression of ideas; they include the realm of the unconscious as a central part of self, a region of thoughts and impulses that influences the waking consciousness but remains largely inaccessible. In these texts, the unconscious mind is so powerful that it is capable of coalescing into a second self. These works of fiction go beyond examining the functions of the mind, however, to interrogate the catalysts behind psychological unrest and division. They reveal the demands of a publicly performed masculinity and suggest that such pressures could provoke a double sense of self. In some cases, double consciousness may seem like a solution to fragmented identity, allowing the individual to assimilate to social demands and maintain a private sense of self. Yet in the end, double consciousness is inevitably a form of mental disease that fictional characters succumb to through death or overcome by revising the self. In representing fractured consciousness, these authors paved the way for a modernist understanding of the mind as a fragmented entity, shaped and at times shattered by social forces.

CHAPTER 2

“TWO ARMIES COME TO THE SHOCK”: EMERSON, MELVILLE, AND
ROMANTIC DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS

In his well-received speech at Harvard University, “The American Scholar” (1837), Ralph Waldo Emerson bemoaned an American culture that he considered weak: “the spirit of the American free-man is already suspected to be timid, imitative, tame” (59). Four years later, in “Self-Reliance,” he expressed similar dissatisfaction: “the sinew and heart of man seem to be drawn out, and we are become timorous, desponding whimperers” (146). Emerson felt that the generations following the founding fathers and Revolutionary War heroes were wanting in the manly qualities of zeal and fortitude. The American Revolution had redefined American masculinity in terms of individual thought and action, as men of the colonies rebelled against the fatherland of Britain, but several decades later, American culture had become feminized.¹¹ In Emerson’s view, men lacked intellectual vigor and independence, instead wasting their energies on the bustling marketplace. Rather than examining their own minds and intuition, his contemporaries looked to past works for guidance, but Emerson doubts “the master who could have instructed Franklin, or Washington . . .” (“Self-Reliance” 150). Early American leaders did not rely solely on previous philosophers and masters; instead, they sought independent, individual truths. Likewise, American men should be individuals, thinking for themselves without being overly influenced by society.

¹¹ Michael Kimmel discusses the influence of the American Revolution on masculine ideals in *Manhood in America*; Ann Douglas’s analyzes the growth and popularity of sentimentality in nineteenth-century literature and culture in *The Feminization of American Culture*.

Emerson felt that men should be not only intellectually independent, but also free from the pull of material possessions. Man should be self-made, but he should not become encumbered by what he has made. This emphasis on independence affirmed the egalitarian vision of the American Revolution, for at the turn of the nineteenth century, “the story of self-reliant struggle from humble origins to high position became the ruling narrative of manly worth, supplanting that of the well-born lad demonstrating his superior breeding in the exercise of responsibilities that were his birthright” (Herbert 33). Emerson likewise encouraged men to reject old relations and birthrights: “a cultivated man becomes ashamed of his property, out of new respect for his nature. Especially he hates what he has if he sees that it is accidental—came to him by inheritance, or gift, or crime” (“Self-Reliance” 152). That which a man owns should be his own, obtained through honesty and industry. And while success in the marketplace had become the primary determinant of masculinity, “in a society that defined manhood competitively by possessiveness and possessions, Emerson would define manhood paradoxically by abandonment and self-dispossession” (Leverenz 47). Manliness, in Emerson’s view, was detached from material and social demands; a man should own only that which he has earned, and he should not be so attached to his property that it influences his actions. His identity should be based on his own sense of self, not on his performance in the public sphere. But how was one to live in capitalist society and avoid cumbersome material attachments, to maintain absolute intellectual independence? According to Emerson, double consciousness was the answer. The positive meaning that Emerson applied to double consciousness indicates that, during the first half of the nineteenth century, the term was not readily associated with mental disease.

Emerson first wrote publicly of a transcendent double consciousness in “The Transcendentalist” (1841), defining it as “the two lives, of the understanding and of the soul”

(93). His ideas about double consciousness echo those of German and British Romantics, who described a division between Reason and Understanding in the human mind. In “Fate” (1860), Emerson returned to double consciousness as the “key” or “solution” to maintaining one’s sense of self in society:

One key, one solution to the mysteries of human condition, one solution to the old knots of fate, freedom, and foreknowledge, exists, the propounding, namely, of the double consciousness. A man must ride alternately on the horses of his private and public nature, as the equestrians in the circus throw themselves nimbly from horse to horse, or plant one foot on the back of one, and the other foot on the back of the other. (25)

Emerson outlines two distinct faculties: the intuitive, private nature and the material, public self. Dividing them through double consciousness appears to both stabilize and enable individual, spiritual insight. Preserving the individuality of the private mind was, for Emerson, part of being a man: “the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude” (“Self-Reliance” 136). The public sphere, for Emerson, is not only the world of work, but all relations with other individuals, including friends and family, that distract from his private thoughts. Likewise, his private sphere does not describe domestic relations, but rather the private sphere of one’s own mind. While antebellum America divided between the private, domestic, feminine sphere and the public, bourgeois, masculine sphere, Emerson envisioned a public/ private dualism within each man, a double consciousness, that allowed his sense of manly self-reliance to remain intact, uninfluenced by public pressures.

In *Pierre* (1852), Herman Melville tells the story of a young man who attempts to maintain an Emersonian double consciousness, to separate his intuitive private self from his

public self and to privilege the former. Although Melville does not use the term double consciousness, the novel's descriptions of duality in Pierre's consciousness situate his experience within Emerson's discourse of a separation between materialism and the soul. Pierre finds, however, that the mind is too complex to be divided with a tidy binary, and the narrator reveals that "strange and complicate is the human soul; so much is confusedly evolved from out itself, and such vast and varied accessions come to it from abroad, and so impossible is it always to distinguish between these two, that the wisest man were rash, positively to assign the precise and incipient origination of his final thoughts and acts" (176). Melville presents the mind as complex and, at times, indecipherable. A man's instincts do not always come from a pure spiritual source, so attempts to divide spiritual from material impulses can lead to confusion. Pierre believes he is adhering faithfully to his spiritual consciousness, but he misreads his own mind. Double consciousness creates a rift between Pierre and society that will have serious psychological consequences.

According to the narrator, "the problem of the possible reconciliation of this world with our own souls" is the central problem of *Pierre*, and by the novel's end, the young hero is certainly at odds with the world around him (209). Like a manly Transcendentalist, Pierre follows his soul's intuition in devoting himself to his orphaned, illegitimate sister. He follows Emerson's dictate that "a man is to carry himself in the presence of all opposition as if every thing were titular and ephemeral but he," and, accordingly, double consciousness should allow him to stay true to his own sense of Reason while maintaining a public persona that handles matters of the understanding such as food and lodging ("Self-Reliance" 135). For Pierre, however, double consciousness is not the spiritual solution Emerson had claimed it to be. Instead, it is a source of psychological suffering, for Pierre's compliance with his soul's impulses

costs him his happiness in a world that he must subsequently inhabit. “In obedience to the loftiest behest of his soul, he had done certain vital acts,” and Pierre finds that these acts “lost him his worldly felicity, and which he felt must in the end indirectly work in him some still additional and not-to-be-thought-of woe” (208, 209). And while Spanos has written that in this novel “it is not . . . the psychological resonance of this disobedience that Melville emphasizes; it is the social” (110), the narrator’s continued attention to Pierre’s psyche suggests that the social and psychological ramifications of Pierre’s decisions are intertwined (110).

In the face of social rejection, occupational failure, and dissolved family ties—in other words, failure in the Emersonian public sphere—Pierre cannot maintain his previous convictions. Melville suggests that Emerson’s version of double consciousness does not enable masculine fortitude, but instead becomes a source of psychological confusion, distress, and depression. Through Pierre’s tormented double consciousness, Melville challenges Emerson’s renunciation of society, showing that masculine identity cannot be maintained under the scorn of one’s family, friends, and social acquaintances. Failure in the public sphere has devastating consequences on Pierre’s psychological health, for the public and private man cannot be divided. Double consciousness illustrates the division that Pierre has created between himself and society in pursuit of Emersonian self-reliance, as well as the subsequent rift that he experiences in his own consciousness.

While double consciousness would become associated with mesmerism and mental disease over the course of the nineteenth century, Emerson’s concept of double consciousness developed from German and British Romantic writers’ descriptions of an ideal state of mental abstraction. In *Aids to Reflection* (1825), Samuel Taylor Coleridge is confident that

consciousness can be known through reflection, arguing that “there is one knowledge, which it is every man’s interest and duty to acquire, namely self-knowledge: or to what end was man alone, of all animals, endued by the Creator with the faculty of self-consciousness?” (64). Coleridge proposed the mind as an active creator of truths, rather than the passive receptor of impressions that John Locke had popularly envisioned. Likewise, James Marsh, author of the influential “Preliminary Essay” in the American edition of *Aids to Reflection*, writes of the mind as a mystery currently being unraveled: “right views of the human mind . . . are to be acquired only by laborious and persevering reflection. My belief is, that the distinctions unfolded in this Work will place us in the way to truth” (25).¹² Right views of the human mind were important to Emerson’s thought as well, for he felt that the times in which he was living fostered a new sense of consciousness. Looking back in “Historic Notes of Life and Letters in New England” (1867), Emerson wrote that “the key to the period appeared to be that the mind had become aware of itself. Men grew reflective and intellectual. There was a new consciousness” (253-54). Emerson found that self-knowledge was a new component of manhood; for British Romantics and American Transcendentalists, consciousness was not only the agent of reflection, but also the subject of reflective inquiry and intellectual labor.

John Milton’s distinction between Understanding and Reason in *Paradise Lost* provided a philosophical foundation for Coleridge and other Romantics, and Immanuel Kant’s work was similarly central to British and American thought. Coleridge adapted the division between Reason and Understanding to encourage the cultivation of an intuitive, spiritual faculty in his readers: “Coleridge’s Reason-understanding distinction starts from, but goes on to stretch, Kant’s occasionally impenetrable but nevertheless wholly *cognitive* distinction between *Vernunft*

¹² Marsh was a minister, professor of philosophy, and president of the University of Vermont. The first American version of Coleridge’s *Aids to Reflection* was published in 1829 with Marsh’s “Preliminary Essay.”

(Reason) and *Verstand* (understanding)” (Keane 57). In Coleridge’s *Aids to Reflection*, Reason is a spiritual state in which the mind transcends material concerns. Coleridge explains that “the judgments of the understanding are binding only in relation to the objects of our senses, which we reflect under the forms of the understanding” (212). Understanding, in other words, is based on those material circumstances and objects that our senses perceive; for Emerson, Understanding would align with the public sphere. In contrast, “reason is the power of universal and necessary convictions, the source and substance of truths above sense, and having their evidence in themselves” (211). Reason is an intuitive faculty that is innate, free from worldly influence; it is of the private man. Coleridge further clarifies that “contemplated distinctively in reference to formal (or abstract) truth, it is the speculative reason; but in reference to actual (or moral) truth, as the fountain of ideas and the light of the conscience, we name it the practical reason” (211). Reason, then, is the appropriate source of moral convictions, guiding individuals towards truth and conscientious decisions. Kant’s secular intuition becomes a spiritual faculty in the hands of Coleridge, and this spiritualized version of Reason was adopted by many American writers.

In a cultural climate in which enthusiasm for the scientific empiricism of the Enlightenment had waned, a number of Americans reacted favorably to the spiritual, other-worldly sensibility of Coleridge. Published in America eight years before Henry Hedge’s “Transcendentalist Club” would begin to meet, Coleridge’s work helped to germinate the seeds of transcendental thought: “In the wake of Marsh’s edition of *Aids to Reflection*, all the Transcendentalists scurried about applying this distinction, seizing on a rock against which empiricism and doubt could not prevail: the conception of a divine Reason that was transcendent yet interior, here, now, and within the individual” (Keane 53). The divine, creative Reason of

Coleridge could take man beyond the mundane facts of daily life, yet it was accessible to the individual. For many American Transcendentalists, it became a way of dividing between the material and the spiritual, between public and private selves. While a few women such as Margaret Fuller and Elizabeth Peabody would become a part of the Transcendentalist Club, this group of intellectuals was composed primarily of men, and it was men who would become popular Transcendentalist speakers on the lecture circuit and in pulpits.

After studying Coleridge and Kant, Emerson began to conceive the mind in dualistic terms, distinguishing between higher, spiritual faculties and lower, material impulses. In an 1834 letter to his brother Edward, Emerson spoke of the makeup of man in terms of Reason and Understanding, which he considered “a philosophy itself”:

Reason is the highest faculty of the soul—what we mean often by the soul itself; it never *reasons*, never proves, it simply perceives; it is vision. The Understanding toils all the time, compares, contrives, adds, argues, near sighted but strong-sighted, dwelling in the present[,] the expedient[,] the customary. Beasts have some understanding but no Reason. Reason is potentially perfect in every man—Understanding in very different degrees of strength. (*Letters* 1.413)

For Emerson, the two faculties are not only binary but hierarchical: Reason is the higher faculty, while Understanding is the lower, associated with actions and animalistic drives. Emerson consistently wrote of this dualism in gendered terms, associating Reason with manliness. The Understanding does not define one as a man: “I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions” (“Self-Reliance” 136). In other words, a man’s actions or behavior in the public realm do not make him a man. For Emerson, this distinction depends upon the strength of a man’s Reason, or intuitive faculty, his private self.

Reason, in Emerson's view, is a universal sense of goodness and truth that transcends time or place: "man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason" (*Nature* 14). A private sense of Reason is necessary for grasping spiritual truths, and its cultivation is central to the thoughtful individual. Sense-based Understanding can be clearly distinguished from Reason, according to Emerson, for the two have conflicting purposes. Understanding distracts the self from the promptings of Reason, for it is a "wrinkled calculator" that "contradicts evermore these affirmations of Reason & points at Custom & Interest & persuades one man that the declarations of Reason are false & another that they are at least impracticable" (*Letters* 1.413). Not only are the two faculties distinct, then, but they are often at variance. The spirit of materialism, or marketplace competition, might impel a man to deal unfairly with his fellow man, while his Reason would prohibit such action. Emerson envisions a psychological conflict between Understanding and Reason, in which Reason leads one to truth, but the input of the senses, or Understanding, is a hindrance. The transcendentalist is one who is attuned to his Reason, but because "there is no pure Transcendentalist," no one capable of living completely in the mind, a balance between Reason and Understanding is necessary ("The Transcendentalist" 85).

In "The Transcendentalist" (1841), Emerson describes the necessary division between Reason and Understanding as "double consciousness" (93). The two remain distinct, for they "really show very little relation to each other; never meet and measure each other" (93). There is no connection between the material and spiritual consciousnesses; instead, "these two states of thought diverge every moment, and stand in wild contrast" (92). When the Understanding prevails, it is "all buzz and din; and the other prevails then, all infinitude and paradise" (93).

Two selves exist for him, and Emerson is able to alternate between them. Because Understanding is necessary to daily life, double consciousness is a means of balancing man's dualistic nature, as previous critics have noted.¹³ The man who was able to separate his material from his spiritual impulses was likewise capable of exercising control over his baser self. A part of manliness, for Emerson, was the ability to distinguish Reason from Understanding and to exert control over one's mind and actions.

Emerson's elevation of individual Reason necessarily distanced him from the public sphere of society and personal connections. He ultimately devalues society, writing that "the materialist respects sensible masses, Society, Government, social art and luxury, every establishment, every mass, whether majority of numbers, or extent of space, or amount of objects, every social action. The idealist has another measure, which is metaphysical, namely the *rank* which things themselves take in his consciousness" ("The Transcendentalist" 83). While the majority opinion of society, or social norms, exerts influence over the materialist, the idealist trusts wholly to his own consciousness and respects its judgments. Thus, the transcendentalist finds that "society is good when it does not violate me, but best when it is likeliest to solitude" (83). A society that imposes itself upon him, enforcing norms of behavior, is a threat to individual thought, and thereby a threat to his manliness. Emerson disregards the social norm that associated men with the public sphere, instead preferring the private sphere of his solitude.

In "Self-Reliance," Emerson further promotes non-conformity and warns against society as a hindrance to self-reliant masculinity:

¹³ Joel Porte writes, "most Transcendentalists believed that the true hero of the age was less the man who healed the division in his nature than the one who could manage to live nobly in a kind of sublime Faustian tension between hell and paradise" (43). Kehler has similarly found that "'double consciousness' proves as necessary as it is painful, and the Romantic's ultimate goal becomes, therefore, neither the denial or the overcoming of duality, but the recognition and control of it" (151).

Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity . . . Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. (134)

The material consciousness is necessarily social, and while some social interaction is necessary, it must be minimized, so that the spiritual consciousness, or Reason, remains pure. Distancing oneself from society suggests an emotional detachment, however, that could cause psychological alienation: “Emerson’s rhetoric requires as its speaker a free-floating self whose nonchalance deliberately rides above emotional commitment and social groupings . . . Emerson cuts himself off from experiencing feelings except through rivalry and detachment” (Leverenz 44-45).

Double consciousness allows Emerson to separate himself from society so it cannot influence his Reason, and thereby he maintains a sense of stoic, independent masculinity. At the same time, however, he sacrifices emotional connections to other members of society. Thus, while he shared American society’s value of manly independence, he did not share the association of men with the public sphere.

In addition to advocating a disconnection from society, Emerson’s writing also, perhaps unwittingly, suggests that double consciousness can result in mental instability. He describes the transcendent encounter as a “brief experience” of illumination which “ma[kes] me aware that I had played the fool with fools all this time” (“The Transcendentalist” 92). He realizes “the worship of ideas,” so that he “should never be a fool more” (92). Soon after his illuminating experience has begun, however, “in the space of an hour probably,” the transcendentalist is “let down from this height,” after which “I wish to exchange this flash-of-lightning faith for

continuous daylight, this fever-glow for benign climate” (92). Emerson expresses frustration at the brevity of his spiritual illumination and his unfulfilled desire to remain in a steadier state of idealism. In his desire for more than a “flash-of-lightning faith,” Emerson reveals that, because of the polarity between the two states, flashes of illumination can engender mental instability. The “continuous daylight” that he wishes for indicates a desire for steadiness in the mind, but Emerson does not expand on this desire. Herman Melville would take up the issue in *Pierre*, however, and suggest that mental maneuvers between Reason and Understanding may not enable a stoic sense of masculinity. In Melville’s tale, double consciousness takes the title character outside of social norms and subsequently causes alienation and distress.

When the novel begins, Pierre is a social darling in the rural community of Saddle Meadows. The opening chapter introduces him “Just Emerging from His Teens,” and the narrator emphasizes not only his hero’s “romantic” and “gentlemanly” nature, but also his “joyful manliness,” “manly brawn and muscle,” the “manly tenor” with which he speaks, and his “manly eyes” (16, 36, 17, 33, 70). Pierre is physically active and enjoys “the glowing practice of all those manly exercises,” for he feels that “he must first completely invigorate and embrown himself into the possession of such a noble muscular manliness, that he might champion Lucy against the whole physical world” (50). The narrator emphasizes the manliness that is requisite for Pierre to assume his public roles of husband to Lucy Tartan and master of his family’s estate. Masculinity requires not only physical strength and prowess, however, but a strong will and self-control. At nineteen years old, Pierre remains naïve, for he “had never yet become so thoroughly initiated into that darker, though truer aspect of things, which an entire residence in the city from the earliest period of life, almost inevitably engraves upon the mind of any keenly observant and reflective youth” (69). Raised in the country by a mother who dotes on him as “a noble boy”

with “such sweet docilities,” Pierre’s life thus far has been privileged and idyllic (20). As a young man, Pierre appears to be poised for success in the public sphere; however, the inner man, or psychological brawn, of which Emerson boasted, has yet to be tested.

The psychological challenge begins when Pierre becomes enchanted by a mysterious young woman at a sewing group he visits with his mother. He knows nothing of Isabel, but after a glimpse of her face he struggles “to regain the conscious possession of himself” (47). In an instant, she displays the power to thrust him into an altered state of mind. Pierre reflects that “thou has evoked in me profounder spells than the evoking one, thou face!” (51-52). Despite his felicitous, ideal engagement to Lucy Tartan, Pierre is rendered helpless by Isabel’s influence. Pierre orders his mind, however, by envisioning his psychological conflict as two opposing forces. As he ponders an unread letter from Isabel, he intuits its ominous potential and “seem[s] distinctly to feel two antagonistic agencies within him; one of which was just struggling into his consciousness, and each of which was striving for the mastery” (63). A new force has entered his consciousness and created a clash of mental impulses; for the naïve Pierre, moral relativity or ambiguity is not an option. Instead, one must be a “good angel” and one must be a “bad angel” (63).

Emerson’s dualism between Reason and Understanding allows Pierre to order his consciousness and gives him confidence in the strength of his intuition. Pierre imagines the bad angel as tied to worldly, material impulses, or Emerson’s Understanding; this force urges him to discard the note, “for in some dark way the reading of it would irretrievably entangle his fate” (63). This angel encourages him to “destroy it, and be happy,” for if he does so, he can secure his worldly happiness with Lucy (63). This is the pull of Understanding, or his desire to maintain the publicly esteemed and privileged self. Because Lucy is connected to the wealth and

social approval of Saddle Meadows, Pierre associates her with his baser desires, despite the narrator's innocent, idyllic depictions of her. The angel that he classifies as good, in contrast, encourages him to "dismiss all misgivings; not because there was no possible ground for them, but because to dismiss them was the *manlier* part, never mind what might betide. This good angel seemed mildly to say—Read, Pierre, though by reading thou may'st entangle thyself, yet may'st thou thereby disentangle others" (63, my emphasis). Pierre imagines that reading the note might ease the pains of Isabel and thus realize some greater, transcendent duty—this is his Reason, independent of social approval. Isabel represents for Pierre a higher law, impelling him to a more selfless renunciation, not swayed by material concerns. If he extends himself towards Isabel, no matter the cost, he will be independent; he will be manly. This "good angel" is ultimately triumphant, and "at the blast of his noble heart, the bad angel shrunk up into nothingness" (63). Pierre feels certain that he has chosen the manly pursuit of truth over material desires, and he experiences within himself a "heavenly swell" (63).

Pierre is confident in his decision to be the independent, masculine protector of Isabel, claiming that "God demands me for thy comforter; and comfort thee, and stand by thee, and fight for thee, will thy leapingly-acknowledging brother" (66). Pierre believes that he is adhering to a spiritual, intuitive sense of duty and cultivating a private, unencumbered self, following Emerson's charge that "a man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within" ("Self-Reliance" 132). The narrator, however, suggests that the mind is not so transparent or self-contained. He has a detached view of Pierre's consciousness, for he is an outsider "who can understand the workings of [characters'] minds even when they are most confused or self-deluded" (Brodhead 177). After Pierre reads the letter from Isabel and commits himself to her, the narrator reflects that "in their precise tracings-out and subtile [*sic*]

causations, the strongest and fieriest emotions of life defy all analytical insight” (67). In other words, the workings of the mind cannot be accurately analyzed, as Coleridge and Emerson had asserted. Of the power of unconscious impulses, the narrator states that “far as we blind moles can see, man’s life seems but an acting upon mysterious hints . . . surely no mere mortal who has at all gone down into himself will ever pretend that his slightest thought or act solely originates in his own defined identity” (176). The identity that one has consciously defined is not all that composes one’s self. A man cannot exercise complete control over his mind, as Emerson suggested, for he is susceptible to external influences and unconscious impulses that are not always divine.

A metaphorical invasion into Pierre’s consciousness indicates that Pierre might not have the control over his mental impulses that he assumes. He is subject to “preternatural ponderings, which baffled all the introspective cunning of his mind” (49). Pierre immediately categorizes these impulses as intuitive, coming to him from another realm, much as Emerson conceived of Reason. In contrast to the “delicious awakenings of the higher powers” that Emerson describes as marring “instinctive belief in the absolute existence of nature,” however, the narrator depicts the supernatural forces in Pierre’s mind as an invading, cloaked army (*Nature* 25). Pierre experiences a dark force: “what he had always before considered the land of veritable reality, was now being audaciously encroached upon by bannered armies of hooded phantoms, disembarking in his soul, as from flotillas of specter-boats” (49). The metaphor of a phantasmatic invading army suggests that Pierre will face an assault within his own consciousness. While he tries to convince himself that his commitment to Isabel is innocently intuitive, the dark metaphor of invasion suggests that he might be mistaken; Pierre’s inner self

may not be so pure as he imagines, and what he considers Reason may be the voice of unreason, or chaos.

To the shadowy image of hooded phantoms the narrator adds images of depth, which reinforce Pierre's ignorance of all that is buried within his consciousness. As he tries to understand his reaction to Isabel, and why he felt impelled to lie to his mother about it, Pierre reacts with aversion towards his own mind: "Pierre shrank abhorringly from the infernal catacombs of thought, down into which, this foetal fancy beckoned him" (51). With the metaphor of catacombs, the narrator presents Pierre's mind as a structure with hidden, subterranean depths. Whether intentionally or not, critics have used similar language to describe Pierre's altered mental state: "the sudden appearance of Isabel unlocks previously unknown depths within Pierre's self" (Clymer 187). Sealts has noted that in *Pierre*, Melville explores "those psychological processes below the level of conscious thought," as if there are planes within his mind to which he has not consciously descended (325-26). Pierre begins to realize "that not always in our action, are we our own factors," but he turns away from this idea (51). He suspects for an instant that his mind consists of more than his conscious thoughts, and that complete self-regulation might be impossible, but he refuses to explore this subterranean region. Emerson's endorsement of Reason over Understanding implies that men can clearly distinguish between the two, but Pierre briefly recognizes with horror how little he knows his own mind. He has envisioned a binary, but the narrator's dark metaphors suggest that the impulses guiding him towards double consciousness may be neither fully discernable nor under his control.

Despite the turmoil that is building in his consciousness, Pierre insists upon his ability to be a masculine provider for Isabel and Delly Ulver. He maintains his spiritual conviction even though it will cost him all social connections, and "thus, in the Enthusiast to Duty, the heaven-

begotten Christ is born; and will not own a mortal parent, and spurns and rends all mortal bonds” (106). Melville’s language here echoes Emerson’s vow in “Self-Reliance” that “I shun father and mother and wife and brother when my genius calls me” (135). Pierre commits himself to the protection of Isabel and stays true to his internal impulses, knowing that to do so will require great sacrifice: he must turn his back on friends and family at Saddle Meadows. In making this choice, Pierre rejects “earlier ideologies of manhood [that] stabilized self-esteem by linking it to institutionalized social structures such as class and patriarchy,” and instead adopts a self-reliant, Emersonian ideology of masculinity (Leverenz 85). The inheritance of Saddle Meadows will no longer be his, so he will make his own way in the world, rather than relying upon the successes of his ancestors. Through his double consciousness, he will divide his mind so that society cannot influence his decisions, and with his mind fixed on a higher, transcendent sense of duty, Pierre will craft a new public self that provides for himself, Isabel, and Delly Ulver.

