

Poetics of Love in Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle"

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Abstract

May and Marcher in Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle" pursues an odd relationship interpreted by James's critics as fraudulent, self-victimizing, or queer. While May is reduced to a witness to Marcher's psychosomatic complexities, an evidence reliable to justify Marcher's troubled heterosexuality, Marcher is deprived of any romantic yearnings for her. This article, departing from simplistic psychosexual interpretations having ended up demoting May to an inferior position and Marcher to a homosexual character, suggests the main problem of their relationship is the contrast between their love styles. In this relationship, the communication is prevented not so much by May's subordinate silence/assent as by Marcher's narcissism. John Allan Lee's typology of love helps individually explicate each character's psychological traits and romantic advances under Lee's comparing terms of eros/ludus and storge/mania. The result of this case-by-case analysis is to prove their relationship is nothing but the obsession Dorothy Tennov redefines in her limerence theory based on such terms as idealization, crystallization, and intrusive thinking. After proving May and Marcher as limerent lovers, each pursuing a love style fundamentally at odds with the love style of the other, this article finally, based on Sigmund Freud's notion of cathexis, concludes it is Marcher's narcissism or self-cathexis that bars the doors of proper communication and mutual recognition.

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Introduction

In "The Beast in the Jungle," James implicitly addresses the submissive role of a lover who sacrifices her love in an uneasy relationship with the story's egocentric protagonist. The story revolves around this protagonist, John Marcher, who ruins his

chance for living in the moment in favor of his obsessive concerns over a vague, impending disaster. Besides this protagonist dealing with his malady of spirit, the story features May Bartram, the insufficiently loved woman who suffers an emotional privation in her relationship. Subsisting first as an impoverished relative in an English stately home, then living in genteel modesty in a

London suburb and sharing in Marcher's forays to the theatre or opera, May is reduced to a complementary role in the scenario of Marcher's silent homosexuality. James states, "the real form" of her relationship with Marcher should have been a married one, "[b]ut ... the very basis itself put marrying out of the question" (1903, p. 508). This "very basis might be the virtual friendship they continue to enjoy without the experience of love. As the story unfolds, this friendship results in an unequal relationship wherein the reader remains indecisive and confused in search of textual and intertextual clues to uncover the motivations for their peculiar conjugal behaviors.

Sometimes these motivations are external to the characters, such as the psychological make-up of James. Paul Lindholdt attributes May's inferior status to James's misogyny and impotence by referring to his "charismatic cousin," Minny Temple, with whom he was in love (1988, p. 281). Viewing May as her variation, Lindholdt believes Minny serves "as a pattern generally for suffering and [the] selfless female love" (1988, p. 284) that, according to Leon Edel, is "of an inner sort" (1985, p. 77). This selfless love accompanied by the unrequited feelings that well up within James's female characters are indeed an integral part of his stories. Adverting to the "painful centrality" (McWhirter, 1989, p. 5) of love in James's fiction, David McWhirter argues James's heroines "are unable to consummate their desires in the achievement of love" (1989, p. 3). To avoid such generalizations about James's heroines or their reduction to the signs validating readings of the male protagonist, this article endows May with the individuality she deserves to be treated with.

While acknowledging what Maxwell Geismar identifies as the "odd love affair" between May and Marcher, this article suggests May is different from James's other heroines for what Geismar contends to be the "intellectual and spiritual" companionship she offers Marcher (1963, pp. 35-36). The motivation behind this paper is the reanalysis of the nuances of May's dialogue that help to remove the inequality persisting in her unjustly biased analyses. These nuances, in Teckyoung Kwon's essay, are blamed for forming a circle of

deception that not only "forbid[s] him [Marcher] to guess" but also "denie[s] him even the power to learn" about May's desire (2015, p. 159). Yet, elucidating the nature of May's desire, on closer inspection, demonstrates both these characters are potential lovers whose successful mutual union is obliterated by their different love strategies and Marcher's autoerotic cathexis.

This paper treats neither Marcher as the apotheosis of James' attempts at affecting a rhetoric of queer periphrasis nor May as the voluntary victim of Marcher's inexplicable passion and his seducer with her intentional secrecy and miscommunications. The research question concerns the controversial decision of May and Marcher to be each other's abiding company that can be answered in a pre-Sedgwick theoretical framework wherein Marcher stifles May, thereby scuttling whatever potential they might have had for a reciprocal, fully realized love, because he sees her only in the cold light of his egotism. Inquiry into the poetics of love May and Marcher develops through employing a strategy that treats the content as the bearer of meaning and ratifies this view that the representations of May in critical discourses are often insufficiently evidenced.

Review of the Literature

After Ross Posnock's disagreement in *The Trial of Curiosity: Henry James, William James, and the Challenge of Modernity* (1991) with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1990) queer analysis of Marcher, James's critics started to prioritize May's psyche in their analyses. James Griffiths (1993) in his comparative study of "The Beast in the Jungle" and "The Bench of Desolation" analyzes James's two female characters, May Bartram and Kate Cookham, on the assumption that their supportive roles are misjudged in the misauthored lives of their male companions. Similarly, Eugene Goodheart (2003), having attributed the un-lived life of Marcher to his refusal of reciprocating May's love, explores what May finds enchanting in Marcher's emptiness despite the frustration of her unrequited love. Kathryn Wichelns in her comparative study "Collaborative Differences: Marguerite Duras, Eve Sedgwick, and 'The Beast in the Jungle'" (2015) argues that

Marguerite Duras's theatrical adaptation of James's story, which presents the original story as an example of *écriture féminine*, puts new emphasis on May whose gender-specific viewpoint is incomprehensible to Marcher.