The narrator continues to undercut Pierre’s sense of manly duty, however, with his manly desires. The narrator is aware of sensual influences on Pierre’s consciousness, commenting that “though charged with the fire of all divineness, his containing thing was made of clay” (107). His body, or physicality, has become conflated with his sense of duty, so that his “heavenly fire was helped to be contained in him, by mere contingent things, and things that he knew not” (107). Pierre’s zest for spiritual truth, according to the narrator, is influenced by physical desires of which he is unaware. Upon describing Isabel’s beauty, the narrator considers its significance: “how, if accosted in some squalid lane, a humped, and crippled, hideous girl should have snatched his garment’s hem, with—‘Save me, Pierre—love me, own me, brother; I am thy sister!’—Ah, if man were wholly made in heaven, why catch we hell-glimpses?” (107). As Pierre contemplates the upcoming interview that Isabel’s letter requested, the narrator reveals

that her physical beauty is a factor in his decision. Because he has seen Isabel's face in the sewing room, "Pierre was assured that, in a transcendent degree, womanly beauty, and not womanly ugliness, invited him to champion the right" (107). With his ironic tone, the narrator weaves a "sinister vein" into the notion of transcendental Reason, so that Coleridge's distinction between Reason and Understanding no longer holds (107-08). While Pierre might indeed be motivated by Reason, the "universal and necessary convictions" of caring for one's sister, he might also be prompted by Understanding, or "the objects of [his] senses," his physical attraction to Isabel (Coleridge 211, 212). Once again, the narrator suggests that the mind might not be wholly aware of all of the forces at work within it; while Pierre believes he is adhering to an intuitive, spiritual manliness, sensual impulses play a more significant role than he imagines.

When Pierre listens to Isabel tell the story of her life at the farmhouse, the narrator's mesmeric language casts further doubt upon the spiritual nature of Pierre's double consciousness. Pierre is "entranced, lost, as one wandering bedazzled and amazed among innumerable dancing lights" in these scenes of the novel (126). In addition to Isabel's story, the simple words that she chants "had bewitched him, and enchanted him, till he had sat motionless and bending over, as a tree-transformed and mystery-laden visitant, caught and fast bound in some necromancer's garden" (128). Pierre's mind is no longer independent, for he is under her spell. In this first scene of significant verbal interaction between Pierre and Isabel, Pierre experiences a state of semi-consciousness. Upon his second interview with Isabel, Pierre is again "almost deprived of consciousness by the spell flung over him by the marvelous girl" (150). The altered state that Pierre experiences is perhaps similar to that sought by Romantics and Transcendentalists, but Isabel's role in inducing it brings to mind the work of mesmerists rather than philosophers. He is not responding to his own inner voice, but to her seduction.

Melville's use of mesmeric language intimates the powerful physical influence of Isabel's magnetism. As she tells her story and plays her guitar, "to Pierre's dilated senses Isabel seemed to swim in an electric fluid; the vivid buckler of her brow seemed as a magnetic plate" (151). During this "first magnetic night," he experiences "sparkling electricity" and an "extraordinary atmospheric spell" from her "strange electric glory" (151, 152). He is drawn to "an extraordinary physical magnetism in Isabel" and feels that theirs is a "magnetic contact" (151, 173).¹⁴ Melville inverts the common, gendered power structure of mesmerism by locating mesmeric control, and therefore power, in Isabel. In this scene, Pierre becomes submissive to her magnetism, as many mesmeric subjects had forfeited control of their conscious thoughts and actions. In 1825, a physician named L.L. Rostan had warned of the risks of animal magnetism in the *French Dictionary of Medical Sciences*: "The will is nearly absent; it is in such a way under the will of the Magnetist that the individual appears to be his mere instrument; they act through him and [the magnetist] can influence even their desires and their thoughts" (qtd. in Laurence and Perry 144). Likewise, descriptions of Isabel's powerful influence in these scenes cast doubt on the autonomy of Pierre's mental impulses. During his second meeting with Isabel, he becomes "vaguely sensible of a certain still more marvelous power in the girl over himself and his most interior thoughts and motions" (151).

Pierre experiences double consciousness, then, but it is not an empowering Emersonian division between material Understanding and transcendent Reason. Emerson's double consciousness enabled the individual to experience a heightened, spiritual state of consciousness

¹⁴ In his 1779 *Dissertation on the Discovery of Animal Magnetism*, Franz Anton Mesmer explained the analogous relationship between magnetism and the influence individuals can exert on one another (67-68). According to Mesmer, a universal fluid connects human beings; furthermore, an individual can manipulate this fluid to exert influence over another individual's body. He also likens animal magnetism to the invisible force of electricity (37), and in antebellum America, electricity became synonymous with animal magnetism (Fuller 60).

without a mediator, thereby maintaining his “manhood,” which is “enviable and gracious and its claims not to be put by, if it will stand by itself” (“Self-Reliance” 134). Pierre attempts to stand by himself, rejecting the property and relations of the public sphere, but his faithfulness to private intuition misleads him. Double consciousness, for Pierre, is a dissociation from waking consciousness that makes him psychologically vulnerable to Isabel. This double consciousness does not affirm his masculine independence, but rather challenges it, for Pierre no longer has control over his own mind. He remains ignorant to all that is influencing his consciousness, and based solely on mental impulses, he will commit to significant sacrifices.

Pierre stubbornly determines to be the manly nonconformist that Emerson describes in “The Transcendentalist” and in “Self-Reliance” and to make his own way in the public realm. He renounces worldly pleasures, for if “he was almost superhumanly prepared to make a sacrifice of all objects dearest to him, and cut himself away from his last hopes of common happiness . . . how light as a gossamer, and thinner and more impalpable than airiest threads of gauze, did he hold all common conventional regardings” (106). While Pierre looks upon the scale of his sacrifice “though but unconsciously as yet,” the narrator acknowledges the solemnity of disregarding social, material considerations (106). For his contempt of all previous relations, Pierre will suffer. The narrator relates that Pierre “*seemed* to foresee and understand” the consequences of his actions, “that now his whole life would, in the eyes of the wide humanity, be covered with an all-pervading haze of incurable sinisterness” (176, my emphasis). Even so, Pierre’s adherence to his decision indicates that he does not fully appreciate its gravity. He remains committed to his private intuition, despite the damage he will do to his public self. His determination suggests that, along with Emerson, Pierre feels that “it is easy enough for a man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes,” for theirs is a “feminine rage”

(“Self-Reliance” 141). Despite the offense that he will do to the cultivated classes (to which he has previously belonged), Pierre remains true to “the manly enthusiast cause of his heart” (167). It is this sense of transcendent, renunciatory manliness that he feels will sustain him.

In contrast to Pierre’s self-assured manliness, the narrator calls him a “rash boy” and points out “the perils and miseries thou callest down on thee, when, even in a virtuous cause, thou steppest aside from those arbitrary lines of conduct, by which the common world, however base and dastardly, surrounds thee for thy worldly good” (176). While “the moral/linguistic imperatives of the ‘world’ are, far from being natural, an ideological construction of the dominant American culture his mother represents” (Spanos 111), the fact remains that to resist such moral imperatives results in isolation and misery for Pierre. The world’s norms might be arbitrary and base, but he would be wise to adhere to them, for dividing himself from his surrounding society only causes despair. Emerson had acknowledged that, in adhering strictly to his own consciousness, he might “give these friends pain. Yes, but I cannot sell my liberty and my power, to save their sensibility” (“Self-Reliance” 146). Pierre will learn, however, that “it is impossible in time and space to kill any compunction arising from having cruelly injured a departed fellow-being” (286). The pain that he inflicts on others will only cause him pain, for his sensibility is, essentially, tied to others.

Pierre’s decisions have so distanced him from society that midway through the novel, the narrator decides that his psychological struggles cannot, or should not, be communicated. As Pierre leaves the farmhouse, the narrator claims that “we know not Pierre Glendinning’s thoughts as he gained the village and passed on beneath its often shrouding trees, and saw no light from man, and heard no sound from man” (162). Pierre’s consciousness is detached; it is not accessible to the narrator, nor is it attuned to the humanity of the village. Here, we begin to see

the distance that Pierre has created between himself and others. The double consciousness that he chooses has not separated his spiritual from material impulses, but has instead created an irreparable division between Pierre and society. After a torturous evening of pondering his fate, consumed by “senseless madness, which is himself” and experiencing the “[profound] prostration of his soul,” Pierre’s consciousness is again hidden from the reader. The narrator swiftly announces that “here we draw a veil [*sic*]. Some nameless struggles of the soul can not be painted, and some woes will not be told. Let the ambiguous procession of events reveal their own ambiguousness” (181). Pierre has fallen under Isabel’s spell and his mind becomes increasingly dissociated. Like a mesmeric subject whose consciousness is discontinuous, so that he cannot remember his thoughts or actions from one state to the next, Pierre has experienced a division in his consciousness so complete that the narrator no longer has full access to his mind. Thus, Pierre’s actions from this point forward will be shrouded in ambiguity.

When Pierre chooses to turn away from the expectations of society, the narrator likewise turns away from Pierre’s consciousness. “Language breaks down as Pierre is increasingly excluded from the world,” a point that is emphasized through the narrator’s inability to communicate the contents of Pierre’s mind (Wald 127). The novel’s central focus is Pierre’s mental state, and when his psychological struggles “can not be painted,” the narrator will simply let them pass rather than try to communicate the complex workings of a mind that has faced intense social rejection. The narrator’s role in a novel is to communicate the experience of an individual to society, to mediate between a central character’s private and public selves and thereby to provide the reader with understanding of that individual. As Pierre’s psychological split between inner reason and material understanding, between self and society, becomes increasingly pronounced, however, the narrator is no longer able to mediate between the two.

The chasm between Pierre's public and private selves cannot be bridged; language, the essential mediator between self and society, is no longer adequate to the task. In this way, the narrator maintains a psychologically realistic portrait of an individual at odds with the society that surrounds him.

As Pierre is increasingly divided from others, he experiences the grievous consequences of so brutally offending his loved ones. When he tells Lucy of his marriage, she no longer recognizes him as her former fiancé. Instead, she sees him as an inhuman entity and requests her maid to "drive it away!—there—there! him—him!" (184). Upon telling his mother of his marriage to Isabel, she claims that "beneath my roof, and at my table, he who was once Pierre Glendinning no more puts himself" (185). Even his ancestral home thrusts him out: "as he crossed its threshold, his foot tripped upon its raised ledge; he pitched forward upon the stone portico, and fell. He seemed as jeeringly hurled from beneath his own ancestral roof" (185). As Pierre's foot stumbles on the doorway, his own body is complicit in his rejection from Saddle Meadows. In disregarding the effect his decision will have on those around him, Pierre has alienated himself from the community of friends and family at Saddle Meadows; they refuse to recognize the man who was once Pierre.

Once he has endured rejection of those he held most dear in Saddle Meadows, Pierre comforts himself with the idea of beginning anew in New York. Instead, he arrives to find that his once-beloved cousin, Glen Stanly, has not prepared the lodgings he had previously offered to Pierre. When he confronts Glen at a party, his cousin responds with disdain: "I do not know him; it is an entire mistake; why don't the servants take him out, and the music go on?" (239). In this world of prestige and privilege, there is no longer a place for Pierre. He has not only lost his place in the public sphere of Saddle Meadows, but also his hopes for easily establishing a new

place in the larger public sphere of New York. Because he has divided his private intuition from his public concerns, his public self has crumbled. When Lucy returns to him in the guise of his cousin, she is too late to bring him any comfort. Pierre finally realizes his own alienation: “he was precisely in that general condition with respect to the outer world, that he could not reasonably look for any tidings but disastrous, or at least, unwelcome ones” (308). In response to his rejection of social norms, society likewise rejects him.

Despite his mounting sense of isolation, Pierre stubbornly maintains his Emersonian double consciousness, and as he does, he becomes increasingly characterized by public failure and emasculation. While he has upheld Emerson’s definition of manhood as independent action, his failure in the marketplace and subsequent failure to provide for his new family strip him of any remaining shreds of socially-ordained masculinity. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, “as the male workplace became quite separate from the home, competition intensified, and men defined manhood much more exclusively through their work” (Leverenz 72). Upon setting out for the city, Pierre plans to support himself, Isabel, and Delly independently through “his presumed literary capabilities” (260).¹⁵ His genteel upbringing is a hindrance, for “he knew no profession, no trade. Glad now perhaps might he have been, if Fate had made him a blacksmith, and not a gentleman, a Glendinning, and a genius” (260). Pierre is determined, however, to be a provider, for “Pierre was proud; and a proud man . . . holds but lightly those things, however beneficent, which he did not for himself procure” (260). Believing in his own capacity for marketplace success, Pierre follows precisely the path to manliness that Emerson

¹⁵ The frustration that Pierre experiences in the literary marketplace invite speculation on the extent to which they mirror Melville’s own literary failures. Gillian Brown makes a convincing argument that “Melville regards sentimentalism as identical with the market. To read *Pierre* is to follow the ways that literary individualism appropriates the anti-market rhetoric of domestic individualism in order to distinguish male individuality from femininity” (136). At a time when sentimental novels reigned in the literary market, male writers struggled to establish a more “masculine” literature. I find, however, that in *Pierre* the quest for individualism goes too far in separating one from society.

had suggested: he lets go of the inheritance that he did not himself earn. Thus, his pride as a breadwinner is battered when, despite his fervent efforts at writing, he cannot support himself and his makeshift family of Isabel, Delly, and eventually, Lucy. His masculinity is further undermined when Lucy offers to paint portraits to help support herself, and Isabel subsequently volunteers to sell her hair or teach guitar lessons. Because of his own occupational failure, the women must now assist in the role of provider. Not only does this emasculation cause his spiritual conviction to flag, but his physical stamina will also suffer from his economic collapse.

As Pierre becomes increasingly distressed, his earlier manly robustness is replaced with frailty, and his physical degradation mirrors a fatigued mental state. Bundling himself against the cold in a room lacking heat, Pierre has “reduced himself to the miserable condition of [a cripple],” dependent upon Isabel’s care (301). He responds with stoicism to his crippling physical and mental states, but the narrator cannot avoid the language of mental disease: his look is one of “melancholy satisfaction” as he sits in “that most melancholy closet” (301, 302). Pierre’s deteriorating physical health reflects and manifests his deteriorating mental health, for Pierre displays “a combination of physical and psychological ailments that came in time to be regularly associated with neurasthenic disease” (Rachman 230). Once settled in New York, Pierre becomes susceptible to “moods of peculiar depression and despair . . . dark thoughts of his miserable condition would steal over him; and black doubts as to the integrity of his unprecedented course in life would most malignantly suggest themselves” (292). As his situation worsens, he experiences “the feeling of misery and death” (339). Double consciousness does not bring Pierre stoic independence, but rather psychological and physical deterioration. The muscular, manly brawn that characterized Pierre in the opening chapters is no more. He has

internalized society's rejection of him, and it leads to a state of depression that he is powerless to control.

Pierre's weakened physical and mental conditions render him helpless, and his visual connection to the outside world is severed when his eyesight begins to fail him. Instead of standing independent, Pierre finds himself prone, denied any human comforts. One night in the city, he loses his way as

a sudden, unwonted, and all-pervading sensation seized him. He knew not where he was; he did not have any ordinary life-feeling at all. He could not see; though instinctively putting his hands to his eyes, he seemed to feel that the lids were open. Then he was sensible of a combined blindness, and vertigo, and staggering; before his eyes a million green meteors danced; he felt his foot tottering upon the curb, he put out his hands, and knew no more for the time. When he came to himself he found that he was lying crosswise in the gutter, dabbled with mud and slime. (341)

In the very public venue of a New York City street, Pierre again loses consciousness, but this time when he awakes he is completely alone, miserable and surrounded by the waste of other individuals. In this scene, the importance of material, sensory faculties is painfully evident: without them, body, soul, or mind might lose its sense of balance and find itself in a gutter.

Again, Pierre's demoralized physical state gives us an indication of his mental state, for he has dissolved social connections save those fictitious ties that he maintains with Isabel and Lucy. He has lost all traces of independent masculinity; he lies before society both physically and mentally helpless, unable to pull himself out of the refuse.

Pierre's emasculation is complete when he receives letters of disdain and disgust from his publisher and from his cousin. He has proven himself incapable of manly success, for "the central characteristic of being self-made was that the proving ground was the public sphere If manhood could be proved, it had to be proved in the eyes of other men" (Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 19). Pierre has proven himself a failure not only before the women with whom he lives, but also before professional men, and this transgression finally breaks him. His publisher's scorn dashes any remaining hopes of material success, and accusations of villainy from his cousin and Lucy's brother deprive him of his former feelings of moral rectitude. While he previously thought he could divide the two and base his decisions on individual, spiritual intuition, he now realizes that he cannot maintain his spiritual sensibility without the esteem and company of his social relations and family. Pierre's reaction is helplessly violent: "No longer do I hold terms with aught. World's bread of life, and world's breath of honor, both are snatched from me; but I defy all world's bread and breath" (357). He will fight back against the world that now actively assaults him.

From this point forward, the narrator is separated from Pierre's mind; he describes only Pierre's actions, as an observer, and Pierre speaks his thoughts aloud, as a dramatic actor would. Melville illustrates the memory barrier that was commonly associated with double consciousness, severing his readers from Pierre's consciousness as it becomes ever more dissociated. In doing so, Melville redefines realism, depicting the mind as complex and inconstant. Just as in double consciousness a subject might not know his "other self," we cannot know this Pierre. Pierre's psychological division from a society that includes the narrator is complete, so the narrator finds that "the feelings of Pierre were entirely untranslatable into any words that can be used" (353). Pierre rushes out to accomplish his revenge "as it were

somnambulously,” deprived of his sanity, acting as if in a trance (357). Once again he is experiencing an altered state of consciousness, only this time he will physically attack representatives of the public sphere. He takes the letters from his cousin and his publisher, his last two communications from men of the public sphere, and crushes them upon the bullets he will use to kill Glen Stanly and Fred Tartan, men whose normative public roles and scorn for Pierre clarify Pierre’s failure and distance from society. Any hope of a compromise between Pierre’s individual impulses and society’s expectations is lost, and, consequently, any capacity for a narrative mediation of Pierre’s private experience is destroyed. The reader can observe, but not fully comprehend, Pierre’s mental state as he is apprehended by the police. He sits in a “low dungeon” of the prison, which indicates that he has indeed sunk to his lowest mental state (360). He relates that “I long and long to die, to be rid of this dishonored cheek” (360). The full weight of society’s scorn is upon him.

In the wake of numerous rejections and alienation, Pierre realizes the double consciousness that enabled him to act independently does not result in a sense of potent manhood. Instead, he is left alone with the consequences of his decisions. He “sets himself against the world and attempts to make the unacceptable acceptable” (McLoughlin 128), but he finds that the world is a force much stronger than he, and it will not accept his unconventional behavior. The narrator describes the two sources of support that Pierre had anticipated—the world and a paternal deity—much like the maternal and paternal support that a toddler experiences as he is learning to walk. Pierre feels that society let go of him when he left Saddle Meadows with Isabel as his ostensible wife, yet he was “willing that humanity should desert him, so long as he thought he felt a higher support; then, ere long, he began to feel the utter loss of that other support, too; ay, even the paternal gods themselves did now desert Pierre” (296).

Because Pierre believes himself to have adhered to heavenly principles, he feels that his manly independence will be rewarded. According to Emerson, “if the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him” (“American Scholar” 59). Pierre learns that, rather than coming round, the world is ambivalent towards his insistence on instinct. No longer certain of his decisions, he realizes that his pursuit of manly self-reliance has reduced his mind to the state of a toddler, isolated and helpless; he is left alone to suffer for his choices. His double consciousness has left him with neither social nor spiritual reassurance.

In *Pierre*, Melville redefines Emerson’s redemptive, balance-restoring double consciousness as a condition of violent fragmentation between self and society, between public and private worlds. A man’s role in the public sphere was critical to his identity in the nineteenth century, and the metaphor of two simultaneously-written books suggests the necessary connection between forces within Pierre’s consciousness. The narrator describes Pierre’s duality as “two books [that] are being writ; of which the world shall only see one, and that the bungled one. The larger book, and the infinitely better, is for Pierre’s own private shelf” (304). Pierre’s experience parallels that of hysterics or mesmeric subjects who have lost access to parts of their consciousnesses. Because he divides a portion of his consciousness from the world, we no longer have access to the book of his spiritual struggles; he no longer has a close friend in whom he can confide, and we can only surmise his mental state from his physical condition. In his attempt to transcend worldly concerns, Pierre has created a greater chasm between self and society than he had perhaps intended. He realizes the necessity of social connections, for he suffers intensely from their severance. In discussing the two books of his double consciousness, the narrator reflects that “circumstances have so decreed, that the one

cannot be composed on the paper, but only as the other is writ down in his soul” (304). Public actions necessarily affect the private man, and vice versa. In nineteenth-century society, which judged men by their public actions, Pierre cannot remain secure in his masculinity once he has alienated himself from the public arena. Manliness does not consist in dividing oneself from society, but in some combination of independence and integration.

While Herman Melville was hardly a social conformist, he illustrates in Pierre’s tale that material, social connections are an integral part of masculine consciousness in Antebellum America. Because the mind contains unconscious impulses that can deceive, social relations are critical in decision-making, for “the self-containment of individuals and the complete rupture of interpersonal relations” is just as much a threat in Pierre’s experience as the erasure of self that accompanies complete conformity (Silverman 361). Thus, while Emerson promotes a “fundamental code that binds manhood and power together at the expense of intimacy” (Leverenz 44), Melville suggests that American societies will not accept a man who is ambivalent towards his intimate relations and public image. Emerson’s brand of masculine self-reliance, which calls for a rejection of the public sphere, only brings Melville’s hero to a culturally feminized state of dependency and depression.

In Pierre Glendinning, we see the fractured modern subjectivity that would become a hallmark of American and British literature by the end of the century. William H. Sack, M.D., has diagnosed Pierre as a manic-depressive under modern psychiatric standards, but he also points out the motif of mental illness that pervades the text:

Pierre’s father was delirious before he died, and Pierre’s mother is driven into insanity before her sudden death. Isabel spent some time in an insane asylum. Nellie [Delly] has a severe postpartum depression and is temporarily mute, and

Isabel makes a suicide attempt before her death by poison. All this suggests that mental illness was never far from Melville's mind as he shaped this strange and moving book. (7)

Insanity looms so large in this novel that upon its publication, some reviewers considered Melville to have fallen victim to insanity himself. A critic from the *Boston Post* charged that the work "might be supposed to emanate from a lunatic hospital"; a headline in the *New York Day Book* declared "HERMAN MELVILLE CRAZY," and still another review in the *Southern Quarterly Review* claimed that "the sooner this author is put in ward the better" (33, 50, 54). While Melville's own mental state at the time of composition can never be known, he does create a memorable literary figure who suffers a psychological breakdown as the result of strict adherence to the manly independence that Emerson promoted. Going forward, the unconscious mind would gain prominence not as the site of the soul's intuition, as Romantics and Transcendentalists had proposed, but as the site of repressed ideas and traumas in both women and men.

CHAPTER 3

“TWO PARALLEL STREAMS”: DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS, ISOLATION, AND
RELIABILITY IN *THE LIFTED VEIL*

In *The Lifted Veil*, George Eliot traces the collapse of Latimer, another male character who is crippled by his own psyche and who illustrates the power of mental disease to deceive the sufferer. While Pierre chooses separation from society as manly renunciation, however, Latimer’s difference and distance from others are part of his earliest childhood memories and are caused by feelings of effeminacy. “Victorian manliness was premised on a powerful sense of the feminine ‘other,’ with each sex being defined by negative stereotypes of the other,” but Latimer diverges from the masculine norm because feminine qualities for him are not other (Tosh 91). Instead, they are an integral part of self. Reflecting on his childhood, Latimer describes himself as “a very sensitive child” who, after a temporary blindness, relished being on his mother’s “knee from morning till night” but who “appeared more timid and sensitive in his [father’s] presence than at other times” (5). The young Latimer was not a rowdy, robust young boy, but instead demonstrated constitutional weakness and nervousness and associated more readily with his mother than with his father. He writes of himself that “I believe that I was held to have a sort of half-womanish, half-ghostly beauty” (14). His internalization of gender norms is apparent; he is a gender hybrid who feels that others view him as effeminate because he lacks strength and assertiveness. He advances this conception by describing himself as a “shrinking, romantic, passionate youth” with a “morbidly sensitive nature perpetually craving sympathy and support” (15). Latimer’s sensitivity and nervousness make him an outsider, “marginalized by [his]

peculiar sensitivities from the kind of unquestioning toughness and vigour which denoted the norm of manliness. [His] position is one of powerlessness and, in psychological as well as social terms, closely allied to the feminine” (Wood 80).

Like Latimer, George Eliot similarly defied gender expectations; Latimer is, according to Bodenheimer, “an obverse image of the gender-blurred George Eliot and a figure of the woman writer who suffered behind the mask of a male pseudonym” (135). In *An Autobiography* (1904), Herbert Spencer describes George Eliot as androgynous, writing that in her “physique there was, perhaps, a trace of that masculinity characterizing her intellect; for though of but ordinary feminine height, she was strongly built” (1:395).¹⁶ The gender expectations of Victorian culture are evident here, for according to Spencer, in both her mental and physical potency, Eliot transcended the frailty that was commonly associated with Victorian women. Eliot and Spencer developed a close friendship in the early 1850s, but Spencer, who would later “identify womanly beauty as the female’s primary contribution to biological progress” in his work on evolution, admitted that he was repelled by what he saw as a lack of feminine delicacy in Eliot (Paxton 19-20). As both a woman and an author, Mary Ann Evans experienced first-hand the limitations that gender ideals placed on individuals. One’s sex came with a catalogue of character traits that person should possess, and those who displayed traits from both categories were anomalies, as Spencer’s assessment of Eliot suggests. Eliot refused to be restricted, however, and “by remaining unmarried and by taking up her work as a translator of profoundly subversive texts, Eliot enacted her resistance to the gender arrangements that Spencer and Darwin later normalized” (Paxton 23). One form of resistance was her own double consciousness: she was both Mary Ann Evans, the woman, and George Eliot, the author.

¹⁶ Spencer’s assessment of Eliot is, admittedly, shaded by his account that she was interested in a romantic relationship with him. He did not reciprocate her interest, in part because he did not find her attractive enough.

Latimer resists gender arrangements, in his case a masculine identity determined in the public sphere, by fostering an intensely private nature. In the opening pages, he depicts himself as someone who has “never fully unbosomed [himself] to any human being,” and he has “never been encouraged to trust much in the sympathy of [his] fellow-men” (4). Until writing his narrative, Latimer had been so devoted to his individual life that he did not take a place in the collective life around him. Sally Shuttleworth has noted of Eliot’s novels that “in each work [Eliot] explores the moral question of whether individualistic desire can ever accord with social duty, and the wider philosophical issue of individual autonomy” (10). In *The Lifted Veil*, which Shuttleworth’s study does not examine, Latimer’s effeminate sensitivity and resistance to a masculine occupation cause him to feel like a social outcast, so he fosters a psychological division between self and society. Latimer has isolated himself from the public sphere so completely and for so long that he can no longer merge his private and public selves to simultaneously entertain a sense of self and other, or self in relation to other; he describes his “double consciousness . . . flowing on like two parallel streams which never mingle their waters and blend into a common hue” (21). Along with Latimer’s double consciousness comes his claim to clairvoyant powers, which compensate for his own failure in the public sphere by violating the private thoughts of others and undercutting their public personas.

The multiple connotations of the term double consciousness allow Eliot to investigate both the social and psychological ramifications of the gender norms Latimer endures, drawing on her knowledge of popular culture and contemporary studies of mental disease. While double consciousness is, for Latimer, related to mesmeric clairvoyance, the same term might also indicate that he suffers from psychological division or derangement. Furthermore, because Latimer’s is a first-person voice, we are conscious that his telling is subjective; alongside his

voice is another voice, that of the implied author, suggesting that another interpretation of Latimer's situation is possible and even probable. Fiction allows Eliot to examine double consciousness not on a stage or in the laboratory, as a mesmerist or physiologist might, but in the erratic arena of novelistic social pressures, interactions, and interpretations that Latimer inhabits. The pressures that weigh on Latimer most heavily are the masculine standards of Victorian society, which register his poetic, nervous, private nature as effeminate. His tale suggests that Victorian men internalized these standards and, when they did not measure up, suffered psychological division and distress.

As Latimer describes his childhood in *The Lifted Veil*, his own sense of isolation and difference from others is prominent. His nervous sensitivity excludes him from Victorian manliness, and in this respect, he is a marked contrast to his brother and his father. Alfred is “a handsome self-confident man of six-and-twenty—a thorough contrast to my fragile, nervous, ineffectual self”; he is “florid, broad-chested, and self-complacent,” while Latimer is subject to “constitutional timidity and distrust” (14, 25, 24). Latimer's feelings of inadequacy are apparent: “I thoroughly disliked my own *physique*” (14). Meanwhile, Alfred possesses both the vigor and confidence to be successful in the marketplace, demonstrating the “self-control, hard work and independence” that were “the dominant code of Victorian manliness” (Tosh 34). Alfred is “to be his [father's] representative and successor; he must go to Eton and Oxford, for the sake of making connections, of course” (5). He is a man of his times, for in Great Britain the early decades of the nineteenth century marked “a transition from a genteel masculinity grounded in land ownership to a bourgeois masculinity attuned to the market . . . the man of substance and repute came to be someone who had a steady occupation in business or the professions” (Tosh

63). Latimer's father too fulfills this definition, for while he is an "active landowner," he is also "in root and stem a banker," and he is confident that Alfred will be his able successor (5).

Unlike Latimer, they do not struggle with emotional or physical weaknesses: "My father had been one of the most successful men in the money-getting world: he had had no sentimental sufferings, no illness" (27). In Latimer's eyes, Alfred and his father are constitutionally programmed to be successful in the public sphere. They embody the bourgeois definition of masculinity and therefore highlight Latimer's shortcomings.

Latimer's penchant for poetry distances him from the manly occupations of his father and brother. His father's reference to Latimer's "poetic nonsense" affirms the disdain with which he holds Latimer's literary aspirations (22). In a marked shift from the earlier decades of Romanticism, poetic sensibility had become a masculine liability by the middle of the nineteenth century. According to John Barlow, a clergyman and Fellow of the Royal Society, an artistic temperament could weaken and thus feminize the mind:

An irregular and injudicious cultivation of poetry and painting has often concurred to produce madness, but nothing is rarer than to find a mad mathematician; for, as no study demands more attention than mathematics, so it secures the student during a great part of his time, from the recurrence of feelings which are always the most imperious in those who are the least occupied. (61)

Barlow believed that the academic rigor of mathematics protects the mind by keeping it occupied with rational thought. In contrast, the mind is often given free play in the production of creative works, and while the Romantics had endorsed this imaginative abandon, Barlow and other nineteenth-century physicians faulted it for lacking rigor and discipline. In Barlow's framework, intellect is clearly linked with discipline and sanity while creativity is paired with self-indulgence

and insanity. Physicians translated this recently-established binary of academic disciplines to gender binaries, “import[ing] the polarized models of manly vigour and irresolute effeminacy into educational and social policy” and voicing opinions on “the emasculating effects of a poetic sensitivity” (Wood 96). Poetry was thus assigned to the feminine sphere, while the robust masculine mind was strengthened by grappling with mathematics and the sciences. Not only is Latimer emasculated by his nervous sensitivity, then, but also by his inclination towards poetry, an occupation that was most often carried out in private and would therefore isolate him from the public workplace.

To foster a masculine occupation in his weaker child, Latimer’s father espouses the principles articulated by Barlow and decides that “a scientific education was the really useful training for a younger son” (6). His father feels that his son’s sensitivity, or “the defects of [his] organization,” might be “remedied” by “natural history, science, and the modern languages” (6). Although he will study “masculine” scientific subjects, the effeminate young Latimer will not be thrust into the public sphere to which he will not belong. Latimer’s father is conscious that “a shy, sensitive boy like [Latimer] was not fit to encounter the rough experience of a public school” (6). Instead, he keeps Latimer at home to educate him in the private sphere, as a young lady would be educated by a governess. His attempts to reshape his son’s intellectual pursuits are perhaps a means of sparing himself and Latimer from humiliation, for “the feminization of [certain forms of] intellectual labor may also be turned against the male writer through the social leverage attached to such epithets as ‘unmanly’ or ‘effeminate’” (Adams 2). Scientific education does not appeal to Latimer, however, despite his tutor’s insistence that “an improved man, as distinguished from an ignorant one, was a man who knew the reason why water ran down-hill” (7). Latimer is more concerned with aesthetics than physics: “I did not want to know *why* it ran;

I had perfect confidence that there were good reasons for what was so very beautiful” (7).

Despite his father’s attempts to prepare him for the rigorous demands of the public sphere, Latimer’s tutors and subsequent experiences at boarding school fail to rid him of his feminine sensitivity and love of beauty.

When the teenaged Latimer goes off to school in Geneva, he maintains a “fatal solitude of soul in the society of [his] fellow-men” (7). His father sends him to boarding school to perhaps expose him to the behavior of other boys, because “for middle- and upper-class boys school was the critical arena of peer-group recognition” (Tosh 111). Surrounded by other boys his age, Latimer might assimilate and outgrow his sensitivity. Instead, he remains resistant and does not develop a sense of mutual experience with his peers. He claims that he was “hungry for human deeds and human emotions,” yet he avoids social contact (6). He feels a desire to *know about* people, yet he does not actually make advances to *know* people. As he muses on “the sky, the glowing mountaintops, and the wide blue water,” he feels a love that “no human face had shed on me since my mother’s love had vanished out of my life” (7). He relishes his own solitude, and he connects himself with nature rather than with other human beings. He stubbornly insists on distancing himself from his peers, and thus from the public sphere of his boarding school: “this disposition of mine was not favourable to the formation of intimate friendships among the numerous youths of my own age who are always to be found studying at Geneva” (7-8). Rather than form friendships with other teenaged boys, Latimer spends significant time by himself, lying in a boat and taking in his natural surroundings. He appears a disciple to Rousseau or Coleridge, cultivating a Romantic, individual double consciousness. As with Pierre, however, Romantic double consciousness will only result in a heightened and eventually devastating sense of isolation.

Latimer's recollections reveal that, as a child, he internalized his feelings of deviance from gender norms and his difference from other boys. The only "community of feeling" that he records is with his single school friend, Charles Meunier (8). Meunier, Latimer feels, will not judge him as effeminate, for he too is an outcast, "poor and ugly, derided by Genevese *gamins*, and not acceptable in drawing-rooms" (8). This community of feeling is due not to similarities in personality, but to a mutual isolation: "I saw that he was isolated, as I was, though from a different cause" (8). The friendship that Latimer describes is not one in which the two share ideas or feelings; instead, Meunier knows that as he talks, Latimer's mind is "half absent" (8). Half of his consciousness is attuned to his surroundings and to Meunier, but the other portion is consumed by his own private thoughts. As a teenager, Latimer cultivates his ability to divide his consciousness and thereby distance himself from others. While he might be zealous about nature and his own reflections, he does not demonstrate interest in other individuals.

Despite his father's efforts, Latimer cannot situate himself confidently in the public sphere like the other men in his family and culture. He does not feel adequate to society's expectations, and with utter self-pity he reflects that "the very dogs shunned me, and fawned on the happier people about me" (25). After Alfred's death, however, Latimer's father holds out hope that "marriage . . . would complete the desirable modification of [his] character, and make [him] practical and worldly enough to take [his] place in society among sane men" (30). In the most basic masculine role of husband, surely Latimer could prove himself. Even marriage is insufficient to modify Latimer's character, however, and his feelings of inadequacy continue. He describes himself as "a poor figure as an heir and a bridegroom" and feels that Bertha is "secure of carrying off all sympathy from a husband who was sickly, abstracted, and, as some suspected, crack-brained" (30, 33). Latimer's self-imposed ostracism is evident. He is consumed by his

feelings of inadequacy, and the only way to ease his feelings of failed masculinity is to continue separating his public persona and private feelings.

According to Eliot's notions of sympathy, however, the personal cannot be separated from the social. In *Problems of Life and Mind*, George Henry Lewes claims that the human mind consists of "two classes of Motors—the personal and the sympathetic,—the egoistic and the altruistic" (1:101). To exclude the sympathetic from one's mental apparatus, as Latimer has, would be to renounce an integral part of the human mind. Bull comes to this conclusion in his reading of *The Lifted Veil* in terms of Hegel's master/slave dialectic: "Eliot's dialectic also embodies a more developed sense of the individual's need for interpersonal connection" (259). Similarly, Beer claims that "in her work George Eliot constantly seeks *relations*, ways beyond the single consciousness" (94). Social interaction is so critical in Eliot's fiction that, as Shuttleworth has written, "social values are actually inscribed within the personality itself. The moral dilemmas . . . do not arise solely from a clash between the individual and a constraining society, for social contradictions are internalised by the individual, thus creating division within the self" (19). Latimer feels just such a division, for he has internalized the binary divisions of masculine and feminine character; he is not either/or, however, but both/and. Latimer cannot reconcile the contradictions between his private sense of self and society's expectations of a man in the public sphere, so he chooses to isolate himself as much as possible from the social.

In *The Lifted Veil*, Eliot not only asserts the importance of sincere interpersonal connections, as the above critics have shown, but also represents the psychological damage that can result from isolation. Latimer cannot define himself apart from social relations, particularly because he is part of "a recognizably modern information culture, in which an explosion of new technologies of information, along with increasingly extensive and intricate webs of commercial

relationships, seemed everywhere to compromise traditional forms of autonomy, and thus prompted an often desperate withdrawal into the shelters of private space” (Adams 13). In a rapidly expanding cultural climate that judged masculinity in the public sphere, social relations and public display were integral to one’s manhood. Latimer resists friendships with his peers, however, an early indication that he would also resist the commercial relationships that an occupation in the public sphere required. Furthermore, instead of utilizing the new technologies of information that might connect him with others, he imaginatively enters others’ minds, a means of interpersonal connection that enables him to maintain his own isolated sensibility. In fostering feelings of difference and separating himself from others, Latimer further removes himself from Victorian masculine identity and retreats into private space, giving birth to a second consciousness that will negotiate social interactions.

Latimer’s double consciousness emerges concurrently with a “severe illness” that emphasizes his physical frailty and absolves him of the public pressures of school (8). While lying in his sickbed, he has a frighteningly realistic prevision of Prague, then another prevision of his father’s entrance into his chamber with Bertha and Mrs. Filmore. These inexplicable visions are followed by another form of clairvoyance: shortly after meeting Bertha, Latimer realizes that “there was the obtrusion on my mind of the mental processes going forward in first one person, and then another, with whom I happened to be in contact” (13). Latimer claims that others’ minds intrude on his own, but his clairvoyance is actually an invasion of *their* privacy, signaling his incapacity for social interaction in the public sphere. He writes that when he is in the company of others, a “stream of thought rush[es] upon me like a ringing in the ears not to be got rid of” (18). While Latimer claims that he is distressed by his telepathic powers, he is also

convinced of their veracity. Thus, his double consciousness makes him one of George Eliot's most unusual characters, challenging the bounds of realism.

Critics cite Latimer's telepathy, along with his previsions, as evidence that Eliot created him as a mesmeric subject.¹⁷ He describes his condition as "double consciousness," and "for many Victorian readers versed in contemporary scientific debates, the term would have brought to mind mesmerism, or animal magnetism" (Small xviii). Eliot's knowledge of mesmerism was informed by William Gregory's *Letters to a Candid Inquirer on Animal Magnetism*, a work to which Eliot was introduced by George Combe. In *Letters*, Gregory describes mesmeric subjects who display both types of clairvoyance that Latimer claims: visions of distant locales and thought-reading. Latimer's belief in his own clairvoyance only highlights his effeminate nature, for in describing the "elevated character" in whom "the intellect and higher sentiments shone forth" during a trance state, Gregory writes that "this is particularly seen in women of natural refinement and high sentiments" (81). While he claims to have clairvoyant powers, however, Latimer's clairvoyance is not accompanied by a trance, which makes it difficult to see him as a mesmeric subject. Furthermore, if Latimer truly possessed mesmeric powers, then the story's emphasis would likely shift outside of Latimer to what he sees and how his powers work. Instead, Latimer's first-person tale remains focused on his internal states, suggesting that Latimer's own interpretation of his situation is the central conflict.

Latimer's self-diagnosis is unusual, for a fundamental feature of mesmeric double consciousness is double memory: "as a general rule, but not a rule without some exceptions, the

¹⁷ Gray has claimed that *The Lifted Veil* "employs a range of experiences that correspond astonishingly closely to testimonies which are reported in unquestionable good faith by Gregory" (414) and Bull writes that Gregory's description of magnetic sleep is the "phenomenon that Eliot appears to have used as the basis of her story" (245). Willis, too, finds that Latimer "is a natural mesmeric sensitive, subject to spontaneous mesmeric trances within which he becomes clairvoyant" (148).

sleeper does not remember, after waking, what he may have seen, felt, tasted, smelled, heard, spoke, or done, during his sleep . . . He lives, in fact, a distinct life in the sleep, and has, what is called, a double or divided consciousness” (Gregory 82). Latimer, however, does not experience the kind of memory barrier that Gregory defines as a critical component of double consciousness. While he experiences a second, detached “stream of thought,” he remarks that “it allowed my own impulses and ideas to continue their uninterrupted course” (18). This is a significant element of Latimer’s condition; because he is fully aware of both sides of consciousness, he is able to diagnose his own “superadded consciousness” (13). He is not diagnosed by a physician, mesmerist, or observer who tells him of his activity while in a second state, as was the norm. Latimer’s self-diagnosis reminds the reader that he is consciously shaping his narrative representation of self, fashioning a self that is victimized by those around him. We should see double consciousness as a term that Latimer has chosen to describe his condition; likewise, clairvoyance is his own subjective diagnosis, or claim, and one that would raise suspicion in the minds of many contemporary readers.

Clairvoyant feats like those Latimer describes were certainly prominent during the first half of the nineteenth century, but they were by no means considered legitimate by everyone. While prominent individuals such as Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, Harriet Martineau, and the Reverend Chauncy Hare Townshend showed great interest in and enthusiasm about mesmerism, many others dismissed it as charlatanry. Dr. John Elliotson, a well-respected physician at London’s University Hospital, resigned under pressure after a “trial” of his mesmeric patients failed in 1838; in the wake of his resignation, many British medical journals joined in disparaging mesmeric subjects as frauds.¹⁸ G.H. Lewes expressed skepticism about mesmeric

¹⁸ Winter provides an intriguing account of Elliotson’s experiences with the O’Key sisters.

clairvoyance in a letter that was published in *The Leader* in March 1852 titled “The Fallacy of Clairvoyance.”¹⁹ And while Eliot participated in a mesmeric experiment in 1844 and considered clairvoyant feats “of thrilling interest,” she also recognized reason for sober suspicion.²⁰ In 1852, she wrote to George Combe that “the great majority of ‘investigators’ of mesmerism are anything but ‘scientific.’” (*Letters* 8:41). In a subsequent letter to Combe, she reiterates this point: “the great mass of loose statement and credulity which surround the whole subject of mesmerism repel many minds from it which are anything but bigoted or unenlightened” (*Letters* 8:45).²¹ While Eliot found clairvoyance interesting, then, she also questioned the authenticity of those who investigated and claimed clairvoyant powers, especially after becoming involved with the amateur scientist George Henry Lewes.

Because many in Eliot’s culture were suspicious of mesmerism, including Eliot herself, Latimer’s claims to prevision and telepathy would not have been accepted wholesale by Victorian readers. Telepathy was not the norm and, as Eliot explained, “we get impatient of phenomena which do not link on to our previous knowledge, and of which the laws are so latent as to forbid even the formation of a hypothesis concerning them” (*Letters*, 8:45). No known scientific laws or principles explained the phenomenon. Thus, in claiming clairvoyant powers, Latimer departs from “those standards that a given culture holds to be constitutive of normal psychological behavior,” standards that are required of a reliable narrator (Nunning 63).

¹⁹ The article was a response to a series of reports by Wilkie Collins on mesmeric experiments he observed; in it, Lewes writes, “for the facts of clairvoyance there seems to me no evidence at all.” Lewes trusts some of the men who profess belief in mesmeric clairvoyance, such as Collins, but he wishes to be convinced by scientific evidence. Although he claims to “not being in any way committed to anti-clairvoyance,” he explains that he has “sought on all sides for this proof, but sought in vain.” Lewes is looking for solid evidence, and at this point he had not found any to be thoroughly convincing.

²⁰ See B.M. Gray’s essay for a more thorough discussion of Eliot’s interest in mesmerism.

²¹ Based on these comments, Dickerson has claimed that “Eliot found a disorganization if not sloppiness of conception about mesmerism that coupled with its mass appeal rendered it all but untenable to the more discriminating mind” (90).

Latimer's claims to clairvoyance call into question his reliability, and, as Nunning has noted of unreliable narrators, "it is often very difficult to determine whether what the narrator says provides facts about the fictional world or only clues to his distorted and evaluating consciousness" (Nunning 59). Latimer's voice, and his claims to clairvoyance, indicates that his mind has become significantly disordered, and an analysis of Latimer as mentally disturbed leads us to alternative interpretations of his double consciousness.

Latimer defines his condition as double consciousness, but, as with *Pierre*, the term has multiple meanings. Because "competing, and even incompatible, theories of the mind regularly shared the same language in this period," the exact nature of Latimer's double consciousness is elusive (Small xxi). Outside of mesmerism and the philosophical double consciousness of Romantics and Transcendentalists, it could also refer to a form of mental division, or derangement. Throughout Latimer's experience, Eliot calls upon all three meanings of double consciousness, but she ultimately diagnoses Latimer's condition as one of psychological derangement. His consciousness is divided along the axis of a public and a private self, and an inequality between the two is caused by his relative absence from the public sphere. During his childhood and adolescence, Latimer does not exercise the structures of his brain that facilitate social interaction, and as an adult, he cannot adapt. His father expects him to assume a role in the public sphere and thereby become manly, but Latimer's mental derangement inhibits his capacity for ordinary social interaction.

The second consciousness that Latimer develops to negotiate the public sphere parallels his ordinary consciousness and is so distinct that it feels like a separate mind. Henry Holland, a friend and physician of Eliot and Lewes, wrote in *Chapters on Mental Physiology* (1853) that "in certain states of mental derangement, as well as in some cases of hysteria which border closely

upon it, there appear, as it were, two minds” (185). The mind feels this duality, according to Holland, because ordinary connections between the sections of mind are not functioning properly. Thus, in double consciousness, “the mind passes by alternation from one state to another, each having the perception of external impressions and appropriate trains of thought, but not linked together by the ordinary gradations” (Holland 187). Latimer’s mind does not allow him to merge his own thoughts with external impressions, as most people’s minds do on a regular basis. Latimer’s description of his own double consciousness, “flowing like two parallel streams which never mingle their waters and blend into a common hue,” echoes Holland and suggests that he is experiencing the kind of mental derangement that Holland describes (21). Latimer tried to escape prescriptive gender roles by isolating himself from society, but his narrative shows that this only leads to greater mental disturbance and division. The mental link between public interaction and private thought has been sundered, so when Latimer comes into contact with others, he feels both streams of thought individually.

While Latimer might not recognize his own pathologically divided consciousness, he does realize that he has become incapable of the normal social interaction that was required of men in public life. As Adams has argued, “the masculine . . . is as much a spectacle as the feminine,” because “nuances of gender” are “an emphatically social discourse” (11, 12). Latimer, however, has failed to perform masculinity in the public sphere and has therefore removed himself from social discourse. After his initial vision of Bertha, Latimer realizes that his years avoiding social relations have mentally crippled him. He reflects that “already I had begun to taste something of the horror that belongs to the lot of a human being whose nature is not adjusted to simple human conditions” (12). Latimer has used difference to justify isolation, explaining in reference to his brother that “Alfred’s self-complacent soul, his freedom from all

the doubts and fears, the unsatisfied yearnings, the exquisite tortures of sensitiveness, that had made the web of my life, seemed to absolve me from all bonds towards him” (25). Because Latimer has made such excuses to avoid social interaction for so long, he recognizes that he is not adjusted to the “simple human conditions” of conversation and consideration. He has only compounded his feelings of masculine inadequacy and now looks upon himself with new horror: he cannot interact with Bertha as a man. His sense of identity is challenged because he has not defined himself in terms of ordinary social relations. Instead, he is simultaneously attuned to both his own impulses and the thoughts of others, clearly dividing the two. Consequently, Latimer suffers from his disturbed perception of others. To compensate for a failed public self, his mind intrudes upon the private thoughts of others and assaults the public images that they have so carefully crafted.

Because we have access to Latimer’s self-centered thoughts, we can see his telepathy as a paranoid manifestation of his own insincere, inadequate public persona. Clairvoyantly, he sees only the worst in others, reinforcing his already-negative thoughts and pointing to his own penchant for antipathy. In Latimer’s mind, the rational talk, the graceful attentions, the wittily-turned phrases, and the kindly deeds . . . were seen as if thrust asunder by a microscopic vision, that showed all the intermediate frivolities, all the suppressed egoism, all the struggling chaos of puerilities, meanness, vague capricious memories, and indolent make-shift thoughts, from which human words and deeds emerge like leaflets covering a fermenting heap. (14)

While Latimer takes these insights as reality, we can see them as his earlier self-conscious antipathy towards society pathologically magnified. He feels a division between his public

shortcomings and his private sense of self, so he imagines that, conversely, others' public representations hide private shortcomings. His telepathic insights, in fact, do not sound all that different from his boyhood memories of "an inward shudder at the sound of harsh human tones, the sight of a cold human eye" (7). Because he feels himself different from other young men, he believes that others see him this way as well and assumes a defensive stance against society. Eagleton has remarked that "Latimer's empathy with other minds isn't easy to distinguish from a mere projection of his own arrogance, anxiety and aggressivity into them" (57). His feelings of double consciousness are not a unique psychic gift, but rather indicate that his mind has fractured into public and private selves, harboring a mental disease that imaginatively transgresses the psychological borders between self and other.²²

Those who studied mental disease in the nineteenth century noted imaginative prowess as a common symptom; this symptom further links Latimer's condition with derangement.²³ According to Holland, a mind that is unbalanced because of disease or unhealthy activity might have trouble distinguishing reality from imagination: "in some cases there would seem to be a double series of sensations; the real and unreal objects of sense impressing the individual so far

²² Latimer experiences the kind of dissociation that Freud would later observe in Elisabeth von R. Just as Latimer is resistant to social contact, "the patient offered strong resistance to the attempt to bring about an association between the separate psychical group and the rest of the content of her consciousness" (Freud 207).

²³ His prevision and telepathy are like waking dreams, hallucinations that would be thoroughly examined in hysterics decades later by Freud. In his work with Anna O., Freud noted a heightened imagination in the second consciousness:

Throughout the entire illness her two states of consciousness persisted side by side: the primary one in which she was quite normal psychically and the secondary one which may well be likened to a dream in view of its wealth of imaginative products and hallucinations, its large gaps of memory and the lack of inhibition and control in its associations . . . the patient's mental condition was entirely dependent on the intrusion of this secondary state into the normal one . . . (*Studies on Hysteria* 80)

Like Anna O., Latimer's states of consciousness run along a parallel trajectory, yet his second state feels like an intrusion that is notable for its heightened imaginative powers. While Eliot's tale preceded Freud's work, Holland had already acknowledged this kind of confusion of reality in those who experienced double consciousness.

simultaneously that the judgments and acts of mind are disordered by their concurrence” (185). Latimer does not recognize that his visions of other minds might be “unreal objects of sense” because his judgment is disordered; thus, he cannot discriminate between the data produced by his imagination and that which is observed by his senses.

Towards the end of his tale, Latimer’s narrative gestures towards this reading of mental disturbance. He is visiting with his only friend, Meunier, who has become a physician, and Latimer relates that “when his talk turned on the psychological relations of disease, the thought crossed my mind that, if his stay with me were long enough, I might possibly bring myself to tell this man the secrets of my lot. Might there not lie some remedy for *me*, too, in his science?” (38). Latimer is so desperate that he considers doing that which he has thus far been unable to do—share his private thoughts with another individual, breaching the divide that he has so carefully protected. He does not look towards the pseudo-sciences of mesmerism or spiritualism to understand and heal his mind; instead, he looks to friendship and to the physiological practices at which Meunier has become adept. He considers seeking Meunier’s help because he is paralyzed by his disease. He relates that, once separated from Bertha, he felt twinges of desire for human contact: “once or twice, weary of wandering, I rested in a favourite spot, and my heart went out towards the men and women and children whose faces were becoming familiar to me” (42). Though he longs to make a personal connection with other human beings, to enjoy familiar society, he laments that he cannot because “I was driven away again in terror at the approach of my old insight . . . And then the curse of insight—of my double consciousness, came again, and has never left me” (42). Far from the free-spirited clairvoyance that Alison Winter has described as armchair travel, Latimer’s insight is a form of mental disease that holds him captive, inhibiting him from functioning in social situations. His removal from the masculine public

sphere is intensified here, as he can no longer tolerate sitting in a public place without being troubled by double consciousness.

The term double consciousness allows Eliot to bring together the fledgling field of mental science and popular-culture clairvoyance and interrogate the boundary between the two. Latimer's first-person voice reveals that, in an insecure and isolated individual, these two discrete arenas intersect at mental disease. The term double consciousness is ideal because of its multiple meanings; Latimer can present himself as clairvoyant while Eliot simultaneously shows him as neurotic. He is our sole source of information, so his is a voice we should examine carefully. The reader must be doubly conscious of Latimer—he is the fictional creation of George Eliot, both narrator and a central character whose mental stability is questionable. Double consciousness, for Latimer, might refer to clairvoyant visions, but it might also suggest that he is delusional. While *The Lifted Veil* may seem like a departure from Eliot's commitment to realism, the work makes sense as a realist novella if we see Latimer's clairvoyance as a means of introducing suspicions about his credibility.

Once we recognize Latimer as unreliable, the narration itself assumes a sense of duality. A voice behind Latimer's becomes perceptible, as Yacobi has explained: "To construct an hypothesis as to the unreliability of the narrator is then necessarily to assume the existence of an implied (and by definition reliable) author who manipulates his creature for his own purposes" (123). Latimer's unreliability directs us to Eliot, or the implied author, to determine what she is communicating through this character. The "two parallel streams" that Latimer describes in his own consciousness provide an accurate description of the narration, for flowing alongside Latimer's narration is a parallel line of the implied author's communications. Thus, "two communicative processes simultaneously arise and develop, the narratorial and the authorial,

each with its own features, its own aims” (Yacobi 124). Cohn has more recently described this as discordant narration: a work is understood differently “by reading the work against the grain of the narrator’s discourse, providing it with a meaning that, though not explicitly spelled out, is silently signaled to the reader behind the narrator’s back” (307). The ambiguity of the term “double consciousness” at mid-century helps to achieve this authorial sleight of hand. Alongside Latimer’s tale of his fantastic, clairvoyant double consciousness, Eliot tells the story of a lonely, mentally disturbed individual who has suffered psychologically from his failure to establish an appropriate masculine identity in the public sphere.

Narrative allows Eliot to explore Latimer’s experience of double consciousness beyond the speculations of philosophers and physiologists. As Menke has noted in his work on vivisection in Eliot’s novels, “Eliot appropriates the framework of Victorian physiology to go where the science itself could not, to develop her own novelistic techniques for the close analysis of imaginary minds and bodies” (636). In *The Lifted Veil*, fiction allows Eliot to lift the veil of human consciousness and to represent the unconscious delusions of an individual who has suffered from the painful exclusions and psychological ramifications of gender norms. While Latimer copes with his feelings of inadequacy by isolating himself, Eliot suggests intersubjectivity, a place between self and others in which personal identity is crafted. Apart from social relations, Latimer finds that “all that was personal in me seemed to be suffering a gradual death, so that I was losing the organ through which the personal agitations and projects of others could affect men” (35). He realizes the importance of the public sphere and of social relations, for now he is “utterly miserable—the unloving and the unloved” (36).

In letting Latimer tell his own story, Eliot gives a voice to derangement. Latimer’s unreliable narration is not “an obstacle to our understanding,” a medium that complicates the

message, as Galvan has claimed; instead, it is a conduit through which we can see the workings of a disturbed mind (246). During the same month that *The Lifted Veil* was published in *Blackwood's*, Eliot wrote to a friend that “the only effect I ardently long to produce by my writings, is that those who read them should be better able to *imagine* and to *feel* the pains and the joys of those who differ from themselves in everything but the broad fact of being struggling erring human creatures” (*Letters*, 3.111). Because of his neurosis, Latimer would indeed differ from most readers. In this novella, Eliot illustrates the psychological ramifications of isolation and brings her reader into contact with a disturbed mind, so we can feel his pain even if we do not feel pity. And because we have this insight into dementia, we should also heed the implicit warning: male or female, the human mind depends upon society to function properly. As Latimer’s narration shows, a disconnection from society leads to a mental disconnection from reality.

In the epigraph that she added to *The Lifted Veil* in 1873, Eliot verified the importance of society in Latimer’s tale:

Give me no light, great Heaven, but such as turns
 To energy of human fellowship;
 No powers beyond the growing heritage
 That makes completer manhood.

According to Eliot, these lines contain “the idea which [the story] embodies and which justifies its painfulness” (qtd. in Small 88 n.2). Human beings cannot forego human fellowship, as Latimer’s tale has shown, for it is a kind of energy that fuels and sustains the human psyche. Heritage, which connects us with those who came before us, is what makes for “completer manhood”—and in a society that held a limited view of the female mind, manhood is what Eliot

sought for herself. To come into this heritage, though, one must be integrated in the collective life. The social is what sustains and helps one grow, as Eliot illustrates in these lines and in Latimer's tale of pain and misery.

Rather than a gothic aberration, *The Lifted Veil* is Eliot's sophisticated narration of a psychological splitting that results from the pressures of public masculinity and consequent social isolation. The fantastic in this novel exists not in external reality, but in the narrator's mind, and the forces that influence Latimer's mind are very much a product of Victorian culture. The term double consciousness is critical, for duality represents two lines of self in Latimer, individual and social, and two lines of narration, Latimer and the implied author. Furthermore, for Victorian readers it would bring to mind astonishing but dubious clairvoyant feats, making Latimer's reliability questionable. Through the unreliable narration of Latimer, Eliot takes double consciousness beyond clairvoyant visions to articulate the psychological consequences of persistently seeing self in opposition to society, a theme that she would continue to develop in subsequent novels. While the pressures of Victorian masculinity and femininity might weigh heavily, separating oneself from society was not the solution to internal conflict. Instead, individuals must find their places in the collective life or suffer psychological distress.

CHAPTER 4

“I WAS RADICALLY BOTH”: HENRY JEKYLL’S PERFORMANCE OF
VICTORIAN MASCULINITY

As a boy, Robert Louis Stevenson was intrigued by the tale of Deacon Brodie, a Scotsman from the late eighteenth century who for nearly two decades maintained a double life as a respectable cabinet maker and a thief, robbing at night those clients whose locks he installed or repaired during the day. Brodie’s alternative existence included not only criminal activity, but also mistresses and illegitimate children. Brodie’s story so captivated Stevenson that at the age of fourteen he wrote the first drafts of a play based on Brodie’s story entitled *Deacon Brodie: or The Double Life*, which he would continue to revise in collaboration with friend W.E. Henley through 1887. In the young Stevenson’s bedroom was a bookcase and chest of drawers made by Brodie, “a tangible reminder of the criminal’s duality” (Harman 33). Duality allowed Brodie to divide his public and private selves, maintaining a veneer of middle-class respectability in public while privately giving vent to rebellious impulses. In *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), which features a similarly divided individual, Stevenson sheds light both on the strict self-discipline that Victorian society required of middle-class men and on the split between public representations and private impulses that could result.

By all but removing women from the text, Stevenson highlights nuances and lapses in masculine behavior and interrogates the power inherent in Victorian manliness. William Veeder notes this in his important essay about patriarchy in *Jekyll and Hyde*, reading Stevenson’s story psychoanalytically. Jekyll’s testimony suggests that he is more affected by cultural expectations

of masculinity, however, than by unconscious anger towards the Father, as Veeder claims. Henry Jekyll is specifically concerned with his public persona in Victorian London and feels compelled to perform respectable masculinity; Linda Dryden finds that “the pressures to maintain social standing are akin in *Jekyll and Hyde* to a kind of agoraphobia” (106). Stevenson does not even allow these men the distraction of a family, instead focusing the reader’s attention solely on their status and reputations as gentlemen and professionals. Henry Jekyll, Gabriel John Utterson, and Hastie Lanyon—the novella’s central characters—have a special social standing to uphold, for as Victorian professionals they must maintain a balance of work and leisure. Educated gentlemen, they have some control over their lives and work, but they are also dependent upon clients and patients. Disciplined behavior is essential, for social respectability helps establish these men as gentlemen, distinct from and superior to the working classes.

A number of critics who have studied masculinity find that discipline was central to a man’s social standing in Victorian England.²⁴ Andrew Dowling, for example, argues that “the hegemonic truth about manliness in the nineteenth century was established through metaphors of control, reserve, and discipline” (13). In addition to controlling one’s behavior and actions in public, a manly man was also required to exercise control over his emotional expression. Historian John Tosh has noted an increased emphasis on reserved masculinity over the course of the nineteenth century: “whereas young men earlier in the century were often able to express intense feelings in public—in tears, hugs, and so forth—this became increasingly rare in their sons and grandsons. The dominant code of manliness in the 1890s . . . [was] hostile to emotional expression” (Tosh 49). The competitive nature that the public sphere required left no room for

²⁴ See, for example, Herbert Sussman’s *Victorian Masculinities: Manhood and Masculine Poetics in Early Victorian Literature and Art*, James Eli Adams’s *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Manhood*, and Andrew Dowling’s *Manliness and the Male Novelist in Victorian Literature*.

emotional vulnerability. “[T]oughness and combative instincts [were] necessary in a man’s world” (Wood 74), and a man’s actions and emotions had to be carefully controlled by his awareness of his role and visibility in the public sphere. This was especially true for Victorian professionals, for while the landed gentry were generally above censure and the lower classes were censured by their superiors, those in the professional classes such as Henry Jekyll were left to regulate their own emotions and behaviors.

Henry Jekyll’s failure to demonstrate the somber, reserved exterior that was expected of Victorian gentlemen is central to his internal conflict in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Dr. Jekyll explains that, as a young man, he was tormented by “a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public” (60). Prior to his creation of Mr. Hyde, Jekyll internalizes the conflict that he feels between the stoic, disciplined masculinity that Victorian society required of a physician and his own free-spirited emotions. Thus, while Jekyll and Hyde are part of our cultural consciousness as representatives of good and evil impulses in an individual, Jekyll’s words “before the public” indicate that his conflict is not solely internal, but instead springs from his anxiety about an imagined audience. Before the public, he must assume a countenance that does not correspond with his private self. From this anxiety, his double consciousness evolves. Jekyll becomes aware of “two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness” (61). One nature shapes itself to social norms while the other is free from censure, indulging in unspecified pleasures. By refusing to name Jekyll’s offenses, Stevenson directs attention not to the pleasures themselves, but to the sense of division they cause in Jekyll. To accommodate his two natures, Jekyll creates a new physical self. By housing Hyde in a different body, he

maintains the respectable persona of a Victorian professional while his indiscretions remain private, cloaked in the figure of Hyde.

In creating a second physical self to house his aberrant emotions and impulses, Jekyll nurtures his double consciousness; he feels that relegating his impulsiveness to another being will allow peace of mind and a more socially acceptable self. Hyde allows Jekyll to hide his indiscretions, and thereby, Jekyll feels that he will be able to publicly perform Victorian masculinity. Instead of relieving the social pressures that encumber Jekyll, however, Hyde increasingly emasculates him by depriving him of the self-control that was an esteemed masculine virtue. Jekyll progressively loses his power to control the transformations between selves, and he subsequently experiences “sufferings and terrors so unmanning” (37). This second self only intensifies Jekyll’s psychological fracture, and while he continues struggling to maintain his image as a respectable physician, his mental disease privately festers. As a foil to Jekyll’s failures, Stevenson provides Utterson, a man whose behaviors generally adhere to masculine norms and who is therefore fully integrated into society. Henry Jekyll’s story parallels Latimer’s and Pierre’s, revealing the distance that gender norms can create between an individual and his society, between self and the public representation of self. Henry Jekyll’s double consciousness is simultaneously a literal psychological disease and the metaphorical sense of division he feels between public and private selves; through Jekyll’s duality, Stevenson illustrates the psychological consequences of diverging from the masculine ideal.

Stevenson’s inspiration for double consciousness in Henry Jekyll may be attributed not only to Deacon Brodie’s tale, but also to his own experiences with duality and masculinity during childhood and adolescence. Claire Harman’s recent biography is titled *Myself and the*

Other Fellow: A Life of Robert Louis Stevenson, based on Stevenson's discussion of two consciousnesses he often felt during a high fever, which he referred to as "Myself" and "the other fellow," "the latter irrational and absurd, the former, his right mind, painfully aware of his temporary subordination" (Harman xviii). The combination of rigorous religious training, fevers, and an active imagination created horrific nightmares and an intense awareness of subconscious life in young Louis (Harman 22). Stevenson's slight frame and susceptibility to illness further contributed to psychological distress because it distanced him from the hardy physical activities that most young boys enjoyed; Harman has traced Stevenson's continuing sense of duality to "his confusion and disruption of what was expected from an effeminate-looking man" (305). Early on, Stevenson was inundated with binary terms of thought and existence: moral and immoral, conscious and subconscious, and masculine and feminine.

Feelings of duality would only be compounded for Stevenson as he grew into a young man and was torn between his father's selection of an engineering career and his own proclivity for literature, much like Latimer in *The Lifted Veil*. As an engineering apprentice, Stevenson attempted to resolve his conflict by living his own dual life: he worked on a breakwater for Wick Harbor by day, and by night he wrote poetry and novels, maintaining "a secret nocturnal career of writing, that must at times have reminded him of Deacon Brodie's double life" (Harman 48). Because of his father's ambitions for him, Stevenson had "to live two lives in tandem if he wanted to be a writer at all" (Harman 51). The elder Stevenson's disregard for his son's writing ambitions was perhaps the result of a cultural perception of authorship as effeminate: "due to the feminisation of the novel, the domestic location of the novelist's work, and the codes of 'manly' speech that governed male behavior, the Victorian male novelist was often seen, by both himself and others, as being not sufficiently manly" (Dowling 35). Like Latimer, Stevenson would have

carried out a literary career primarily in private; a career in engineering, on the other hand, would have located him squarely in the public realm as a manly breadwinner like his father.

Finally, as a law student at Edinburgh University, Stevenson maintained a different kind of dual existence, this one echoing Deacon Brodie's and Henry Jekyll's even more closely:

As a student and young man in the city he and his friend, Charles Baxter, would use a benign doubleness to deal with the pressures of high bourgeois existence; they assumed the liberating roles of Johnson and Thomson, heavy-drinking, convivial, blasphemous iconoclasts, whose sense of humour would have been a little too strong for the Stevenson's Heriot Row drawing-room. (Letley x)

Stevenson's dual existence during this time brings together his earlier conflict regarding occupational respectability and the psychological duality that he experienced during childhood nightmares. His double life was characterized partly by rebelliousness, as Stevenson created a second identity that allowed him to break free from the rigid codes of moral public behavior. It was also psychological, however, for while at Edinburgh he describes a subconscious mind that acted independently of his conscious mind. Stevenson recalls in "A Chapter on Dreams" that, while in Edinburgh, he began "to dream in sequence and thus to lead a double life—one of the day, one of the night" (200). Every night, his mind would resume the previous evening's dream, so that his subconscious mind assumed a private existence of its own. Stevenson, then, experienced his own double consciousness, a psychological division that seems analogous to the "parallel streams" Latimer describes in *The Lifted Veil*. Stevenson described a "strong sense of man's double being which must at times come in upon and overwhelm the mind of every thinking creature" (208). Stevenson's experiences with duality stretch from his childhood through adulthood and emerge from a range of conflicts—religion, illness, morality, career—but

overarching these is his failure to fulfill Victorian ideals of manliness. In his vulnerability to night terrors, his disappointment as an engineering student, and his sometimes decadent behavior in Edinburgh, Stevenson demonstrated deficiency in a quality critical to Victorian masculinity: self-control. In the growing city of Edinburgh, where relative anonymity was possible, Stevenson's psychological conflict between public behaviors and private self became manifest in a second identity and a second consciousness.

Just as Stevenson and Baxter felt it necessary to separate their nightly indiscretions from respectable daytime personas, Henry Jekyll is affected by an atmosphere in which his behaviors are visible to the friends and strangers who often surround him. The urban center was central to the social imperative of Victorian masculinity, for here individuals of all social classes came into contact. While a gentleman might at times enjoy the liberty of urban anonymity, he was also constantly conscious of an audience, of the eyes of others upon him. In *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, class diversity is evident in the narrator's description of Jekyll's London street, which contains "ancient, handsome houses, now for the most part decayed from their high estate and let in flats and chambers to all sorts and conditions of men" (19). Jekyll's house is the only one that remains entire; his neighbors occupy a variety of social classes, and this common mixing of men from different social classes only reinforced a man's need to assert his superior masculinity through outward display. Gentlemen like Jekyll and Utterson, who are educated professionals, live in close quarters with debauchery and poverty, yet they still try to distance themselves from it. Close quarters demanded that a man distinguish himself from his inferiors, and this often resulted in an exaggeration of masculine traits, and thus a fragmentation into public and private selves: "London was much like its inhabitants, a microcosm of the necessary fragmentation that Victorian man found inescapable" (Sapostnik 718). One's public self was

often a performance, for “as rational and sensual being, as public and private man, as civilized and bestial creature, he found himself necessarily an actor, playing only that part of himself suitable to the occasion” (Saposnik 716). In *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Stevenson highlights the importance of playing the suitable part, of public representations of masculinity. The first character that we meet, Gabriel John Utterson, is a man who exudes disciplined respectability and is therefore accepted by all of those he encounters in Victorian society.

Utterson has perfected the performance of masculinity, perhaps because it is more closely aligned with his inner character. Throughout the novel, we see no inconsistencies between his public and private behaviors. In the first sentence of the novel, Utterson is introduced as a man of restrained stoicism:

Mr. Utterson the lawyer was a man of a rugged countenance, that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean, long, dusty, dreary, and yet somehow lovable. At friendly meetings, and when the wine was to his taste, something eminently human beaconed from his eye; something indeed which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after-dinner face, but more often and loudly in the acts of his life. (7)

Utterson initially appears as a rather dry and bland character, but there is more to him than meets the eye. Only when intoxicated with wine does Utterson’s human side make it to the surface, and even then his humanity evades language. As Showalter has noted, Utterson is “a spokesman for the Law of the Father and the social order” (*Sexual Anarchy* 109). Utterson’s central characteristic is his control over his emotional expression, and in this way he meets societal expectations at a time when

the display of affection—even the awareness of inner feeling—became incompatible with a masculine self-image, and while a son might sentimentalize these qualities in his mother he could not express them in his own demeanour. This was the background which produced some of the characteristic masculine traits of the period. The stereotype of the “stiff upper lip” approximates pretty well the emotional repression which marked so many men of the upper and middle classes at this time. (Tosh 110)

Stevenson suggests that “eminently human” emotion exists in Utterson, but he emphasizes the discipline that Utterson exercises over those impulses. Utterson’s characteristic emotional restraint translates to self-control in his habits. He denies himself simple pleasures, drinking “gin when he was alone, to mortify a taste for vintages; and though he enjoyed the theatre, had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years” (7). Utterson does not allow himself even those harmless pleasures that might be considered indulgent; drinking gin but not wine, Utterson fully embodies his role in the professional class, in between the landed gentry and laboring classes. His restraint does not distance him from others, but rather makes him “somehow lovable,” acceptable in Victorian society (7).

Utterson’s self-discipline earns the trust of others, and thus he is the recipient of the confidential communications of both Lanyon and Jekyll. When Utterson receives Lanyon’s confidential letter, a statement that could solve the mystery of Jekyll’s condition, he demonstrates this quality: “a great curiosity came on the trustee, to disregard the prohibition and dive at once to the bottom of these mysteries; but professional honour and faith to his dead friend were stringent obligations; and the packet slept in the inmost corner of his private safe” (38). Both publicly and privately, Utterson maintains his respectability, faithful to Lanyon’s request

that his letter only be read upon Jekyll's death or disappearance. Later in the tale, when Jekyll's servants are distressed about their master, the butler, Poole, turns to Utterson for guidance.

Utterson's gentlemanly education situates him above the working classes, but Poole's regard for Utterson is not simply class deference, for when distressed Poole actively seeks out Utterson for his guidance. Utterson embodies Victorian masculinity with his austere exterior and restraint, and thus he moves freely and affably through the different classes of Victorian society.

Utterson's varied male friendships reaffirm his conformity to Victorian standards of masculinity.²⁵ His characteristic restraint allows him to be liberal with the faults of others, for he is confident in his own superior self-control, and thus in his own masculinity. The narrator notes Utterson's "approved tolerance for others" and comments that "his friendships seemed to be founded in a similar catholicity of good-nature" (7). Though he holds himself to high standards, he associates with moral degenerates: "it was frequently his fortune to be the last reputable acquaintance and the last good influence in the lives of down-going men" (7). Utterson exudes self-confidence in his role as a mentor and confidant of troubled men, perhaps becoming the masculine ideal that these men can look up to. The narrator describes in particular his association with Enfield, "his distant kinsman, the well-known man about town" (8). While seriousness and sobriety characterize Utterson, Enfield is a dandy, a figure more concerned with pleasure than with business. The narrator elaborates on the notable differences between the two men: "it was a nut to crack for many, what these two could see in each other or what subject they could find in common" (8). For Utterson, common interests are not a requirement for friendship, for "the two men put the greatest store by these excursions, counted them the chief jewel of each week, and not only set aside occasions of pleasure, but even resisted the calls of business, that

²⁵ Tosh writes of the importance of male friendships to nineteenth-century masculinity (37-39).

they might enjoy them uninterrupted” (8). Above both pleasure and business, Utterson values his time spent in the society of his kinsman; the fact that they regularly take “Sunday walks” through town indicates that this friendship is part of Utterson’s public representation of masculinity, not a familial duty that he maintains in the privacy of his drawing room (8). The maintenance of male friendships, another hallmark of Victorian masculinity, is rigorously upheld by Utterson.

Utterson’s male friendships extend not only to men of questionable moral character, but also to both the higher and lower classes of Victorian society. He describes the high-positioned Danvers Carew as a “friend and client,” and he learns of his murder because Carew was carrying a letter addressed to Utterson (32). When he seeks a handwriting analysis from his head clerk, Mr. Guest, Utterson does not approach him condescendingly, as a boss, but instead entertains the man at “his own hearth” with wine and conversation (32). The narrator reveals that “there was no man from whom he kept fewer secrets than Mr. Guest; and he was not always sure that he kept as many as he meant” (33). Utterson not only trusts in this man’s confidence, but also his counsel; upon letting Guest read the letter from Mr. Hyde, the narrator reveals that Guest “would scarce read so strange a document without dropping a remark; and by that remark Mr. Utterson might shape his future course” (33). Even though the narrator refers to Utterson as “the master” during their dialogue, Utterson shows trust and confidence in Guest (34). When Jekyll’s butler, Poole, visits Utterson out of concern for Dr. Jekyll, the lawyer shows a similar courtesy to the butler, urging him to “take a seat, and here is a glass of wine for you . . . now take your time, and tell me plainly what you want” (41). The catholicity of Utterson’s associations reflects his own success in adhering to Victorian ideals; because he has upheld masculine respectability, Utterson approaches his inferiors with gentlemanly ease and sincerity. If he were harboring secret

deviance like Jekyll, on the other hand, his fear of discovery would prompt him to maintain distance or assert his dominance more overtly. Utterson is a man whom other characters respect and trust because he fits the bill of a Victorian gentleman.

Utterson's associations with those of a lower class do not completely transcend social hierarchy, however; instead, interactions with his inferiors allow him to demonstrate his own superiority. He shows irritation when he feels that Jekyll's servants have exceeded the bounds of appropriate behavior. He arrives at Jekyll's home to find them all huddled in the entry hall and charges that their gathering is "very irregular, very unseemly; your master would be far from pleased" (42). Furthermore, when Poole shows Utterson an opened correspondence between Jekyll and a wholesale chemist, Utterson questions him "sharply, 'How do you come to have it open?'" (45). Of this incident, Veeder has written that "rather than admit the common plight of them all, the lawyer focuses on decorum as a way of venting anxiety while maintaining superiority," and he is therefore "far . . . from the mastery appropriate to patriarchy" (151). In contrast, I find that Utterson maintains appropriate masculine responses throughout the tale, reminding the servants of his superiority. He serves as the leader of the group of servants, making the decision to break down the door and assigning tasks to the footman and the knife-boy. He assures them that "if all is well, my shoulders are broad enough to bear the blame" (47). Utterson's dominance is consistently felt by all, and thus his broad-shouldered masculinity is preserved. Utterson's frank interactions with individuals of all social classes grant him stability and insight. While Sandison has regarded Utterson, Lanyon, and Jekyll as "notably isolated figures," then, I find Utterson to be a significant exception to his analysis (252). Utterson's position at the story's opening establishes and emphasizes the standards of Victorian masculinity, so that when Jekyll/ Hyde is introduced, his deviance is apparent.

Jekyll lacks the restraint and stoicism that Utterson has in spades; he cannot suppress his passionate emotions or check his rebellious behaviors, for they are forceful parts of his character. As a young man, he had proven his masculinity through success in the marketplace, a norm that had evolved over the course of the nineteenth century to replace the inheritance of an estate. Jekyll buys his home from a former physician, also acquiring a home laboratory as a result of his own hard work and discipline. While Utterson is comfortable with his austerity, however, Jekyll cannot resign himself to the somber exterior that his occupational and social ambitions require. He reveals that “it was thus rather the exacting nature of my aspirations than any particular degradation in my faults, that made me what I was” (60). He aspires to greatness in Victorian society, so he must strictly conform to that society’s expectations. He admits that “many a man would have even blazoned such irregularities as I was guilty of; but from the high views that I had set before me, I regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame” (60). Because he is socially ambitious and wants to maintain a bourgeois, gentlemanly exterior, Jekyll cannot exhibit the impulsive behavior that is a part of his nature.

Jekyll’s mental division doesn’t begin with Hyde, then, but with the “irregularities” that make him feel different from other gentlemen and that threaten to hinder his progress in public life. The duality that he experiences between self and social imperatives reveals the psychological ramifications of strict gender norms in Victorian culture. His mental distress is evident as he writes that “it was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together—that in the field of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling” (61). Rather than resolving his psychological conflict by finding some common ground between his mirthful character and a solemn public demeanor, however, Jekyll separates the two even further, amplifying his double consciousness with a “second form and

countenance” (62). Jekyll cannot reconcile himself to gender norms and control his emotions; he cannot be the exemplar of Victorian masculinity that Utterson represents. His feelings of inner division between public image and private self prompt him instead to create Hyde.

Jekyll dedicates himself to concocting a drug that will divide his two natures completely because it will enable him to maintain the taboo social relations and activities that he so enjoys in private, as Hyde, while also sustaining his respectable public demeanor as Jekyll. While he is working on this concoction, however, Jekyll paradoxically becomes consumed with his own project and isolates himself. Already, his status in the public sphere falters. When Utterson interviews their close friend, Dr. Lanyon, Lanyon remarks that “it is more than ten years since Henry Jekyll became too fanciful for me. He began to go wrong, wrong in mind” (15). Jekyll’s studies are focused on human consciousness, but more particularly, it is his own consciousness with which he is consumed, and Lanyon recognizes a psychological disruption in his friend. Unlike the doctor who previously occupied his home, Jekyll’s “tastes [are] rather chemical than anatomical”; even though he is a doctor, Jekyll has become more interested in chemical formulas than in human bodies (30). His need to engineer socially acceptable behavior has taken him away from the ordinary human interactions of a physician and from the social relations he had sought to maintain. His isolation is again apparent when Utterson enters Jekyll’s laboratory and notes “a distasteful sense of strangeness as he crossed the theatre, once crowded with eager students now lying gaunt and silent, the tables laden with chemical apparatus, the floor strewn with crates and littered with packing straw” (30). In Jekyll’s laboratory, people have been replaced by chemicals, and an eerie silence is prominent. Although he is a physician, Dr. Jekyll’s retreat from society is highlighted by the fact that the only patient we see in the novel is himself. Jekyll engineers Hyde as a means of maintaining separate public and private selves, but

during the course of his research and experimentation he finds himself distanced from public life altogether.

Hyde is by nature a social deviant, for he houses all of the impulses of which Jekyll is ashamed. Many critics have read his undefined deviant impulses as homosexual; if this is the case, they are a further threat to his masculinity.²⁶ I agree with Veeder that what is significant, however, “is not that patriarchs ‘really are’ homosexual, as though this were one state, but that late-Victorian professional men feel emotions that they can neither express nor comprehend” (144). If Jekyll were to indulge his “irregularities” or display his emotions, he would gain the reputation of a “well-known man about town,” like Enfield, and would become the subject of public derision at a time when the dandy-aesthete figure was gaining notoriety for his flagrant effeminacy (8). Dennis Denisoff has aptly described Stevenson as not necessarily an aesthete, but rather a writer “who did not subscribe wholeheartedly to the masculine image of the restrained gentlemanly professional . . . [In *New Arabian Nights*] Stevenson is not portraying a specific persona such as the dandy-aesthete but, more broadly, youthful adventurousness chafing within the ill-fitting garb of the gentlemanly professional” (289). The same may be said for Henry Jekyll, who feels himself unable to fully adopt the persona of a respectable physician; his pre-Hyde transgressions are never specified, even after Hyde has committed assault and murder. Stevenson preserves the secret of Jekyll’s “irregularities,” perhaps because what is most important is his general discomfort with and failure to uphold the social standards of the manly professional.

When Hyde first emerges, Jekyll is content with his work because he is confident that it will allow him to maintain this gentlemanly exterior. He finds, however, that psychological

²⁶ For reading of homosexuality and/or deviant sexual behaviors in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, see Showalter, Dryden, and Heath.

dissociation engenders mental instability. Jekyll is conscious of Hyde but unable to control his actions; he writes that, before the murder of Carew, “I was conscious, even when I took the draught, of a more unbridled, a more furious propensity to ill . . . but I had voluntarily stripped myself of all those balancing instincts, by which even the worst of us continues to walk with some degree of steadiness among temptations” (69). Jekyll has disrupted the balance of his own character, and subsequently, the thrill of Hyde turns into the horror of Jekyll:

Hyde had a song upon his lips as he compounded the draught, and as he drank it, pledged the dead man. The pangs of transformation had not done tearing him, before Henry Jekyll, with streaming tears of gratitude and remorse, had fallen upon his knees and lifted his clasped hands to God. The veil of self-indulgence was rent from head to foot, I saw my life as a whole. (70)

Double consciousness allows Jekyll to be conscious of his own actions and morals along with those of Hyde, so he is susceptible to guilt but helpless to modify Hyde’s behavior. His life is a whole; it cannot be divided into separate public and private personas. The two sides of his consciousness share memory, so that “Henry Jekyll stood at times aghast before the acts of Edward Hyde; but the situation was apart from ordinary laws, and insidiously relaxed the grasp of conscience” (66). Jekyll is conscious of all that Hyde does, but he can’t impose his conscience on Hyde, for this is what he has separated. He cannot fully divide Hyde from himself, however, so he is still plagued with guilt. Jekyll comes to abhor Hyde: “it was no longer the fear of the gallows, it was the horror of being Hyde that racked me . . . I still hated and feared the thought of the brute that slept within me” (73). Hyde has not only isolated Jekyll from his friends, but also actively threatens the reputation that Jekyll had worked so diligently to

preserve. Jekyll's double consciousness, this me-but-not-me, leads to increased self-loathing, shame, and distress.

The helplessness and frustration that Jekyll felt as a young man are thus magnified when he creates Hyde, for Hyde amplifies his impulsive, passionate nature, and thus his lack of control. As Hyde becomes increasingly powerful, Jekyll realizes that "the balance of my nature might be permanently overthrown, the power of voluntary change [might] be forfeited, and the character of Edward Hyde become irrevocably mine" (68). Jekyll loses power to control the transformation, and of necessity he becomes an "inscrutable recluse" (38). As we have seen, however, Jekyll's social anxiety had already separated him from society as he concocted the chemical to release Hyde. Hyde doesn't cause his social isolation and inner division, but only strengthens it. Likewise, Jekyll's failure to demonstrate his own strength of will over Hyde only intensifies the lack of self-control that has tormented Jekyll since he was a young man. Rather than alleviating the need for self-control, Hyde has only perpetuated the problem, and subsequently, Jekyll's anxiety. Essentially, Jekyll's will-power has failed, and his failure to maintain mental toughness costs him his sanity and leads him to a point of harming others. If his experiment had been successful, Jekyll would have demonstrated the masculine ideal of discipline while Hyde would have housed his deviant, but relatively innocent, impulsiveness. Instead, Jekyll's ever-mounting helplessness before Hyde further threatens his masculinity and increases his anxiety.

As Hyde gains strength, his mood swings become more intense, and both Jekyll and Hyde exhibit symptoms of hysteria, a disease that was emasculating when diagnosed in men. Poole describes Hyde "weeping like a woman," and as Jekyll transforms into Hyde, he experiences "a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering" which "left me faint" (48, 71).

After reading a letter from Jekyll/ Hyde, Dr. Lanyon is convinced “my colleague [is] insane,” that he is “dealing with a case of cerebral disease” (54, 55). When he encounters Hyde, desperate to acquire the drug that will transform him back into Jekyll, Lanyon describes his manner as “wrestling against the approaches of hysteria” (57). Jekyll/ Hyde has completely lost control over his consciousness. Without the transformational drug, he is susceptible to a transformation of self at any time, and he is hysterically frightened of this possibility. Hyde’s hysterical behavior is a sign that “emasculat[i]on, in turn, characterizes Hyde himself . . . Despite all his ‘masculine’ traits of preternatural strength and animal agility, Hyde is prey to what the late nineteenth century associated particularly with women” (Veeder 149). Jekyll, too, experiences hysterical symptoms; as his conflict with Hyde escalates, he writes that “I became, in my own person, a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind, and solely occupied by one thought: the horror of my other self” (74). Jekyll/ Hyde, then, is further stigmatized as effeminate by his mental affliction, for “while it was recognized in men, hysteria carried the stigma of a humiliatingly female affliction” (Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* 105-106). Jekyll and Hyde, then, both display qualities that are masculine and feminine, indicating the inability to divide neatly between the two. Just as masculine and feminine traits cannot be wholly divided, neither can public and private selves.

Double consciousness is not a solution for Dr. Jekyll, for the separation between himself and Hyde, between deviance and conformity, is never complete. In protecting Hyde and deceiving his closest friends, Jekyll continues to practice aberrant behavior. Jekyll acknowledges the interdependence of his two natures before beginning his experiment, explaining that “of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both” (61). Jekyll finds that

his consciousness must work in unison, for in cultivating mental division, Jekyll only causes himself increased psychological distress. He cannot simultaneously sustain a respectable, masculine public persona and a rebellious private persona without suffering from the division.

Through Jekyll's story, Stevenson reveals the pressures of Victorian masculinity and the psychological torment and alienation that deviance can create. Jekyll's mental instability and lack of a secure identity is evident in the shifting pronouns with which he refers to himself. He begins by discussing Hyde as another part of himself: "I have more than once observed that, in my second character, my faculties seemed sharpened to a point and my spirits more tensely elastic; thus it came about that, where Jekyll perhaps might have succumbed, Hyde rose to the importance of the moment" (72). Here he refers to both sides of his consciousness in first and then third person, suggesting that he delineates between the two, but feels that they are both equally a part of himself. Shortly thereafter, however, he turns to a disavowal of Hyde. After narrating the murder of Danvers Carew, Jekyll, writes, "Hyde in danger of his life was a creature new to me: shaken with inordinate anger, strung to the pitch of murder, lusting to inflict pain" (72-73). Jekyll no longer uses a personal pronoun for this part of his consciousness. In describing Hyde's actions, Jekyll insists that it is "He, I say—I cannot say I" (73). The slippage between pronouns "belie[s] his attempts to dissociate himself from Hyde" (Castricano par. 10). While Jekyll may desire dissociation, he is helpless to control Hyde's intrusion to his consciousness. Only a few paragraphs later, the distance between the two has once more faded: "but when I slept, or when the virtue of the medicine wore off, I would leap almost without transition (for the pangs of transformation grew daily less marked) into the possession of a fancy brimming with images of terror, a soul boiling with causeless hatreds" (74). Once again, he claims the identity of Hyde. As Jekyll prepares to lay down his pen and make his final

transformation into Hyde, however, he distances himself one final time: “this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself” (76). Throughout his narrative, Jekyll oscillates between association with and dissociation from Hyde, revealing the instability of his mind.

Because Utterson adheres to masculine ideals, however, his consciousness is unified by a steady sense of identity, so he provides a more stable assessment of his friend. A number of critics have read Utterson’s character as antagonistic. Davison, for example, has argued for a reading of Utterson as cunning and manipulative, a character who “not only vies for and successfully obtains Jekyll’s inheritance but is, ultimately, indictable for his murder” (139). Veeder finds that Utterson is “implicated directly . . . in patricidal rage”; he is the “sibling rival” of Hyde, and therefore he is “attracted to, as well as emulous of, Edward Hyde” (134, 139, 146). Conversely, however, I see Utterson as a character whose personality is in line with the Victorian masculine ideal and thus is capable of various social connections—he is the norm against which Jekyll’s deviance stands out. Because Utterson is integrated into Victorian society, Stevenson allows the narrator access to Utterson’s thoughts. Stevenson’s narrator is generic at a time when generic meant male and bourgeois, so his voice aligns itself with Utterson’s. The thoughts of the narrator and of Utterson are the assessments of middle-class Victorian men, men whom Jekyll struggled, but failed, to emulate. Stevenson supplements these views with additional perspectives to fully represent the public and private sides of Jekyll and Hyde.

By employing multiple narrators, Stevenson emphasizes the potential distance between public representation and private reality, or subjectivity. Jekyll’s divergent public and private natures raise the issue of narrative representation, for “preoccupations with dualism must of necessity result in concerns of narration that make the unitary subject as narrative consciousness

and stable voice an impossibility” (Fernandez 367). How does the author capture both sides of a divided character? Stevenson chose to do so by providing multiple points of view. In addition to Utterson’s perspective, he includes the first-person narratives of Enfield, Poole, and Lanyon: a dandy, a servant, and a fellow physician, all men. These are public representations by varied figures, and along with Utterson’s narrative, they provide further assessments of Jekyll and/or Hyde’s public behaviors, but they do little to unravel his private mystery. We must see the public side of Jekyll and Hyde, however, and the judgments of his peers, to fully understand his situation. In this way, “*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* offers the notion of a split subject as a narrative solution to the problem of representing the fictive ‘coherence’ of a male life” (Cohen 196). The division of the tale between narrators allows us to look at Jekyll through the eyes of other respectable men, men whose opinions Jekyll had previously feared. We see the Jekyll and Hyde that they see, the public Henry Jekyll and Edward Hyde, and experience their confusion over these characters’ odd behaviors. Therefore, when we read Jekyll’s statement of the case, we are shocked to learn of the incongruence between public representation and private experience.

While Jekyll’s friends had been concerned about his uncharacteristic secrecy and withdrawal from society, none had suspected his role in Hyde’s horrific acts. Jekyll must recite his own story, for this is the private Jekyll, the self that he has so carefully concealed. Told in the form of a letter, Jekyll’s narrative is self-contained, lacking any mediation. The narrator has no immediate access to his thoughts, for the medium of writing lacks the immediacy and presence of spoken narrative or psycho-narration. The narrator’s voice ends when Lanyon’s and Jekyll’s letters are in Utterson’s hands, and “the letters may as easily be read as appendices, free-floating documents or relics with no overarching consciousness to survive them” (Fernandez 383). Jekyll’s letter is read after his death, as per his instructions, so his account is denied any

further clarity; through this final letter, Stevenson emphasizes Jekyll's complete isolation from society. The posthumous reading disables communication, for letters are incapable of "connecting up with anything outside or beyond themselves—a difficulty corroborated by the fact that almost all the documents in this story appear in the guise of 'enclosures'" (Williams 420). Jekyll's written communication doesn't serve as a means of social connection, but rather continues his severance from his friends. The novella ends with Jekyll's statement, "as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (76). Jekyll thus writes his own conclusion, an act that Fernandez refers to as "the final instance of bourgeois efforts to impose its own phallic authority upon events, this time through the pen" (381). This is Jekyll's last attempt to assert masculine control, to reveal the general goodwill and gentlemanly intentions of Jekyll and to perhaps salvage some portion of the public persona he has so vigorously protected. Jekyll is no longer connected to the world of middle-class masculinity, however, and his isolation is here reiterated, as Utterson does not return to the story and Jekyll is denied sympathy from his only remaining friend. By allowing Jekyll to tell his own story, Stevenson reveals the distance between other characters' assessments and Jekyll's sufferings, between his public and private selves.

Through multiple narrators, Stevenson reveals the difficulty of truly knowing or representing another individual, of seeing through public representations to a private self that is often not in itself coherent, but comprised of various, conflicting impulses. In this way, Stevenson and fellow writers kept pace with contemporary psychology, for

many of the stories of the *fin de siècle* are also case histories which describe deviance, rebellion, and the abnormal. Like Freud's accounts of hysterical patients, they are fragmented, out of chronological sequence, contradictory, and

incoherent. Rather than being told by the omniscient narrator of Victorian realism, they are told by multiple narrators, or by characters who reveal their own feelings towards the hero or heroine in the course of telling the tale. (Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* 18)

In the closing decades of the nineteenth century, as psychologists such as Freud, James, and Charcot brought to light the complexity of consciousness, authors of fiction attempted to represent this complexity by providing fragmented narratives and multiple points of view. Stevenson's title, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, reiterates its similarity to case studies of psychologically troubled patients. To represent an unstable consciousness, stable, linear narration would not suffice; instead, Stevenson experimented with form, capturing mental complexity and altered consciousness through multiple voices. To represent a man who was tortured by dueling public and private selves, Stevenson provides views of the man from both perspectives.

In his private correspondence, Stevenson suggests that Jekyll's repression and mental division is representative of Victorian men; the account of Jekyll's psychological experience is, therefore, both realism and Gothicism. Upon sending a copy of the novella to a friend, he referred to it as a "gothic gnome . . . but the gnome is interesting I think and he came out of a deep mine, where he guards the fountain of tears" (*Letters* 163). Intense emotion is buried within every man, but it is guarded, according to Stevenson. Echoing Stevenson's description of buried emotion, Saposnik has described Jekyll's case as "a cry of Victorian man from the depths of his self-imposed underground" (721). As occupants of the public sphere, Victorian men were subject to "a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish. It establishes over individuals a visibility through which one differentiates and judges

them” (Foucault 184). Like Henry Jekyll, the Victorian man was not necessarily repressed by society, but rather self-consciously guarded his own behavior according to social strictures, aware of the gaze of others. Through Hyde, Jekyll strives to preemptively control his public representation and thereby to forestall the gaze of others. The existence of a subconscious guardian who exerted this resolve was not unique, as Stevenson suggested in the postscript of his letter to Will Low: “The gnome’s name is *Jekyll and Hyde*; I believe you will find he is likewise quite willing to answer to the name of Low or Stevenson” (*Letters* 163). The story of Henry Jekyll could be the story of Stevenson or his friend, for controlling one’s emotions and behaviors was required of every man.

In Stevenson’s narrative, masculine ideals potentially result in psychological damage because they might exclude portions of one’s character that are not socially acceptable. In Victorian society, an emotional, impulsive nature was undesirable in a professional man, but in attempting to exile the unacceptable portions of his nature, Jekyll only ends up exiling himself from society and doing irreparable damage to his own consciousness. Stevenson’s biography attests to the duality that Victorian men experienced:

He has been considered remarkable for seeming to live out his fictions, for being Jekyll and Hyde in the form of the bourgeois drop-out who does not desert the fold, for camping on Treasure Island, and casting himself away there at the head of a Scots Family Stevenson. He is also remarkable for having been an eminent Victorian who was also an eminent Bohemian. (Miller 212-13)

While Stevenson might have had some success with living his own forms of a double life, Henry Jekyll is not so successful. In a society that insists upon particular behavioral norms, Jekyll finds no safe place to house his rebellious impulses. Jekyll’s discomfort with masculine norms and his

resulting double consciousness would be shared by middle-class men as the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth.

CHAPTER 5

“THE ODDITY OF A DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS”: LAMBERT STRETHER’S CRISIS OF
MASCULINITY

By the turn of the twentieth century, masculine ideals were in a state of tumult both in Europe and in America, challenged by the New Woman who was fighting for her place in the work force and in the voting booth. While men had been expected throughout the century to be stoic breadwinners and prove their masculinity through competition in political and business spheres, “by the last decades of the century, manhood was widely perceived to be in crisis” (Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 52). Elaine Showalter agrees that “the 1880s and 1890s, in the words of the novelist George Gissing, were decades of ‘sexual anarchy,’ when all the laws that governed sexual identity and behavior were breaking down” (*Sexual Anarchy* 3). The work imperative that had so prominently figured into masculinity was transformed as cities and businesses grew in size and efficiency:

Rapid industrialization, technological transformation, capital concentration, urbanization, and immigration—all of these created a new sense of an oppressively crowded, depersonalized, and often emasculated life. Manhood had meant autonomy and self-control, but now fewer and fewer American men owned their own shops, controlled their own labor, owned their own farms. More and more men were economically dependent, subject to the regime of the time clock. (Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 58)

Furthermore, as cities became crowded, competition for jobs and between businesses increased. Men more commonly faced economic failure, and, “not surprisingly, self-doubt flourished in the writing of new businessmen and professionals” (Rotundo 174).

In *The Ambassadors* (1903), Henry James explores this crisis of masculinity through the character of Lambert Strether, a middle-aged man who is burdened by his own failures as an American businessman, and thus as an American man. Significant critical attention has been paid to masculinity in James’s fiction, most often considering James’s male characters in the context of the author’s own marginal gender identity and focusing primarily on sexuality and desire.²⁷ Lambert Strether’s relation to the masculine world of work, however, his failure to be a Masculine Achiever, has been relatively unexplored. In his *Notebooks*, James describes his model for Strether’s character as a “rather fatigued and alien compatriot, whose wholly, exclusively professional career had been a long, hard strain” (373). Strether’s professional failures are central to his situation in the novel, for his attempts to define himself through his work have emasculated him and left him dependent on a wealthy woman, Mrs. Newsome. Other American men in the story—the late Mr. Newsome, Waymarsh and Jim Pocock—exemplify the ideal of the successful American businessman, highlighting Strether’s shortcomings. In Paris, Strether will be forced to confront and reconcile the crisis of masculinity that has been building in his consciousness.

²⁷ Alfred Habegger examines ways in which Henry James “never succeeded . . . in winning manhood as it was understood in the United States (63). Athena Devlin notes that a number of turn-of-the-century supernatural tales, including those by James, “portray white men in the dominant classes as ill, incomplete, and lacking something critical. It is this lack that leads to the split or breakdown” (11). Men who deviated from Victorian masculinity faced marginality, as Kelly Cannon has argued: “the author and many of his male characters defy stereotypes of masculinity, asking in their varied voices if culture allows for deviation” (1). Leland Person has convincingly argued that James represents plural definitions of masculinity, claiming “the point is not that Strether must identify himself as one or the other, masculine or feminine. The novel . . . represents more complicated possibilities, suspending male identity between masculine and feminine poles” (31). The characters that Person studies defy the simple masculine/ feminine binaries that so characterized the Victorian age, instead settling on “a state of suspense in which male identity, configured in terms of gender and sexuality, remains fluid” (35).

Strether's own sense of dissatisfaction is evident as soon as the reader meets him. In his initial description of this central character, Henry James writes, "he was burdened, poor Strether—it had better be confessed at the outset—with the oddity of a double consciousness. There was detachment in his zeal and curiosity in his indifference" (18). Strether experiences a psychological conflict: he is not wholly committed to his ostensible purpose of retrieving Mrs. Newsome's son from Paris, but he is fascinated by the European decadence to which he should feign indifference. Despite his own failures and discontent with normative American masculinity, as Mrs. Newsome's ambassador Strether must convince Chad to return to America and assume this role at the head of the family business. Like the male characters discussed in previous chapters, Strether's public self-representation and private sense of self are incongruous. His double consciousness is unified in Paris, however, where he experiences greater personal freedom, culture, and relaxed gender roles, and despite his previous intentions, he finds that he cannot honestly encourage Chad's return to America. Strether no longer feels a division between who he is and who he must ostensibly be; in Paris, he can simply be, so the conflict of his "false position" is resolved (Preface xxxv).

Henry James borrows the language of his brother's psychological inquiries to diagnose Strether's "oddity of a double consciousness." By choosing the terminology of psychology, James not only metaphorically illustrates the experience of inner division, but also suggests that Strether's double consciousness is a precursor to mental disease. Strether experiences feelings of psychological discord that, as Waymarsh illustrates, can grow into neurasthenia in men or hysteria in women. More than a decade before Henry published *The Ambassadors*, William had written in *Principles of Psychology* that "the same brain may subserve many conscious selves, either alternate or coexisting" (1:401). Most commonly, female hysterics demonstrated the

existence of more than one conscious self, but William James doesn't limit the divided consciousness to women or to hysteria: "Who knows how many pathological states (not simply nervous and functional ones, but organic ones too) may be due to the existence of some perverse buried fragment of consciousness obstinately nourishing its narrow memory or delusion, and thereby inhibiting the normal flow of life?" ("Hidden Self" 372). Lambert Strether's double consciousness is one of the pathological states to which James refers; it has not reached the level of neurasthenia, but is instead a disturbing feeling of having two selves, one of which has been buried. His double consciousness indicates that he is unconsciously approaching the "general nervous collapse" that Waymarsh had just escaped through his trip to Europe (17). By incorporating the language of mental disease, James reveals the intensity of the pressures that weighed on many American men.

Although he eventually determines to return to America, Strether will not return as the man he was before his journey. He will no longer be an ambassador for Mrs. Newsome, nor will he be burdened by the ideal of the American businessman. He no longer considers "the bustling business at home, the mercantile mandate, the counter, the ledger, the bank, the 'advertising interest'" as the primary definition of civilization (James, *Notebooks* 396). Instead, he is aware that personal freedom makes "the *charm* of civilization as he now revises and imaginatively reconstructs, morally reconsiders, so to speak, civilization" (*Notebooks* 396). In the Preface to the New York edition, James emphasizes the centrality of this ongoing transformation: "He had come to Paris in some state of mind which was literally undergoing, as a result of new and unexpected assaults and infusions, a change almost from hour to hour" (xxxvi). By novel's end, Strether has done irreparable damage to his relationship with Mrs. Newsome, which will affect not only their expected marriage but likely his job as editor of the journal she finances. He

returns to America with a more unified consciousness, however, because he will no longer assume a persona that does not suit him, nor will he sacrifice his own ideals for financial security.

Through Lambert Strether, James illustrates a crisis of masculinity that is caused by narrowly-defined expectations of men in the business sector. In Europe, Strether is exposed to decadence and plural definitions of masculinity and femininity; subsequently, he declares his independence from the restrictive gender norms that had caused a psychological division between his private sense of self and his public representation of masculine norms. The independence that Strether acquires is a different form of masculinity, one that is not tethered to Mrs. Newsome's money, his own career, or the status quo of marriage. By revealing Chad and Madame de Vionnet's indiscretions and returning Strether to America, however, James refuses the simplistic binary of American masculinity vs. European masculinity. Strether's autonomy unites his public and private selves, but it is not without cost, for he returns to America alone, without the comfort of companionship that he had found with Maria Gostrey. In a way, Strether resorts to the Emersonian version of manhood discussed in Chapter 1, a masculinity that is dissatisfied with cultural norms and thus divorces itself from society, relying solely on self. While Emerson asserted masculine independence, however, Strether will declare a more radical independence, free even from the ideal of masculinity. When faced with either continued economic failure or economic dependence, this defiance of societal gender norms and relations is perhaps Strether's last, best option.

Lambert Strether hails from New England, and he attempts to uphold the Puritanical value of industriousness. James describes him as "our rueful worthy, from the very heart of New

England—at the heels of which matter of course a perfect train of secrets rumbled for me into the light” (Preface xxxv). The spirit of the Masculine Achiever, or pillar of capitalism, to which Strether pays homage may be traced back to the Puritan settlers of New England. In 1904, after a trip through America, Max Weber related this spirit to a work ethic that had helped assure Puritans of their own salvation; by the time that Benjamin Franklin made famous the American Dream ideal, however, the capitalist “‘spirit’ exist[ed] without the religious foundation, which had already died out” (Weber 123). Thus, “whereas originally Puritanism had emphasized faith *and* works, by the late nineteenth century works alone had become the predominant goal of American males” (Dubbert 307). Especially in the northeastern United States, “striving for profit . . . became understood as the essence of a morally acceptable, even praiseworthy way of organizing and directing life” (Weber 35). While this work for nineteenth century women was completed primarily in the privacy of the domestic sphere, for men it was a public activity, and thus a public display of one’s manhood and morality. Rotundo confirms that “in the nineteenth century, middle-class men’s work was vital to their sense of who they were . . . If a man was without ‘business,’ he was less than a man” (168). Some individuals acknowledged the dangers of this work imperative; a 1909 article in the *Atlantic Monthly* charged that “the habit and fury of work” was “a masculine disease in this country” (qtd. in Rotundo 176). Most men, however, simply kept their noses to the grindstone, striving towards financial achievement.

In *The Ambassadors*, the late Mr. Newsome is an example of the Masculine Achiever, having built “a big brave bouncing business” and given the entire town of Woollett “an immense lift” (41). Waymarsh, too, the “overworked lawyer” is a “prominent man” in his own “American business community” (*Notebooks* 377). Because of his business achievements, Strether considers him a success, “in spite of overwork, of prostration, of sensible shrinkage, of his wife’s

letters and of his not liking Europe” (*Ambassadors* 18). Although his wife berates him, Waymarsh “had held his tongue and had made a large income; and these were in especial the achievements as to which Strether envied him” (19). Waymarsh has proven his own viability in the marketplace and, early in the novel, Strether is envious of this kind of success. Finally, when Mrs. Newsome’s son-in-law, Jim Pocock, arrives in Paris, he, too, represents the ideal American businessman. Strether describes him as “the note of home for which Mrs. Newsome wants him—the home of the business” (305). Strether here repeats normative American ideologies of gender, in which a man must take his place as a leader in both the home and in business. Taken together, Mr. Newsome, Waymarsh, and Pocock depict the traditional American ideal of Masculine Achiever that has encumbered Strether for some time, leaving him with feelings of inadequacy. In representing the novel’s three American men (besides Strether) in the same light, James emphasizes the degree to which the American businessman was the norm.

In contrast to these men, Strether has experienced significant financial failure. Comparing himself to Waymarsh, Strether claims that, “though with a back quite as bent, [I] have never made anything. I’m a perfectly equipped failure” (30). His only successful occupation is the editorship of the *Woollett Review*, a publication for which Mrs. Newsome provides financial backing. His name is on the cover, and thus he has some occupational prominence, but Strether considers this “exactly the thing that I’m reduced to doing for myself. It seems to rescue a little, you see, from the wreck of hopes and ambitions, the refuse heap of disappointments and failures, my one presentable little scrap of an identity” (45). Strether has struggled with numerous failures, and he recognizes putting his name on the cover of the magazine as a pathetic effort to create a successful self-image and to thereby soothe his private frustrations. Like the magazine cover, his editorship is merely a cover for his previous failures;

it is not the result of his own achievement, but of Mrs. Newsome's favor. Furthermore, it only provides a "scrap" of identity for Strether, not a whole; even with this fragment of occupational success, Strether is incomplete. Strether's reference to his scrap of identity reiterates the earlier depiction of his "double consciousness": Lambert Strether is a fractured individual, and his fragmentation is directly related to his failures in the masculine world of work.

To represent Strether's crisis of masculinity, James uses a third-person narrator with access exclusively to Strether's consciousness. Cannon considers Strether to be "the most complete illustration of James's marginal male" because he is the first one to receive "an exclusive point of view, main character status, and title of the novel" (15, 16). While in previous novels James had looked at characters through the "number of possible windows" he describes in the "house of fiction" in the Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* (7), in this text he chose the strategy of "employing but one centre and keeping it all within my hero's compass" (Preface xxxviii-xxxix).²⁸ Because of his concern with Lambert Strether's internal transformation, James's narrator will focus solely on Strether and his consciousness. James further explains:

Strether's sense of things, and Strether's only, should avail me for showing them; I should know them but through his more or less groping knowledge of them, since his very gropings would figure among his most interesting motions, and a full observance of the rich rigour I speak of would give me more of the effect I should be most "after" than all other possible observance together. It would give me a large unity . . . (Preface xxxix)

²⁸ In the house of fiction, James writes, there are "a number of possible windows" and "they have this mark of their own that at each of them stands a figure with a pair of eyes, or at least with a field-glass, which forms, again and again, for observation, a unique instrument, insuring to the person making use of it an impression distinct from every other" (Preface, *The Portrait of a Lady*, 7). Each character, or each character's eyes, serves as a window from which other characters may be seen, but no two perspectives are alike.

Others' perspectives of Strether are not central to James's purpose in this novel; instead, it is Strether's own self-consciousness that is at issue, and the transformation his divided consciousness will undergo. He is consumed with his own sense of failure, regardless of what others may think. By narrating exclusively through and about Strether, James creates a focused view of the central character's overwhelming sense of inferiority.

Since Strether's consciousness is at the center of the novel, why not let him speak for himself as a first-person narrator? James addresses this issue in the Preface. As a first-person narrator, Strether simply wouldn't have provided the kind of insight that is needed to tell his story. James explains that Strether "has to keep in view proprieties much stiffer and more salutary than any our straight and credulous gaze are likely to bring home to him, has exhibitional conditions to meet, in a word, that forbid the terrible *fluidity* of self-revelation" (Preface xlii). His persistent maintenance of a stoic public image is at issue in the novel, so Strether wouldn't provide the confessions that are necessary to understand his sense of failure. He has become accustomed to performing the role of the Masculine Achiever, however partially and inadequately, and he would continue this representation before his audience. The limited omniscient third-person narrator, however, is able to reveal the psychological weaknesses that Strether would conceal. "Even while the narrator creates, enters into, shares Strether's thoughts, he also maintains irony toward them," allowing us to penetrate the veneer of the American businessman that Strether would protect (Cameron 178n). As Strether makes new acquaintances in Europe, his mask begins to fall away, however, and he reveals himself to characters like Miss Gostrey, whom James describes as "an enrolled, a direct, aid to lucidity" (xliv). Strether confides in her what he might not have previously confided in another individual, for he is

gaining confidence in his private persona. Through his surrounding cast and the narrative voice, the reader witnesses the gradual unification of Strether's public and private selves.

When he arrives in Europe, the variance in Strether's public and private selves is most apparent. Although Strether has not himself achieved success in the business world, he will serve as its ambassador, encouraging Chad to become a part of the American public sphere that has brought him shame. Once he arrives in Europe, Strether realizes the extent to which he is tethered to Mrs. Newsome and her money: "he would have done anything for Mrs. Newsome, have been still more ridiculous—as he might, for that matter, have occasion to be yet; which came to saying that this acceptance of fate was all he had to show at fifty-five" (59). Not only has he failed to prove himself successful in the business realm, but he has also sacrificed his independence. A marriage to Mrs. Newsome might bring Strether security and social status in Woollett, Connecticut, but it will cost him his autonomy and his dignity. He feels privately emasculated by occupational failure and his dependence on Mrs. Newsome, but Strether accepts his dual role and publicly approaches Chad as a spokesman for normative American male identity, urging him to return to the family business.

Strether has committed himself to representing the American businessman in an optimistic light, but the narrator reveals that Strether's own history of failure remains prominent in his mind during his travels, perpetuating his feelings of duality. As he sits alone in the Luxembourg Gardens, he reflects on "the fact that he had failed, as he considered, in everything, in each relation and in half a dozen trades" (58). Here, Strether's distress reflects the clinical cases of male double consciousness that I describe in the Introduction, cases in which "mature men . . . have wearied of occupations at which they were unsuccessful" (Hacking, "Double Consciousness" 141). Like other nineteenth-century men, Strether's feelings of failure challenge

his sense of masculine identity, for “failure was a want of achievement where achievement measured manhood” (Rotundo 179). His sense of duality again comes to the fore as he considers that “it had not been, so much achievement missed, a light yoke nor a short load . . . It had been a dreadful cheerful sociable solitude, a solitude of life or choice, of community” (58). The paired contrasts here depict the conflicting mental states that comprise Strether’s double consciousness. While appearing cheerful, he has suffered an undercurrent of dread. He has chosen to measure himself by his community’s standard, and in order to be sociable, he has experienced the solitude of assuming a false front before the public. His exterior life doesn’t match his interior, so “though there had been people enough all around it there had been but three or four persons *in it*” (58). Strether’s double consciousness, then, is a relatively isolated, essential self in conflict with a public self that is struggling to keep his grip on the socioeconomic ladder.

In struggling to maintain a respectable public image, Strether has suppressed his private frustrations with normative male identity. He suggests that a number of men from Woollett similarly struggle with social expectations: “men of my age, at Woollett—and especially the least likely ones—have been noted as liable to strange outbreaks, belated uncanny clutches at the unusual, the ideal. It’s an effect that a lifetime of Woollett has quite been observed as having” (289). In the character of Waymarsh, James illustrates the psychological effect Strether describes. A lifetime of hard work has worn on this man, who hails from another New England town, and Strether intuits that “he had, at the end of years, barely escaped, by flight in time, a general nervous collapse” (17). In this novel, James suggests that norms of masculinity wear upon the men of New England until many suffer psychological distress. The “strange outbreaks, belated uncanny clutches” that Strether describes echo the strange outbreaks of double

consciousness that William James includes in *Principles of Psychology* (1890), and with which I begin this work.

Strether's case is perhaps most similar to the case that James describes of Ansel Bourne, who developed a second consciousness so distinct that it assumed its own identity and existence as A.J. Brown. Bourne, like Strether, was distressed about his occupation. He was trained as a carpenter but felt called to itinerant preaching, and for roughly thirty years he maintained a rigorous schedule of travelling and preaching to earn a living. His wife, however,

disapproved of his absences from home in the course of his preaching, so that he confined his labours to his immediate vicinity. On this account he became somewhat troubled, thinking that he was not so active in religious work as he should be. The thought that he was not "on the path of duty" weighed on his mind, and he seems inclined to think that if he had been in active religious service, and therefore contented with his work, the experiences which he subsequently underwent would never have occurred. (Hodgson 228-229)

Bourne could not adequately support his family with local preaching, so he was forced to return to carpentry, a trade that did not satisfy him. While he does not appear to have confronted the failures that plagued Strether, he was unable to simultaneously maintain his duties as a husband and father and find satisfaction in work.

Bourne's case of split personality, or double consciousness, is representative of the psychological distress that was increasingly common in men during the second half of the nineteenth century, often termed neurasthenia. Feelings of inadequacy could trigger neurasthenia, which was a catch-all category for male psychological disorders coined by George Beard in 1869. Beard attributed neurasthenia to the stresses of modern life, and the myriad

possible symptoms included “insomnia, dyspepsia, hysteria, cold flashes, nervous exhaustion, and brain collapse” (Kimmel, *Manhood in America* 91). When one failed to achieve success in the public sphere, as Bourne had, frustration could lead to distress, and distress to neurasthenia: “middle-class males for whom work was an ordeal increasingly found shelter in vague, debilitating illness. Actively tolerated in some circles, male neurasthenia was a common phenomenon in the late nineteenth century” (Rotundo 185). But while male nervous disorders were indeed more common in these decades, they were never fully accepted, and by the turn of the century, neurasthenia had become “a badge of shame” (Rotundo 188). Strether’s double consciousness, which springs from his professional failures, is an initial symptom of the generic male mental disease termed neurasthenia, a condition that is represented by Waymarsh.

A European vacation was a common treatment for American men who were diagnosed with neurasthenia. The weary Waymarsh is traveling for that purpose, in an oxymoronic “wild hunt for rest,” but he complains that “he [hasn’t] had the first sign of that lift I was led to expect” (20). An American workaholic, Waymarsh turns his vacation into additional stress, a “wild hunt” rather than a relaxing reprieve. While this treatment fails for Waymarsh, then, it was a course that many Victorians, including Henry, William, and Alice James, pursued to soothe psychological troubles, and “the fact that the ultimate prescription when bedrest failed was a trip to Europe suggests that . . . a separation from the cares of life [was] more important to recovery than physical inaction” (Rotundo 189). Escape was central to treating nervous disorders, which indicates that one’s surrounding social conditions contributed to nervousness. In Strether’s case, the demands of Woollett and his failure to meet those demands are the cause of nervous troubles. While Strether ostensibly goes to Europe to retrieve Chad Newsome for his mother, then, his trip also serves as a means of escape. Even if Strether is not aware of his own mounting distress, the

trip will inadvertently function as a treatment, allowing him to get away from an environment in which he is not content. Strether is able to relax in Europe, for he, like Henry James himself, finds that “a man who was not in business could breathe more easily” in northern Europe (Habegger 59). No longer does he feel pressure to maintain a particular public persona.

The inner division that Strether escapes in Europe was of great interest then to both William and Henry James, the subject of both psychological inquiry and fictional representation. In a series of lectures titled *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), William James devoted an entire lecture to “the divided self,” which he described thus:

Some persons are born with an inner constitution which is harmonious and well balanced from the outset. Their impulses are consistent with one another, their will follows without trouble the guidance of their intellect, their passions are not excessive, and their lives are little haunted by regrets. Others are oppositely constituted; and are so in degrees which vary from something so slight as to result in merely an odd or whimsical inconsistency, to a discordancy of which the consequences may be inconvenient in the extreme. (141)

More simply put, the individual with a divided self experiences “a clash between his inner character and his outer activities and aims” (154). This is precisely Lambert Strether’s situation, for although he is externally faithful to the business ideal, internally he desires something more. Likewise, while he appears committed to retrieving Chad, he is increasingly uncertain as to whether the young man *should* return to his family’s business. Strether’s double consciousness goes beyond a conflict between the public promotion of masculinity and his private frustrations; it is comprised of an integral part of self that has been repressed. To resolve psychological conflict, William James explains, the secondary, and often deviant, self must be acknowledged

and addressed.²⁹ Lambert Strether's inner discord, or "perverse buried fragment of consciousness," that must be addressed springs from some as-yet unidentified self, from private inclinations that he has repressed.

When Strether arrives in Europe, this second consciousness emerges and encroaches upon the imperative of work that he has upheld for so long. According to William James, "the buried self often comes to the surface and drives out the other self," particularly in subjects who are susceptible to hypnotism (*Principles* 1:209); for Strether, a second consciousness surfaces during extended moments of meditation or reflection that are akin to a trance. In the Luxembourg Gardens, Strether recalls that on his first trip to Europe, he had made a

private pledge of his own to treat the occasion as a relation formed with the higher culture and see that, as they said at Woollett, it should bear a good harvest. He had believed, sailing home again, that he had gained something great, and his theory—with an elaborate innocent plan of reading, digesting, coming back even, every few years—had then been to preserve, cherish, and extend it. (60)

From these reflections, we can conceive the young Lambert Strether as idealistic and romantic, a young man who felt a stronger commitment to culture than to business. The work that he anticipates involves literature, reflection, and travel, not bank books or commodities. His vow was eventually forgotten, however, upon his return to America and the workaday world. His commitment to higher culture became like a second consciousness, which William James describes as "a split-off, limited, and buried, but yet a fully conscious self" (*Principles* 1:209).

Although Strether had "buried for long years in dark corners at any rate" the memory of that trip

²⁹ While William James focuses primarily on religious experiences, he clarifies that "the process of remedying inner incompleteness and reducing inner discord is a general psychological process, which may take place with any sort of mental material, and need not necessarily assume the religious form" (*Varieties* 147).

and his vow to cherish his connections to European culture, “these few germs had sprouted again under forty-eight hours of Paris” (60). Immediately upon arriving in Europe, the private, buried seeds of Strether’s desire for higher culture and aestheticism surface and begin to crowd his faithfulness to the business sector.

Strether’s suppressed consciousness can only emerge because he no longer feels restricted by social expectations. When he arrives in Chester, Strether experiences “such a consciousness of personal freedom as he hadn’t known for years; such a deep taste of change and of having above all for the moment nobody and nothing to consider” (1). He no longer feels pressured to consistently adhere to the ideal of hard work. As he strolls through the streets of Chester with Miss Gostrey and Waymarsh, “there were moments when he himself felt shy of professing the full sweetness of the taste of leisure . . . The smallest things so arrested and amused him that he repeatedly almost apologised—brought up afresh in explanation his plea of a previous grind” (27). Strether is fascinated by this experience, for he has been so accustomed to the grind of perpetual labor that he doesn’t quite know how to respond to leisure. In America, “at the very start of their professional lives, . . . young men began the habit of pouring heart and soul into their work,” and Strether’s newfound leisure provokes in him “the inevitable recognition of his having been a fortnight before one of the weariest of men” (Rotundo 175; *Ambassadors* 58). Strether arrives in Europe exhausted by his constant attention to public, professional life, by pressures that have stifled leisure and creativity.

As the pressures of American masculinity grow faint, however, Strether begins to see his flights of imagination as “a symbol, a symbol of his long grind and his want of odd moments, his want moreover of money, of opportunity, of positive dignity” (61). Strether has worked for many years to uphold the American ideal through financial success, but “the figure of the income

he had arrived at had never been high enough to look any one in the face” (19). With this metaphor, the narrator suggests that Strether’s bank account balance must rise to a particular height before he can be take pride in himself as a Masculine Achiever. And while Strether has made himself weary with work, the fruits of his labor have not reached this height. Despite his public failures, he has persevered in the public sphere, still clambering after and essentially trapped by its capitalistic ideals. When he arrives in Europe, he realizes the “extraordinary sense of escape” that so many neurasthenic American men before him had experienced (56). Strether has escaped from the American ideal of hard work that had encumbered him without him even realizing it. He experiences the freedom of unearthing his second consciousness, or private self, of no longer repressing the parts of himself that are drawn to culture.

As Strether’s “second self” emerges in Europe, so too does his distaste for the terms of the Masculine Achiever and the lives of the American men with whom he is in contact. As Maria gets to know Strether, she exclaims that he is “of a depth of duplicity!” (50). While he has feigned allegiance to the social norms of Woollett, she senses his double consciousness, the other side of Strether that is rising to the surface as he experiences personal freedom in Europe. “The Woollett point of view is from the start more borrowed than wholly genuine in Strether, a coat that doesn’t quite fit,” and his divergence from this norm becomes more prominent when he is away from Woollett and surrounded by alternatives (Pippin 152). Strether realizes his fear of becoming like Waymarsh as he stands on Chad’s Paris balcony for the first time, observing Little Bilham: “it came to pass before he moved that Waymarsh, and Waymarsh alone, Waymarsh not only undiluted but positively strengthened, struck him as the present alternative to the young man on the balcony” (70). In Waymarsh, Strether now sees the weariness and failure that often accompanied the demands of American masculinity; Waymarsh, who is “joyless,” is Strether’s

future (14). He is separated from a wife who berates him, and his successful career obviously offers little consolation. In Little Bilham, however, Strether sees that he has options beyond Waymarsh's misery. While he was once envious of Waymarsh's financial success, endlessly striving to himself become a Masculine Achiever, Strether now acknowledges his revulsion from this ideal.

By the time Jim Pocock arrives in Paris, Strether's public representation has begun to correspond more closely with his private impulses. He openly admits his repulsion towards this "leading Woollett business-man" whom he describes to Miss Gostrey as, "frankly speaking, extremely awful" (262, 305). Jim is a younger version of the Masculine Achiever, recently married and accepting of his role as a dutiful husband. Waymarsh and Jim represent the type of the American businessman that Max Weber had observed in America, men for whom "the acquisition of money, and more and more money, takes place here simultaneously with the strictest avoidance of all spontaneous enjoyment of it" (17). Acquiring money was the American Dream, yet those men who were most successful often refused to spend their earnings on leisurely activities, stifled by the work ethic that had produced their successes. In considering Jim's situation, Strether comforts himself that "he was different from Pocock; he had affirmed himself differently and he was held after all in a higher esteem" (262). While he had once expressed envy of Waymarsh's success and prominence in his American business sphere, Strether's perspective has changed during his time in Europe, and he now more freely admits that he is revolted by the idea of becoming like either man.

Strether's newfound sense of freedom stems from his growing recognition of plural definitions of masculinity. Paris is, for Strether, "a mere symbol for more things than had been dreamt of in the philosophy of Woollett," representing the expansion he will experience (Preface

xxxviii). In Europe, he finds that the previous categories by which he had classified individuals are no longer sufficient, for “those before him and around him were not as the types of Woollett, where, for that matter, it had begun to seem to him that there must only have been the male and the female. These made two exactly, even with the individual varieties” (36). In the typical New England town of Woollett, the two categories of male and female largely determine one’s course and “type”; variations are negligible. Strether distinguishes between American and European gender norms and, “as Strether’s habitual inferiority complex makes clear, this challenge to one’s gender loyalties took on a distinctive accent on the American scene, where pledging allegiance to manhood demanded not only assuming the roles of husband and paterfamilias but proving oneself,” becoming a successful businessman like Mr. Newsome, Waymarsh, or Pocock (Haralson 173).

During his travels, Strether witnesses many “types” of European men and women who defy Woollett’s simple categorizations, and his sense of inferiority diminishes. For example, when he meets Miss Gostrey, Strether has “quite the sense that she knew things he didn’t, and though this was a concession that in general he found not easy to make to women, he made it now as good-humouredly as if it lifted a burden” (7). Strether finds himself able to move beyond his previously-held gender norms. He is comfortable submitting himself to Miss Gostrey’s guidance, whereas in America he had become accustomed to maintaining a veneer of manly superiority to women, and he finds that submitting to her is, in a way, liberating. Maria Gostrey initiates Strether to the freedom of transcending the two categories of male and female, masculine and feminine. Women like Maria Gostrey were not alone in transgressing gender expectations, for in turn-of-the-century Europe “the system of patriarchy was under attack not only by women, but also by an avant-garde of male artists, sexual radicals, and intellectuals, who

challenged its class structures and roles” (Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* 11). At a time when many European men, perhaps most famously Oscar Wilde, were challenging their prescribed social roles, Maria Gostrey and Marie de Vionnet “help [Strether] fashion an alternative status for the American male” as they “teach him new arts of sociality, new fluencies of being” (Haralson 174). The manliness to which they introduce him is more expansive and clearly preferable to the narrowly defined American masculinity, and for this reason, *The Ambassadors* “associate[s] a kind of superb masculinity with Europe” (Habegger 270). In Paris, Strether enjoys the favor of two attractive women who seem indifferent to his failures as a businessman. Thus, he no longer finds it necessary to adhere to the Woollett “type” of Masculine Achiever, to maintain a public façade and rely on Mrs. Newsome’s support.

Just as he is freed from the expectations of success in the business sphere, Strether is also freed from the imperative of marriage. Previously, he had adhered to the Woollett standard of marriage as the definitive relationship between the sexes. A typical American man defined himself not only as a businessman, but also as a husband and father. The importance of marriage as convention is evident in Mrs. Newsome’s plan to bring Chad home to what Strether terms “the general safety of being anchored by a strong chain” (49). Maria immediately intuitively grasps his meaning: “what you *really* want to get him home for is to marry him” (50). Strether admits that marriage is “rudimentary,” for one’s status as someone else’s wife or husband is “the only way we distinguish people at Woollett” (50). When Jim arrives in Europe, he elaborates on the way that men are defined by their families. Jim explains that his wife’s and sister’s “types” are “recognized and acclaimed; whereas the most a leading Woollett businessman could hope to achieve socially, and for that matter industrially, was a certain freedom to play into this general glamour” (261). As with most Woollett men, Jim is distinguished by business and family; he has

no identity outside of this. If Strether marries Mrs. Newsome, he will likewise become defined as her husband.

Jim Pocock admits that marriage is in some ways limiting, a suggestion that Strether keenly notes. As they converse, Jim

seemed to say that there was a whole side of life on which the perfectly usual *was* for leading Woollett business-men to be out of the question. He made no more of it than that . . . Only Strether's imagination, as always, worked, and he asked himself if this side of life were not somehow connected, for those who figured on it, with the fact of marriage. (262)

While Strether has freely enjoyed his time in the company of Miss Gostrey and Madame de Vionnet, his role as a husband would preclude him from these tête-à-têtes. Strether realizes that he has enjoyed his liberal relation to “a society of women,” and he recognizes that “poor Jim wasn't in it. He himself, Lambert Strether, *was* as yet in some degree—which was an odd situation for a man; but it kept coming back to him in a whimsical way that he should perhaps find his marriage had cost him his place” (262). His relations with women such as Maria, Marie, and even Sarah and Mamie Pocock would become more formal and rigid if he were a married man. Marriage, in Strether's eyes, has become another part of the limiting, middle-class respectability that will sever him from the free relations with women he enjoys. Strether comes to Paris as Mrs. Newsome's ambassador, with marriage to her as the prize of his success, but this prospect is less attractive to him as he abandons limiting definitions of masculinity. Marriage is another categorical achievement of masculinity that he finds he can easily leave behind.

With his newfound independence from the restraints of gender norms, Strether becomes increasingly accepting of various relations between men and women. Strether's circle of

acquaintances in Paris represents decadents and New Women who, at the turn of the century, were both “challenging the institution of marriage and blurring the borders between the sexes” (Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* 169). Miss Barrace expresses to Strether that “‘Marrying a man, or a woman either,’ . . . ‘is never the wonder, for any Jack and Jill can bring *that* off. The wonder is their doing such things without marrying’” (188). Strether is not accustomed to relationships between men and women outside of marriage, but he is initiated as he observes Chad and Marie de Vionnet and as his own relationships with Maria and Marie evolve. These relationships are critical because they enable Strether’s expansion as an individual, not because they promise sex or love. James himself wrote of the association between Strether and Madame de Vionnet, “it’s not in the least that he has fallen in love with her, or is at all likely to do so”; instead, her “charm is independent of that for him, and gratifies some more distinctively disinterested aesthetic, intellectual, social, even, so to speak, historic sense in him, which has . . . never found itself so called to the front” (*Notebooks* 392). These women evoke in Strether an aesthetic, cultured sensibility that is independent, disinterested—he is no longer dependent on others or on social norms, so he feels free to develop the aestheticism he had thus far suppressed. With this new portion of his consciousness brought to the surface, Strether is able to forge an identity outside of his previous narrow categories of masculine and feminine.

When he finally meets Chad, Strether encounters a form of masculinity that is new to him. Chad has not defined himself by work, but has instead lived a life of leisure and culture for the past six years, with “free use of a great deal” of his family’s money (40). Chad illustrates “another symptom of femininity that crept into the lives of bourgeois males in the late nineteenth century . . . a growing fondness for leisure and ease” (Rotundo 263). Strether’s preconception of Chad was of a naïve young man in the snare of a “wicked woman,” for that is the only

explanation he could imagine that would keep a man from his duties towards the family business (37). Strether finds, however, that he is impressed by the transformation that has taken place in Chad and by Chad's life of leisure. In Chad, a life of leisure and culture is not a moral flaw, as the strict American work ethic might suggest. Instead, it becomes a viable alternative to the strains of the workplace.

Chad has been shaped by his experiences in Europe, so that he now stands out from other men, at least to Strether. His ruggedness has been refined, but he has not been emasculated: "Chad was brown and thick and strong; and of old Chad had been rough . . . It was as if in short he had really, copious perhaps but shapeless, been put into a firm mould and turned successfully out" (107). Strether perceives Chad "as the young man marked out by women; and for a concentrated minute the dignity, the comparative austerity, as he funnily fancied it, of this character affected him almost with awe" (108). Unlike Pocock, Chad emanates his own "general glamour," rather than remaining in the shadow of a woman. While Chad might not have learned how to manage the family business, he has learned how to manage social situations: "Strether recalled as they approached the house that he had impressed him that first night as knowing how to enter a box. Well, he impressed him scarce less now as knowing how to make a presentation" (147). More significant than any particular detail of Chad's character, however, is the fact that he is not constrained by others' expectations. In one of Strether's periods of reflection, "it became at once vivid to him that he had originally had, for a few days, an almost envious vision of the boy's romantic privilege" (64). Chad has grown into a confident, cultured man, unencumbered by contemporary American expectations of ascetic masculinity. He develops the romantic consciousness of Emerson: he is free to rely upon his own intuition and inclinations, much as Pierre had attempted in Melville's novel. Because Chad exercises this romantic

masculinity in Paris, however, he does not experience the censure, degradation, and destruction that result from Pierre's similar adoption of romantic ideals in New York City. It is in Europe, not America, that both Chad and Strether experience the freedom to move beyond the bounds of American masculinity.

Chad is responsive to beauty and to culture, not solely focused on work and business as American men were pressured to be. Likewise, in Europe Strether feels his sense of aestheticism is heightened, an aestheticism that he would have previously considered effeminate. It begins with Miss Gostrey, for in preparing to join her for a walk, Strether stands before the mirror and takes "a sharper survey of the elements of Appearance than he had for a long time been moved to make" (5). Strether becomes conscious of his own appearance, and as Waymarsh, Strether, and Miss Gostrey stroll the streets of Chester, there is already a notable difference between the two men: "[Waymarsh] pierced with his sombre detachment the plate-glass of ironmongers and saddlers, while Strether flaunted an affinity with the dealers in stamped letter-paper and in smart neckties. Strether was in fact recurrently shameless in the presence of tailors, though it was just over the heads of the tailors that his countryman most loftily looked" (27). Strether demonstrates an interest in fine and beautiful things, while Waymarsh remains drawn by the hard and the utilitarian.

Later, during his private dinner with Miss Gostrey, Strether admires the "cut down" neckline of Maria's dress and the "broad red velvet band with an antique jewel" that she wears around her throat, comparing her adornment to the more reserved, conservative dress of Mrs. Newsome (34). He then admonishes himself, questioning, "what, certainly, had a man conscious of a man's work in the world to do with red velvet bands?" (34). The narrator illustrates Strether's double consciousness here, for one side of self draws him towards rigid masculine

asceticism while the other side is appreciative of Miss Gostrey's adornments. Strether's second, previously-buried consciousness is attuned to aestheticism, and as these sensibilities surface they prompt him away from previous notions about "man's work in the world." The guilt that Strether experiences when he is surrounded by beauty may be attributed to his Puritanical consciousness: "our friend continued to feel rather smothered in flowers, though he made in his other moments the almost angry inference that this was only because of his odious ascetic suspicion of any form of beauty" (135). Strether has been conditioned to see beauty as effeminate and indulgent, and thus to shy away from it, and his recognition of this conditioning angers him.

In Paris, however, Strether's second consciousness is freed and, through trance-like meditative states, increasingly surfaces as a part of his identity. Habegger argues that "Strether has been living more strenuously and anxiously than ever before, always worrying about Chad and hardly ever relaxing and really enjoying Paris," but, on the contrary, Strether's transformation comes about precisely because he has learned to relax (283). On having tea with Little Bilham and one of his friends, Strether experiences a sense of removal from his previous life; what he is now experiencing is like a fairy tale, "the faraway makeshift life, with its jokes and its gaps, its delicate daubs and its three or four chairs, its overflow of taste and conviction and its lack of nearly all else—these things wove round the occasion a spell to which our hero unreservedly surrendered" (89). Like doubly-conscious hysterics who were treated with hypnotism, Strether is entranced. James employs beauty and leisure to affect Strether's cure, to "rescue [him] from [his] 'dissociated' and split-off condition, and make [him] rejoin the other sensibilities and memories" (*Principles* 1:385). Strether had dissociated the portion of his consciousness that responds to beauty, but the spell of Parisian leisure helps him re-capture that

part of himself and join it to his surface consciousness. Thus, he no longer feels the need to sustain a performative public self. Strether escapes from an impending nervous collapse because he resolves his double consciousness and achieves a unified sense of self.

As his buried consciousness becomes part of his surface identity, Strether gains an independence that he had formerly not known. He no longer needs Mrs. Newsome's money, nor does he need Miss Gostrey's guidance to see beyond the Woollett types that had previously guided him. Miss Gostrey acknowledges Strether's new sense of independence when she tells him, "you've got your momentum and can toddle alone" (231). Upon her pronouncement, the narrator affirms that "he could toddle alone, and the difference that showed was extraordinary" (239). He now feels himself at home among Parisian culture and society and, more importantly, he experiences a unity of consciousness, for his private and public selves are in harmony. He gains independence much like a child, letting go first of Mrs. Newsome, then Maria. When he first met Maria in Chester, Strether had submitted himself to her, "sat at her feet and held on by her garment and was fed by her hand" (239). Initially, Strether had transferred his dependence from Mrs. Newsome to Miss Gostrey; after some time, however, "it was as if she had shrunk into a secondary element" (239). The primary element, for Strether, is that he has been liberated from the confines of Victorian-American masculinity. He has gained the independence to determine his own course.

In Strether's final scene with Maria, she asks him directly whether he is returning for Mrs. Newsome, and he demonstrates his independence by confidently replying that "there's nothing any one can do. It's over. Over for both of us" (436). Strether is not the same man he formerly was, and, as he explains, "She's the same. She's more than ever the same. But I do what I didn't before—I *see* her" (436). Strether now sees Mrs. Newsome more fully, more

accurately than he did before his time in Paris. Because he no longer sees himself through society's standards, he no longer sees her in this way either, no longer anticipates the marriage because it is socially beneficial. He has achieved independence of vision. This is, according to James, the key to Strether's dilemma, "the answer to which is that he now at all events *sees*; so that the business of my tale and the march of my action, not to say the precious moral of everything, is just my demonstration of this process of vision" (Preface xxx). While he cannot directly answer Maria's question of what there is for him at home, Strether is sure that he is not returning to a marriage with Mrs. Newsome. Moreover, he cannot succumb to Maria's suggestion that he stay with her, for hers is "the offer of exquisite service, of lightened care, for the rest of his days," and this, too would stifle his newfound independence (438). Instead, Strether's future must remain open, so that he can follow his own inclinations.

Strether's new success is that he cannot be categorized. He no longer has a profession, nor is he a lover or a husband. Having broken all professional and social ties, he is free to assert his own sense of identity, one that moves beyond normative gender categories. For much of his time in Paris, he feels that "I seem to have a life only for other people," as is evidenced in his adaptation of his identity and behavior to fit others' expectations (191). Once he becomes free from his ties to Mrs. Newsome, Strether realizes that "he represents no one but himself, and that indeed his own behaviour was at issue all along" (Butler xvii). Strether's error was in maintaining a public persona that was in conflict with his private sense of self, for this conflict created double consciousness. Through his escape from Woollett society, however, Strether learns that while his consciousness is "at once formed by social and economic and historical conditions," it is "not merely determined by them, not simply what these conditions decree" (Pippin 160). In other words, he can have an identity outside of the contemporary American

masculinity that has made Waymarsh so miserable. Strether discusses with Chad the “extraordinary ideas” that had once possessed him at Woollett, and he feels “both how they had possessed him and how they had now lost their authority” (251-52). In his decision to return home, Strether demonstrates his ultimate independence from categories by rejecting both the outdated and the new, Mrs. Newsome and Miss Gostrey.

Lambert Strether faces a crisis of masculinity that characterized the turn of the twentieth century. Even as the Victorian ideal of Masculine Achiever was challenged by increased competition, decadence, and New Women, Strether struggles with his own failure to achieve. In response, he becomes burdened by a double consciousness, thoughtlessly performing Victorian masculinity while privately harboring aesthetic impulses. And while he is attracted to the decadence that he experiences in Europe, it is also not fully representative of his identity, for as a New Englander he retains some of his Puritanical moral sensibility. Thus, the only solution available to Strether is an independence similar to that proposed by Ralph Waldo Emerson in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Emerson perceived a crisis in masculinity following the American Revolution, and in response he urged men to seek their own self-definitions, free from social ties and expectations. Strether’s “move to Europe frees him just long enough from his American ‘fathers’ to allow him to realize his independent self” (Cannon 158), and his is a self that will no longer fracture itself for either society or another individual. To assert this kind of freedom, Strether determines “not, out of the whole affair, to have got anything for myself,” and to thereby comfort his moral sensibility and walk away from the situation free (438). He becomes empowered by James’s standards, and “‘power’ according to the Jamesian model does not mean the domination of others, but rather personal autonomy” (Cannon 159). Strether achieves this personal autonomy by returning to and moving beyond Emerson’s definition of

sturdy manliness. In walking away from all of his acquaintances and responsibilities, both American and European, Strether establishes an identity that transcends the category of masculine.

In breaking free from social constraints, Strether resolves his double consciousness and avoids the psychological collapse that was the fate of Pierre, Latimer, and Henry Jekyll. His transcendence of gender norms goes beyond Chad's Parisian experiences, for at the end of the novel Chad expresses a newfound interest in advertising and asserts that he will return home to the family business. Chad takes a vacation from the demands of American masculinity, while Strether asserts a more lasting independence from its pressures. This independence allows Strether to reclaim his manhood, but it costs him the happiness he had found with Maria, and so it becomes a bittersweet victory, a resolution that will not necessarily bring him contentment. His independence is absolute, separating him not only from those who engendered his psychological conflict but also from those who brought him comfort.

The double consciousness that James attributes to Strether in the novel's second paragraph is key to the conflict and resolution that takes place in this central character. As he lies on a hill in the French countryside, Strether realizes that "he was tired—tired not from his walk, but from that inward exercise which had known, on the whole, for three months, so little intermission" (383). In Paris, a buried portion of his consciousness comes alive, and while Strether feels exhilarated, he is also exhausted because those impulses had been dormant for so long. Strether's sense of self has expanded, for by the novel's end it includes the buried fragments of his appreciation for high culture, female friendships, and bachelorhood. He fuses this buried consciousness with his surface consciousness, much as William James had suggested might be achieved with doubly conscious hysterics: "if the brain acted normally, and the

dissociated systems came together again, we should get a new affection of consciousness in the form of a third ‘Self’ different from the other two, but knowing their objects together, as the result” (*Principles* 1:399). This is precisely what happens with Lambert Strether; his dissociated selves, lives of work and of leisure, merge to form a man who will not return to the tyranny of masculine ideals. In this way, Strether illustrates a crisis that many men faced at the turn of the century, as their manhood was challenged by New Women and workplace competition. Double consciousness is, in *The Ambassadors*, a psychological dissatisfaction with self, a sense of division caused by society’s too-restrictive categories of masculine and feminine behavior. When W.E.B. Du Bois used the term in his collection of essays published the same year, *The Souls of Black Folk*, conflicts of masculinity were also a central concern, compounded many times over by the ostracism of being an African American man.

CHAPTER 6

“TWO WARRING IDEALS IN ONE DARK BODY”: THE SOULS OF BLACK MEN

The male characters in the chapters I have discussed thus far feel their consciousnesses divided between private impulses and socially-imposed masculine expectations, and from that duality they cultivate double consciousness as a coping mechanism, a private response to public pressures. As the changing workplace challenged the manliness of the Victorian middle-class male at the turn of the century, one means that white men found of reasserting their masculinity was through racial superiority. White men verified their masculinity in Britain’s African and Indian colonies and America’s Jim Crow South by drawing attention to the inferiority of racial others and the femininity of “savages.” Rudyard Kipling famously wrote of “The White Man’s Burden” in 1899, and, “during the decades around the turn of the century, Americans were obsessed with the connection between manhood and racial dominance” (Bederman 4). In America, white supremacy continued to oppress “black men emasculated by a peculiarly complete system of slavery,” as well as the children and grandchildren of former slaves (DuBois 23). “The father’s authority in the slave family was nullified by his owners’ ability to sell, abuse, or move his wife and children at whim,” and during Reconstruction and the decades that followed, black men remained excluded from the patriarchy (McCaskill 76). While the white male characters I have discussed experience mental distress because of an internal sense of difference from the normative white male, black men suffered uniquely from socially-imposed emasculation. Unlike the emasculation that individual white men experienced, the feminization of black men stigmatized the entire race.

At the turn of the twentieth century, W.E.B. DuBois was troubled by the debilitating stereotype of black men as effeminate.³⁰ By the time of his death, gender roles had undergone significant changes and DuBois had argued for gender equality in an essay titled “The Damnation of Women”; as he was composing *Souls*, however, the Victorian separation of spheres was still prominent, and DuBois was concerned with black men’s status as men. The assertive and competitive persona this era required of white men in the public sphere was not acceptable in black men:

To-day the young Negro of the South who would succeed cannot be frank and outspoken, honest and self-assertive, but rather he is daily tempted to be silent and wary, politic and sly; he must flatter and be pleasant, endure petty insults with a smile, shut his eyes to wrong; in too many cases he sees positive personal advantage in deception and lying. His real thoughts, his real aspirations, must be guarded in whispers; he must not criticise, he must not complain. Patience, humility, and adroitness must, in these growing black youth, replace impulse, manliness, and courage. (128)

In contrast to white men, who could potentially advance their careers through bold action or entrepreneurship, black men could advance, and only minimally, if they put on masks of subdued humility. In *The Ambassadors*, Lambert Strether’s only option for economic progress is through submission to Mrs. Newsome; likewise, the only available option for Negro men was submission to white men.³¹

³⁰ This chapter is concerned with masculinity in *The Souls of Black Folk*’s cultural moment of 1903 rather than comprehensively assess DuBois’s attitudes towards gender, for DuBois was “a notoriously complex and prolific thinker whose views continued to evolve for another sixty years until his death in 1963” (Hancock 86).

³¹ Although “Negro” is a contested and degrading designation, I will use it throughout this chapter to refer to African American men because Du Bois uses it as a commonplace term in *The Souls of Black Folk*. The term

This stereotype of black men as submissive, simple-minded laborers lingered from the nineteenth century, and as the twentieth century dawned, “black men were all tainted with the same problem: they were not properly manly. Some were unable to exercise manly self-control over primitive impulses, others were overly refined and effeminate; both effeminacy and primitivism were indications of insufficient manhood” (Kimmel, *History of Men* 10). Black men were assumed to be either effeminate like Latimer in *The Lifted Veil* or subject to the primitive, rebellious impulses that torment Henry Jekyll in Stevenson’s tale. This common stereotype was reinforced by the works of “racist humorists,” usually white men, who “frequently drew on these beliefs by depicting African American men as weak and henpecked, dominated by their robust and overbearing wives” (Bederman 28). At the turn of the century, the stereotype of effeminate, inadequate black men persisted in American culture.

Several decades after emancipation, DuBois confronted and attempted to overturn these labels: “DuBois’s overall goal during the first third of his life was certainly to correct stereotypes and false analyses among his primarily white readers” (Hancock 92). To do so, he appeals to Victorian ideals of manliness. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois equates manliness with self-assertion and demands this same masculinity for black men: “he simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face” (DuBois 11). DuBois considers black men and white men to be “fellows,” or colleagues, in American society. His desire is “simple,” for black men to have the opportunity to establish and assert themselves in the public sphere, a public sphere that not only deterred black men from occupational advancement, but also segregated them from their white counterparts and denied them a political

African American would be inappropriate for this discussion because, as Du Bois himself asserts, at this time it was impossible “for a man to be both a Negro and an American” (11).

voice. DuBois reiterates his ideal of integration by blending genres within *The Souls of Black Folk*, a poly-vocalic text that brings together essay, personal narrative, biography, fiction, and travel narrative, and thereby resists simple classification. To illustrate a black man's internal conflict between going along with the simplistic stereotype of inferior black manhood, which was the easier route, and fighting it by asserting his own sense of manly dignity, DuBois uses the trope of double consciousness.

The first part of DuBois's claim about double consciousness is similar to the experience of the fictional men I have discussed: "it is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (11).³² Pierre, Latimer, Jekyll, and Strether all experience this sensation, for they feel their masculinity threatened only when they look at themselves through the lens of social norms. For these fictional characters, the pressures of masculinity create double consciousness because each man cannot be himself and be a man by the world's standards. White authors used double consciousness both metaphorically and literally to represent men's struggles with socially-determined roles during the second half of the nineteenth century, and DuBois uses the same trope to represent the particular conflicts of black men. Samir Dayal describes DuBoisean double consciousness as one that "denies the subject's sovereignty and stresses the performativity of the subject" (48). Like the white characters I have discussed, many black men felt pressured to perform according to social expectations; for black men, however, these expectations were degrading and emasculating.

DuBois explains how his version of double consciousness is unique to the Negro. First of all, the Negro is measured "by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (11). In contrast to the white man, he is an outsider, an antagonist to the dominant culture.

³² DuBois first published these words in an article titled "Strivings of the Negro People" that appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1897, and the article became the opening chapter of *The Souls of Black Folk*.

Furthermore, he must be at home in a land that is not fully his own. Because of his African roots, “One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder” (11). Double consciousness required a masculine strength similar to, but even stronger than, that required by Emerson’s romantic double consciousness, for the African American double consciousness must enable a black man to maintain an independent sense of self in spite of society’s degrading views. Even for those blacks who felt no personal connection to Africa, their dark skin served as a reminder of difference from dominant white culture. Black men were not fully American, for they lacked the civil rights and responsibilities of a white American male. The sense of “two-ness” that DuBois articulates here has become famous in multicultural studies. Applicable to all those who live on the border between two cultures, double consciousness describes the feeling of being torn between one’s heritage and social norms.

The challenge that critics have faced in explicating DuBois’s famous assertion of double consciousness is to define the “warring ideals” and the influences that shaped them.³³ He read Emerson, took a class with William James at Harvard during the time that James was publishing *The Principles of Psychology*, and also studied Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* while at Harvard. Because double consciousness had a range of meanings in nineteenth-century society, and because DuBois read so extensively, DuBoisean double consciousness cannot be limited to

³³ Eric Sundquist argues convincingly, based on the above lines, for the warring ideals of African and American cultures resulting from a growing sense of African nationalism. Chester J. Fontenot, Jr., however, reads double consciousness as a “mind/spirit binary” (134), while Shanette M. Harris argues for “his desire for assimilation” as the source of DuBoisean double consciousness (239). Dickson D. Bruce sees DuBoisean double consciousness springing from the works by Ralph Waldo Emerson and William James, while Shamoan Zamir argues for Hegel’s influence on DuBois and reads *Souls* as an adaptation of *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

one source or meaning. Instead, “DuBois created something, not out of whole cloth or purely from his own intuition and experience, but by reconfiguring various sources and his own experience in new ways” (King 134). Double consciousness had multiple applications and was therefore a concept “flexible enough to correlate with a range of particular experiences of racial subjectivity” (Flatley 121). DuBoisean double consciousness was not limited to one specific experience of duality, but could apply to a range of experiences by African Americans whose sense of self was in conflict with degrading stereotypes, or who felt themselves similar to, and yet different from, white Americans. One of those experiences that DuBois felt acutely, and articulates throughout *The Souls of Black Folk*, was emasculation. The influence of gender identity on DuBois’s notion of internal conflict has been generally overlooked by critics, but a close examination of *The Souls of Black Folk* reveals that, for DuBois, double consciousness was not only a racial issue, but also a gender issue.

DuBois uses double consciousness to reflect his own and a male character’s inner division in the face of emasculation. As an internationally-educated intellectual, DuBois was not like the majority of African Americans who lived and toiled in poverty in the American South among constant reminders of slavery; because he shared their heritage and was subject to the same degrading stereotypes, however, he could relate to them in some ways. Thus, DuBois had his own double consciousness as an intellectual and a black man, identifications that were generally considered mutually exclusive in postbellum America. Like the authors I have discussed in previous chapters, DuBois turns to fiction to demonstrate the psychological division that could be caused by nineteenth-century masculinity. In the only fictional piece included in *The Souls of Black Folk*, “Of the Coming of John,” DuBois illustrates the double consciousness of a young, northern-educated black man who returns to the American South. Like DuBois, John

has a double consciousness as an intellectual and a black man; because southern society does not see John as the equal of white men, he cannot establish himself as a black intellectual. Thus, the chasm in his consciousness grows, and he struggles with conflicting impulses towards racial progress and his own dignity. When John finally determines to assert his masculinity no matter the consequence, the consequence is death. John suffers double consciousness, a real sense of mental conflict, because the only means to progress for a black man in postbellum Southern society is through humility and, often, humiliation. By discussing psychological distress in the black community and representing it in a fictional character, DuBois provides a psychological framework through which his white readers might understand the experiences of African Americans. “Prior to [*The Souls of Black Folk*], the depth of the black psyche was largely unknown and unexplored, often assumed by European Americans to be nonexistent” (Harris 219), but DuBois opens up that psyche in this work, especially in “Of the Coming of John.” Appropriating double consciousness, a term that had multiple applications to human consciousness, DuBois reveals the complexity of the African American mind in general and the African American male in particular.

Gender comes to the forefront in *The Souls of Black Folk* in the work’s first anecdote, as DuBois tells of his own childhood awakening to racial difference when he is rejected by a white girl. During an exchange of “gorgeous visiting-cards” at school, DuBois realizes that he is not the same as other boys: “The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card—refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil” (10). This early challenge to DuBois’s budding manhood is the

direct result of his race: because he is black, this girl will not accept him as she does the white boys. Hazel Carby identifies this incident as critical to DuBois's sense of gender identity, for it "disrupts the smooth passage of the formative years of his male adolescence" (31). Furthermore, this is not a private embarrassment, for "in a relatively public setting, charged not only with the usual social anxieties of childhood but also with the pressures of compulsory heterosexuality, DuBois is rejected" (Flatley 119). School functions as a microcosm of the adult public sphere, where boys and girls learn social relations; from this confrontation, the young DuBois learns that, socially, a black boy is different from a white boy. It is directly after relating this anecdote that DuBois first posits his theory of double consciousness, which suggests that DuBois perceived a correlation between the two. Race and gender both contribute to DuBois's double consciousness, for in the public sphere, his racial identity inhibits his opportunities and identity as a young man.

DuBois regrets that the fate of most Negro boys is to accept the feelings of inadequacy he experiences during this incident. He writes that "their youth shrunk into tasteless sycophancy, or into silent hatred of the pale world about them and mocking distrust of everything white" (10). These boys begrudgingly accept emasculation through their subordination, all the while harboring quiet discontent. Obsequiousness stunts their growth as men, for it "not only disrupts adolescence but dooms these young men to a life of mimicry, to a mere a [*sic*] parody of masculinity, a parody which results in their being denied a full role in the patriarchal social and political order" (Carby 32). Ingrained into these boys' consciousness is the cultural notion that they can never fully be masculine, not as the dominant white population defines masculinity. Because of their socially-imposed inferiority, all that is available to them is a parody of white masculinity in their own communities. They will not have the opportunity to establish

themselves as men in the American public sphere, for they have submitted themselves to subservience. Because they cannot practice self-assertion, these boys' transition to American manhood is thwarted.

Unlike these boys, the young DuBois does not accept his subordination, but instead sets out to assert himself through public competition in what, for the adult man, would become the marketplace. School, and the academic and physical competition it offers, is for many boys the first arena in which they can compare themselves to other young men. DuBois takes advantage of these opportunities to assert himself, and he records that "the sky was bluest when I could beat my mates at examination-time, or beat them at a foot-race, or even beat their stringy heads" (10). The young DuBois learns that, if he cannot assert his male identity through a normative exchange between boys and girls, he can accomplish it through competition. He does not remain committed to physical competition, however. As he matures and realizes that "the worlds I longed for, and all their dazzling opportunities, were theirs, not mine," DuBois likewise determines that "some, all, I would wrest from them. Just how I would do it I could never decide: by reading law, by healing the sick, by telling the wonderful tales that swam in my head,—some way" (10). DuBois dedicates himself to intellectual labor because he realizes that it holds the key to opportunity and to establishing himself in the public sphere, among his white counterparts. To DuBois, the path to progress for the Negro was through his intellect and professional accomplishments. Through these, he could achieve the definition of masculinity held by white culture: he could secure his own success and respectability in the public sphere.

By articulating his desire to assert himself in the public sphere, or in the workplace, DuBois appeals to patriarchal masculinity, the Victorian separation of spheres. DuBois saw black men as the leaders of racial uplift, and, in *The Souls of Black Folk*, he articulates "a

conceptual framework that is gender-specific; not only does it apply exclusively to men, but it encompasses only those men who enact narrowly and rigidly determined codes of masculinity” (Carby 10). The narrow, rigid codes of masculinity to which Carby refers are those of the dominant white culture. Just as “*The Souls of Black Folk* confirms a presentation of African American womanhood that reinforces Victorian assumptions of respectable femininity,” it also reinforces Victorian assumptions of respectable masculinity (McCaskill 74). Traditional, Victorian male power was essential to DuBoisean racial uplift: “the African American men of *The Souls of Black Folk* must debunk the Reconstruction’s stereotypes of themselves as ne’er-do-wells, philanderers, and rapists. Then, they must restore themselves to the roles that it precluded: responsible breadwinners, loving fathers, and passionate defenders of their women’s virtue” (McCaskill 78). By demonstrating the conventional characteristics of white men, providing for their families and serving as heads of households, black males could overturn negative stereotypes and assert themselves more successfully in the public sphere.

DuBois emphasizes manhood and the roles of men in *The Souls of Black Folk* because, in a patriarchal society, racial uplift depended upon the assertion of black men as the equals of white men.³⁴ DuBois desired for black men a public representation that could earn respect. Kevin Gaines explains that, “in the hegemonic parlance on race, virile, northern, civilized Anglo-Saxon nations were destined to subdue effeminate, tropical, savage, and child-like people deemed incapable of self-government” (113). A first step, for DuBois, in refuting stereotypes of childishness and femininity was to establish the manliness of black men and thereby to align them with normative patriarchal power in white culture:

³⁴ This is not to argue that DuBois was a misogynist; in 1920, he wrote that “the uplift of women is, next to the problem of the color line and the peace movement, our greatest modern cause” (“Damnation of Women” 67). At the turn of the century, however, his attention was focused on racial uplift, with little mention of feminist issues.

Given the historical denial of the normative status of patriarchal protector to black men, advocates of racial uplift sought to escape this “feminized” image by asserting manliness as the epitome of rights and bourgeois respectability and as an antiracist panacea . . . While the rhetoric of manhood rights was a staple of militant black protest, to many, manhood itself became synonymous with the progress of the race. (Gaines 200)

Rather than challenging gender stereotypes, DuBois worked within the cultural framework of manliness in his early work. To regain their dignity, black men must take it back through the same boldness that was required of white men in the public sphere. This battle was not an easy one, however, for a too-assertive black man would be considered a threat and subject himself to potential ostracism or even lynching. While one side of a black man’s consciousness might instruct him to accept stereotypes, and thereby to slowly advance economically, the other side resisted degradation and longed to prove himself as a capable man.

In his quest for intellectual advancement among black men, DuBois was significantly hindered by social, and even scientific, assumptions of black mental inferiority that persisted throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. In an Appendix to *Crania Americana* (1829), British phrenologist George Combe (the friend with whom George Eliot had discussed mesmerism) states that based upon phrenological examination, Africans, “with few exceptions, exhibit one unbroken scene of moral and intellectual desolation” (271). Based on his own belief in polygeny (the concept of human races as separate species), Harvard professor of zoology and geology Louis Agassiz argued in 1850 that education “must be tailored to innate ability; train blacks in hand work, whites in mind work” (Gould 79). In a private letter, Agassiz described blacks as “indolent, playful, sensuous, imitative, subservient, good natured, versatile, unsteady in

their purpose, devoted, affectionate, in everything unlike other races, they may but be compared to children, grown in the stature of adults while retaining a childlike mind” (qtd. in Gould 80).

This childlike nature makes blacks effeminate, according to Agassiz, and he expressed concern about national masculinity in a letter from 1863. He worries about what will become of America if

instead of the manly population descended from cognate nations the United States should hereafter be inhabited by the effeminate progeny of mixed races, half indian [*sic*], half negro, sprinkled with white blood . . . I shudder from the consequences . . . How shall we eradicate the stigma of a lower race when its blood has once been allowed to flow freely into that of our children. (qtd. in Gould 81)

Intellectual prowess is necessary to success in a competitive marketplace, and Agassiz did not feel that other races could compete because of their inferior brains. Any mixing of blood could only denigrate the men of the white race. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, black men, women, and children shared a similar stigma of intellectual inferiority to the white male.

In response to the perceived intellectual inferiority of the Negro, DuBois argues that “there are an appreciable number of Negro youth in the land capable by character and talent to receive that higher training, the end of which is culture” (71). Most of them never become educated or cultured, however, in part because they internalize and accept the assessments of science and society. The view of what DuBois terms the “older South” is that “God created a *tertium quid*, and called it a Negro—a clownish, simple creature, at times even loveable within its limitations, but straitly foreordained to walk within the Veil” (62). Thus, even though “some

of them with favoring chance might become men,” they are kept from manhood by the impenetrable veil that lies between black men and American opportunity (62). In *Souls*, DuBois seeks to overcome limiting stereotypes and thereby open the doors of opportunity for talented young black men.

For Du Bois, opportunity included a sense of manhood equal to that of the white man, and he refused to relinquish higher education and cultured jobs. Immediately after describing the condition of double consciousness, DuBois illustrates this condition through “the double-aimed struggle of the black artisan,” “the Negro minister or doctor,” and “the would-be black *savant*” (11). For DuBois, the black man must establish himself through the public medium of a professional, middle- to upper-class occupation, but men in these occupations are those who most suffer double consciousness, torn between their own intellect and society’s degrading assessments. His goal, or “the end of his striving,” is “to be a co-worker in the kingdom of culture . . . to husband and use his best powers and his latent genius” (11). For DuBois, the cultivation of the mind was ultimately worth more than immediate profits, for its rewards would be further-reaching. DuBois claims that “manly self-respect is worth more than lands and houses, and that a people who voluntarily surrender such respect, or cease striving for it, are not worth civilizing” (40). That manly self-respect could be gained only by challenging and overturning all notions of black inferiority. Becoming an intellectual was not an end, however; instead, the intellectual man must take a leadership role in the public sphere, a public sphere that included not only the world of work, as it has for white male characters I have discussed, but also a public political discourse from which black males were often excluded.³⁵

³⁵ DuBois’s public sphere, then, approaches more closely the public sphere as defined by Habermas in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* than the public spheres of the texts I have previously discussed.

DuBois emphasizes the importance of public black manhood in his famous denunciation of Booker T. Washington. To DuBois, Washington's accommodationist methods would only perpetuate the degradation of black men that had begun under slavery. The epigraph to his chapter on Washington underscores the significance of reclaiming a manhood decimated by bondage: "From birth till death enslaved; in word, in deed, unmanned!/. . . Hereditary bondsmen! Know ye not/ Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?" (34). To free themselves from the lingering, emasculating echoes of slavery, Negro men had to quit allowing themselves to be "unmanned" and instead assert themselves forcefully. While Washington encouraged blacks to surrender social equality and accept segregation from the dominant class of whites, DuBois feels that "silent submission to civic inferiority . . . is bound to sap the manhood of any race in the long run" (41). Accepting a subordinate position in the public sphere in exchange for economic stability would drain the manhood from black men, and DuBois draws attention to this inherent emasculation. For although he desired reconciliation between the North and the South, DuBois also felt that "if that reconciliation is to be marked by the industrial slavery and civic death of those same black men, with permanent legislation into a position of inferiority, then those black men, if they really are men, are called upon by every consideration of patriotism to oppose such a course by all civilized methods . . ." (43). To be a man, one must resist assertions of inferiority, not accept them as Washington proposes. According to DuBois, those who do not oppose legislation that would affirm black inferiority are not worthy to be called men. DuBois feels that Washington "belittles the emasculating effects of caste distinctions," caste distinctions DuBois saw as a roadblock to overcoming prejudice (45). If black men accepted stereotypes of their own relative weaknesses and inferiority, they would

Because occupation is central to DuBois's arguments about black masculinity, however, the experience of black men in *Souls* still has parallels with that of the white male characters from previous chapters.

significantly impede race progress. Instead, they must work through education and public self-assertion.

DuBois illustrates the challenges facing educated black men through the nonfictional account “Of Alexander Crummell” in *The Souls of Black Folk*. In recounting the life and trials of this intelligent black man, however, DuBois is limited to Crummell’s external condition; he can only tell of events, actions, or words. When he moves to fiction in “Of the Coming of John,” he is able to provide more depth, representing John’s external circumstances and his internal conflict. Eric Sundquist has described the story’s plot as “a perfect incarnation of double consciousness encoded in the intertwined fates of the doubled black and white figures” (521). In focusing on the tension caused by racial difference in the white and black doubles, however, Sundquist overlooks the denial of manhood that catalyzes John’s violence.

In “Of the Coming of John,” DuBois illustrates the psychological division that black men experienced when their minds surpassed a color line that their bodies could not. The story is actually about two Johns—John Henderson and John Jones, one white and one black. The two were childhood companions, as John Henderson, son of the town Judge, relates: “I remember my closest playfellow in boyhood was a little Negro named after me” (146). John Henderson’s memory is shaded by his own superiority to this boy; John Jones can only aspire to imitate his privileged white namesake. All is well for John Jones during childhood, and “the white folk of Altamaha voted John a good boy—fine plough-hand, good in the rice-fields, handy everywhere, and always good-natured and respectful” (143). The white population does not look favorably upon the idea of educating him, though: “they shook their heads when his mother wanted to send him off to school. ‘It’ll spoil him,—ruin him,’ they said; and they talked as though they knew” (143). The white citizens of Altamaha feel that John Jones’s place is laboring in the fields, and

he should remain there. The Judge shares in the majority opinion that college is not the place for a young black man. He tells John Jones's sister that it's "too bad, too bad your mother sent him off,—it will spoil him" (144). It is also time for the Judge's son John to go off to school, and, in contrast, the Judge claims that Princeton will "make a man of him," for "college is the place" (144). As these two boys with the same name and amenable disposition move towards manhood, members of the white southern society demand that their paths diverge. The education that will "make a man" of the white boy by fitting him for a profession will only "ruin" the black one; in other words, the black John need not become a man by the white world's standards.

In expressing concern and skepticism towards the education of a young black boy, the white people of Altamaha voice a common cultural assumption of the time. In 1896, after thirty years of emancipation, statistician Frederick Hoffman advocated against African Americans' seeking education and entering professions. Hoffman compiled ten years' worth of statistics and interviews into a comprehensive study of *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*. In this work, Hoffman argues for the futility of Negro education: "It has been shown in the preceding part of this work that education has failed to improve materially the moral condition of the race; we have here the testimony of those who come in daily contact with negro laborers to the effect that education has failed to benefit the race in an economic sense" (274). Education is not practical for blacks, for, according to Hoffman, they are more useful as laborers on southern farms than in professions.

Hoffman discourages black men and women not only from education, but also from moving north and pursuing a profession, for in consequence "men and women who might have lived useful and happy lives on the farm or in the small rural towns of the South, are thus reduced by thousands to the anti-social condition which the colored race sustains in the large

cities” (286). In his view, negroes are not morally, socially, or intellectually equipped for life in the city, and their failures result from innate race characteristics, not a psychologically degrading social environment: “It is not in the conditions of life, but in race and heredity that we find the explanation of the fact to be observed in all parts of the globe, in all times and among all peoples, namely, the superiority of one race over another, and of the Aryan race over all” (312). Because of their natural inferiority, American Negroes should remain in menial positions until they are able to prove themselves worthy of more. This study was not the work of an extremist outlier, but was instead sponsored by the American Economic Association, a respectable academic association founded in 1885. Conventional American thought, as reflected in this compilation of statistics and testimony, saw African Americans as unfit for work in the professions, thereby barring African American men like John from the masculinity that occupational success affirmed. While a black man might consider himself to be capable of professional success, public consensus and literature suggested otherwise, creating in him a double consciousness.

John Jones is a black man who might experience such an internal conflict, for he represents the “talented tenth,” the especially bright few who DuBois believed could receive a university education and emerge as race leaders like himself. DuBois sees “the path out of the economic situation” as one that requires “men of skill, men of light and leading, college-bred men, black captains of industry, and missionaries of culture; men who thoroughly comprehend and know modern civilization, and can take hold of Negro communities and raise and train them by force of precept and example, deep sympathy, and the inspiration of common blood and ideals” (110). Just as white men were the leaders in American culture at the turn of the century, serving as breadwinners and heads of households, DuBois calls on black men to similarly take charge of the social advancement of Negroes. Dignified manhood, for DuBois, required the

guidance of cultured men, for “the paths of peace winding between honest toil and dignified manhood call for the guidance of skilled thinkers” (73). By gaining an education, John Jones could return to his southern home and guide those who labor. He would serve as a leader not only within his own family, but also for the race as a whole, establishing himself as a black man in the public sphere of occupation and culture.

In college, John learns the value of education and industry, as well as personal responsibility, and he determines to be the race leader Du Bois had previously described. After his initial mischievousness and irresponsibility earn him a suspension, John begins to take his education seriously. The paucity of his early education is an obstacle to him in preparatory school, but he learns to overcome: “it was a hard struggle, for things did not come easily to him,—few crowding memories of early life and teaching came to help him on his new way; but all the world toward which he strove was of his own building, and he builded slow and hard” (145). John demonstrates manly determination and assertion as he learns to construct his identity independently, free of assistance from the white world. As his mind expands through study, “a new dignity crept into his walk” (145). He becomes contemplative and resolute, “pausing perplexed where others skipped merrily, and walking steadily though the difficulties where the rest stopped and surrendered” (145). In short, he becomes “a man,” as the Judge had expected his own son to become in college, armed with the tools and determination to be successful in an occupation. Four years of college have “almost transformed the tall, grave man” who graduates (145). Manhood for John Jones, however, will bring double consciousness, a conflict between his newfound sense of manly dignity and the public emasculation that he will inevitably face.

When he attends an opera in New York, John’s duality as an educated black man comes into focus. As he listens to Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, his mind is transported out of the black body

that so limits him. This is his second consciousness, a self that is not limited by social prejudice—it is, quite simply, an American self. This is the essential self, one that identifies not only with other Negroes but with all humankind, that he wishes to assert in the public sphere. John's essential self is conscious of his own power to shape his future, "if he but had some master-work, some life-service, hard,—aye, bitter hard, but without the cringing and sickening servility, without the cruel hurt that hardened his heart and soul"(147). John wishes for a manhood that is defined by his work, as manhood is for white men. The music continues to guide his meditations, however, and brings forth the other side of his being: "when at last a soft sorrow crept across the violins, there came to him the vision of a far-off home,—the great eyes of his sister, and the dark drawn face of his mother. And his heart sank below the waters" (147). Even as he is confident of his own power and intellect in the North, he is aware of the limitations of his racial identity and his duty to the family he left behind in the South. Unlike the middle- to upper-class white men I have discussed in previous characters, John does not have the luxury of becoming wholly consumed with his own sense of masculinity. Instead, he must also consider a family that remains trapped by poverty and discrimination. Manhood for him will require not only self-assertion through occupation, but also taking care of an impoverished family.

John has the education and the capacity to be successful, and to thereby demonstrate to the white world the capability of the black man. At the same time, however, this goal seems impractical when his family remains in poverty in Altamaha, Georgia. DuBois had earlier described this conflict as "the double-aimed struggle of the black artisan—on the one hand to escape white contempt for a nation of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, and on the other hand to plough and nail and dig for a poverty-stricken horde" (11). Talented black men were limited not only by cultural stereotypes, but also by a desire to help their people in a

practical rather than an ideological manner. If he had stayed home and continued to labor, John might have been of more immediate use to his family. It would also have meant continued degradation and emasculation, however. Struggle as he might to establish himself in a profession in the North, his successes might be scant, if any. John Jones's educated, transcendent consciousness is at war with his practical consciousness of the reality of being a black man in America.

As he ponders the possibilities and potential for his future, John is reminded of his helplessness before the dominant white society. A young white man complains of his presence and proximity in the theater, and when the usher feebly requests that John leave, he and the white man experience a brief moment of recognition, as "for the first time the young man recognized his dark boyhood playmate, and John knew then that it was the Judge's son" (147). As adult men, they are now separated by the color line and by John Henderson's power over John Jones in the public sphere. The two men minimally acknowledge each other: "the white John started, lifted his hand, and then froze into his chair; the black John smiled lightly, then grimly, and followed the usher down the aisle" (147). John Henderson has become a symbol for the part of John Jones's consciousness that contains the Southern values of his childhood, the grudging acceptance of whites' superiority and power. Because the white John wants him removed, the black John must submit. Despite John Jones's enjoyment of the opera, he is not allowed this privilege. His second consciousness, which had soared to operatic melodies, has been stifled by the reality of his situation, so his consciousness of himself as a black man has returned.

John is troubled by the double consciousness that DuBois describes earlier in the work: he is an American man, so he wants to make his own way, but he is also a black man, for whom occupational opportunities are limited. With education and experience, his consciousness of

injustice has been awakened: “He grew slowly to feel almost for the first time the veil that lay between him and the white world; he first noticed now the oppression that had not seemed oppression before, differences that erstwhile seemed natural, restraints and slights that in his boyhood days had gone unnoticed or been greeted with a laugh” (145-46). He has gained an educated sense of his own self-worth as a human being, so he has trouble tolerating the segregation and oppression that were previously commonplaces to him. After being removed from the opera, however, John dedicates himself to returning home: “Here is my duty to Altamaha plain before me; perhaps they’ll let me help settle the Negro problems there,—perhaps they won’t” (148). With affirmation that he will continue to face oppression in the North, John determines to return home and try to serve as a race leader there. If not in the public sphere of a large city, he might at least establish himself in the public sphere of his southern hometown.

John experiences another painful emergence of his double consciousness when he returns home to a people who are generally uneducated and accepting of their menial jobs and social status. His new, expanded consciousness is set on progress, but the people at home do not understand him. These are his people, both his race and his family, and yet he cannot connect with them. A part of him associates with the experiences of these people, for they comprised his boyhood, but the part of him that has grown intellectually feels oppressed by injustices to which they turn a blind eye. His new, alternate self occupies the public, white world of education and recognizes the equality of people of all races. This is evident when he goes to visit the Judge and unwittingly offends him by going to the front door. He does not intend to be disrespectful, for “all the time he had meant right,—and yet, and yet, somehow he found it so hard and strange to fit into his old surroundings again, to find his place in the world about him” (150). At preparatory school and college, John developed a consciousness and intellect that transcended

his racial identity. He began to view himself simply as a man. Once he returns home, however, he must suppress that awareness and resume his public identity as a humble black man.

While DuBois promoted education as a pathway to racial progress, double consciousness was a problem that education could not solve. Allen has argued that DuBois's "double consciousness became a problem uniquely identified with the educated elite" (229). DuBois, however, clearly refers to "the double life every American Negro must live, as a Negro and as an American, as swept on by the current of the nineteenth while yet struggling in the eddies of the fifteenth century" (127). Every American Negro lived a double life because as an American he lived amongst opportunity, but as an African he also had faced significant limitations. Double consciousness was not unique to the educated, but was perhaps felt more intensely by educated men like John because they were more conscious of injustices. The educated American Negro had access to the egalitarian ideals of the nineteenth century, but he was hindered by old-fashioned prejudices that the dominant white culture had not progressed beyond. DuBois felt that "such a double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must give rise to double words and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretence or to revolt, to hypocrisy or to radicalism" (127). The dignified consciousness that a man such as John possessed could not be reconciled to the sycophancy required in public, so duality was unavoidable. DuBois warns that double consciousness cannot be maintained, and in "Of the Coming of John," he illustrates this reality. The civic arena was contested ground in segregated America, and, as we saw with other fictional white males, conflicts between private and public selves, between essential and assumed selves, result in violence if not resolved.

The public sphere was the terrain of white men, and Judge Henderson does not take kindly to what he perceives as an encroachment by blacks. He wastes no time emasculating John

by reminding him of his inferiority. The black people “whom the judge abhors and wants to lynch are those who seek equality with white men, in other words, those who attempt to share white public space” (Fontenot 144). John has to ask this man’s permission to teach the Negro school, and the Judge makes clear the limitations of the arrangement:

Now I like the colored people, and sympathize with all their reasonable aspirations; but you and I both know, John, that in this country the Negro must remain subordinate, and can never expect to be the equal of white men. In their place, your people can be honest and respectful; and God knows, I’ll do what I can to help them. But when they want to reverse nature, and rule white men, and marry white women, and sit in my parlor, then, by God! we’ll hold them under if we have to lynch every Nigger in the land. Now, John, the question is, are you, with your education and Northern notions, going to accept the situation and teach the darkies to be faithful servants and laborers as your fathers were. (150-151)

Black men who attempt social relations with whites, whether in occupation, marriage, or social relations, have stepped out of their places. To the Judge, John’s education is a liability, for he could awaken other blacks to notions of equality. The Judge demands the inferiority not only of the students, but of John himself, making clear that his job will be to help keep other blacks subordinate. In other words, he cannot share the enlightened, egalitarian ideals that he has obtained in college, nor can he encourage his students towards a profession. When the Judge learns that John is teaching students about the French Revolution, he immediately closes down the school. The Judge will not stand for black students to be indoctrinated with notions of *liberté, égalité, fraternité*. Despite the education that he gained through rigorous study, John

cannot advance himself or his people through hard work and industry. Instead, he remains at the mercy of a powerful white man.

When the Judge shuts down John's school, he also attempts to shut down the second, educated consciousness through which John might succeed in the public sphere of work and thereby establish a sense of normative masculinity. John's honest attempt at an occupation that could give him a sense of meaning, educating his people, has been thwarted by the Judge's hostility. John walks home in a state of weariness, and "the fierce, buried anger surged up into his throat" (153). He is helpless against this man's power, but he cannot submit to him psychologically because to do so would sacrifice his dignity. His double consciousness has brought about a crisis in his masculine identity. The self-respect that he gained in college is continually undercut by the social climate of the South, and John has grown weary of juggling to two. Sundquist describes John Jones's dilemma as "nothing less than the vise of divided identity in which DuBois himself was caught: how to balance the acquisition of white, European cultural forms against the preserved beliefs and cultural patterns of black America that originated in slavery" (524). Alongside this cultural clash, however, is a more immediate threat to John's identity as a man who can provide for and protect himself and his family. It is a denial of his manhood and dignity, not cultural confusion, that drives John to commit murder.

When he stumbles upon John Henderson sexually assaulting his sister, John Jones can no longer maintain a submissive veneer. Not only has his dignity been stripped away by the Judge's condescension, but now his sister is undergoing an even more personal attack. John cannot suppress his second self, and he releases it in one violent attack against the white John. With the swing of a fallen limb, John executes the part of himself that John Henderson represents—a self that is subservient and accepting. He stands up for himself, for his sister, and for his race; in this

scene, DuBois “consciously confronts and contradicts claims that white male aggression is met only by black male passivity” (Carby 25). As a man, he must protect his sister’s virtue, and his violent anger is only exacerbated by his recent emasculation by the Judge. His attempt to establish his manhood through his occupation has been stifled, and, like Melville’s Pierre, his only remaining option is a violent, self-destructive assertion of manhood.

John has exorcised the part of himself that is his identity as a black man in the South, restrained by cultural stereotypes, and his mind is transported to his transcendent experience at the opera. His psyche is no longer present in Altamaha, for “as the sheen of starlight fell over him, he thought of the gilded ceiling of that vast concert hall, and heard stealing toward him the faint sweet music of the swan” (153). He can no longer distinguish reality from his own imaginings. As men hurry towards him to seek vengeance for the murder of John Henderson, “clear and high the faint sweet melody rose and fluttered like a living thing, so that the very earth trembled as with the tramp of horses and murmur of angry men” (153). Like Henry Jekyll, John ends his life by making a full transition to his second, repressed consciousness. This is the consciousness he had felt fully at the opera, one that transcends racial prejudice, and he hears not the music of black spirituals, but that of white European culture. As he departs from a world in which his identity as a black man had proven limiting, “Jones’s disembodied discourse here suggests his alienation from himself as the black subject” (Fontenot 147). DuBois does not suggest a turn away from black culture, but rather seeks an identity that is not determined solely by his race. According to Gilroy, the closing chapters of *Souls* can be read as “a bid to escape not just from the South or even from America but from the closed codes of *any* constricting or absolutist understanding of ethnicity” (138). In John Jones’s moment of transcendence, he

escapes the constrictions of an emasculating black identity. The cost, psychologically, is distress and eventual dissociation; the cost, physically, is his life.

For young, educated black men like John, double consciousness was a reality. By using the term double consciousness to describe a black man's condition in America, DuBois emphasizes the psychologically troubling dimension of that experience. In fictional literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, double consciousness was a destructive psychological disease *and* a metaphor for the stresses and contradictions of public representation that men faced. DuBois describes his and other Negroes' "longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self" as a panacea to his sense of duality (11). His reference to the merging of two selves hearkens back to William James's discussion of psychological double consciousness, and the necessary merging of the two parts of the mind.³⁶ For African American men, however, this self-conscious manhood remained elusive, for, as John's story illustrates, American society did not allow one to be both black and manly, Negro and American. By integrating a European opera with John's consciousness in his dying moments, however, DuBois suggests that self-conscious manhood could be attained through a merging of Negro and Caucasian ideals. As American citizens, Negro men must be able to participate in the patriarchy of American culture. Though it is in his dying moments, John Jones achieves this manhood.

In placing DuBois's text alongside texts by English, Scottish, and American authors, I have sought the kind of cultural blending that DuBois calls for. The epigraphs of *The Souls of Black Folk* integrate the music of African spirituals with European poetry, which indicates that DuBois envisioned "a world in which the alternating epigraphs would be in communion, not in

³⁶ See *The Principles of Psychology* 1.385, 399.

conflict, in which the Western and African traditions might harmoniously coexist” (Sundquist 468). Likewise, *The Souls of Black Folk* should not be segregated to study solely in African American Literature classes and anthologies; to do so would be to ignore DuBois’s message of integration in the work, to maintain a kind of double consciousness in literary studies in which a work cannot be both multicultural and American. By merging genres within *The Souls of Black Folk*—essay, personal narrative, biography, fiction, and travel narrative—Du Bois creates a literary text that resists classification. The blending of multi-cultural artforms in *Souls* furthers DuBois’s project of integration and understanding; likewise, placing DuBois’s work alongside the fictional works of white authors and brings to light a common concern over masculinity during the second half of the nineteenth century and, in an unorthodox manner, equates the psyches of black and white men through the experience of psychological trauma.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Despite their many differences, correspondences between the psyches of nineteenth-century black men and white men are evident when their literature is viewed together. While African American men faced abuses and discrimination beyond those which most white men had experienced, individual men in both groups sought a masculinity that was independent, unrestricted by social expectations. Double consciousness allows Pierre, Latimer, Jekyll, Strether, and John to simultaneously entertain submission and rebellion; by dividing their consciousnesses, these men attempt to maintain a rational, temperate existence in public and relegate irrational impulses and emotional excess to a private self. Their experiences are not entirely fantastic or imaginary, for case studies reveal that a number of nineteenth-century men experienced similar rebellious impulses and double consciousness. The outcome of double consciousness for afflicted nineteenth-century men was often not recorded. For fictional characters, however, acquiescence and resistance cannot be housed in the same individual without causing pain and, in all cases except Lambert Strether's, psychological destruction. Through devastating double consciousnesses, authors test and contest Victorian masculinity and the ideology of separate spheres.

The double consciousness that a number of Victorian men experienced led Melville, Eliot, Stevenson, James, and DuBois to experiment with fictional representations of consciousness and identity in order to create a realistic portrait of their characters' psyches. In doing so, these authors forged the path towards a new kind of realism, one that represents the

intricacies of consciousness. They reiterate the psychological division their characters experience by distinguishing the voice of the character from that of the narrator or implied author. Melville's narrator becomes distanced from Pierre's private experience as the chasm between his public and private selves grows, while Latimer's unreliable first-person voice allows us to observe his mounting dissociation from reality. Stevenson employs multiple narrators, finally including Henry Jekyll himself, to emphasize the distance between Jekyll and other men's assessments of him; contrastingly, by focusing solely on Lambert Strether's consciousness, reporting both through and about Strether, James's narrator reveals both the extent to which Strether is consumed by his own sense of failure and the eventual unification of his consciousness. Finally, DuBois uses fiction to illustrate one of the central problems he discusses in *The Souls of Black Folk*: the double consciousness experienced by African American males. Through the voice of an omniscient third-person narrator, DuBois reveals John's external actions and his internal conflicts, drawing attention to the psychological distress that many African American men faced but which was rarely represented in antebellum or postbellum literature. Furthermore, by bringing together multiple genres in one work, DuBois reiterates his ideal of integration rather than classification. As fiction tended towards the fragmentation of modernity, double consciousness offered a paradigm for troubled masculinity and for the relationship between authorship and fictional identity.

Authors from various cultural backgrounds, then, depict distressed masculinity in similar ways, through a term that could loosely signify psychological distress and metaphorically represent the feeling of being torn. For authors of fiction, double consciousness was a way to illustrate a male consciousness that rebelled against the constraints of the Victorian public sphere. In male characters, double consciousness was a very real psychological experience, a

male malady that emerged when one's private self was at war with the expectations of the public. Through double consciousness, these men craft adaptive personas and publicly perform masculinity, only to suffer privately. The spoils of their private wars are, in most cases, shattered minds, revealing the vulnerability of the male mind at a time when psychological vulnerability was allocated primarily to women. These male characters heralded a new literary age, an age in which traditional gender roles were frequently challenged and an individual's psyche, rather than his external circumstances, was often the source of his greatest conflict.

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