Some critics, however, disprove May's decency and virtue in possessing Marcher's consciousness. While Gert Buelens in his article "In Possession of a Secret: Rhythms of Mastery and Surrender in 'The Beast in the Jungle'" (1998) regards May's love desire solely for an erotic relationship, Lomeda Montgomery in her article "The Lady is the Tiger: Looking at May Bartram in 'The Beast in the Jungle' from the 'Other Side'" (2001) relegates May's character to the monstrous, mythological figure of *lamia*. In response to these two analyses, Carolyn Tate ascribes May's "stilted language and double entendres" to her troubled heterosexuality (2012, p. 21). Nevertheless, the nuances of May's metaphoric language, in Kwon's essay (2015), are discussed to be the reason for Marcher's failure to grasp her love, thereby leading to *his* troubled heterosexuality.

Overall, the reason why May faces such accusations against herself is nothing but her silence—Donatella Izzo traces the reasons for May's silence towards Marcher's secret as well as her covert expression of love in terms of her "feminine modesty" and "autonomous subjectivity" (2001, pp. 230-1). What this paper identifies as the gap in the critical analyses of May and Marcher's lack of mutual language are the equal potentials of these characters for love that culminate in May's secrecy and Marcher's narcissistic obsession, as complimentary and unavoidable facts for their irreconcilable love strategies.

Methodology

Employing John Allan Lee's typology of love, Dorothy Tennov's limerence theory, and Sigmund Freud's notions of cathexis and narcissism, the writers of this article offer an analysis of James's story based on the interrelation between content and context. The first section argues May's desire, if gratified by Marcher, would consider both as the potential lovers whose characteristics can be examined by the theories of John Allan Lee, the Canadian psychologist. Asking his

examinees to share their love experiences, Lee theorizes his typology of love styles based on their "personal and social expression[s]" (1977, p. 173). His typology casts each lover in "a role characteristic of a given lifestyle" and holds back from "explaining why a particular person holds attitudes and enacts behaviour typical of one lovestyle" (1977, p. 175). He claims his typology "is about a style of relationship, not about a personality or identity" (1977, p. 174). However, it is rather impossible to ignore the lover's personality traits, for the criteria Lee defines for lovers—"emotional pain," "self-disclosure," and "the need for reciprocity," to name but a few—all reflect the distinct personalities traceable within their dialogues with their beloveds (1977, p. 175). Similarly, the nature of the relationship between May and Marcher is approachable through their dialogues.

To delve into the underlying motives that inspire their persistent relationship, this article, in the second section, employs the limerence theory of Dorothy Tennov, the American psychologist. This theory has its roots in the book *Love and Limerence: The Experience of Being in Love* Tennov published to introduce an "intrinsic" aspect to the nature of love (1988, p. xi). In search of a word for that intrinsic aspect, she coined the term 'limerence', synonymous with obsession, to connote the emotional pain her interviewees confessed in their love experiences. She then defines limerence as an "unwilled mental activity" carrying the lover "from the peak of ecstasy to the depths of despair" and "back again" (1988, p. xiii). The aim of this limerence theory, according to Tennov, is to interpret the influence of such mental activity in the lover's "overt behavior in public places" (1988, p. xi). As far as James's story is concerned, the result of this interpretation would find Marcher guilty. In the last section, Freud's notions of cathexis and narcissism help to explicate Marcher's guilt in this failed relationship.

Results and Discussion

Clash of Desires in an Unrequited Love

Studying May and Marcher individually as a potential lover indicates none is self-consciously deceitful or abusive, neither do

they harbor a conscious desire to abnegate or self-victimize themselves. They are indeed lovers joined in a difficult but appealing relationship despite their warring love styles. They harbor hope for the future transformation of their beloved or an epiphany, respectively, that either does not happen or happens only too late.

Lauren Berlant defines desire as “a state of attachment” that visits the lover “as an impact from the outside,” seeming “as though it comes from within,” and love as an “embracing dream” that blooms only when the “desire is reciprocated” (2012, p. 6). By reciprocation, Berlant means “the two-as-one intimacy” that such potential lovers as May and Marcher fail to build their relationship on, for they insist on the false interpretation of each other’s desires, which, though unfulfilled and deficient, define them differently (2012, p. 6). In the story, desire is mentioned two times: once, on May’s deathbed when Marcher “had but one desire left — that he shouldn’t have been ‘sold’” (James, 1903, p. 219), and the other, to describe May’s “mere desire, all too visible, to check his obsession and wind up his long trouble” (James, 1903, p. 229). This difference reflects while Marcher’s desire is loud and spiritual, May harbors a silent and corporeal desire. Indeed, their inability to establish a constructive dialogue accounts for the unfair silence of May’s desire. Yet, May’s dialogue differs from Marcher’s due to the self-confidence she expresses as a single and autonomous woman. In all her dialogues with Marcher, she speaks “with an earnestness,” while keeping “her kind eyes on him,” and beneath her kindness, there is relative autonomy that in comparison to that of Marcher is more significant for the progress of their unmarried relationship (James, 1903, pp. 197-198).

Nevertheless, despite her decision to be an unmarried lover instead of entering a loveless marriage, May reduces her autonomy as a single woman by accepting Marcher’s companionship. She turns her back on her autonomy and yields up her superior status to Marcher, relying on him for a mutual definition of love. This mutual definition is, however, never reached, for May’s perspective fails to make Marcher familiar with the aesthetic dimension of love. Their first attempt to engage

in a constructive dialogue about love fails in their first encounter:

*“Do you mean because you’ve been in love?”
And then as he but looked at her in silence:
“You’ve been in love, and it hasn’t meant
such a cataclysm, hasn’t proved the great
affair?”*

*“Here I am, you see. It hasn’t been
overwhelming.”*

*“Then it hasn’t been love,” said May
Bartram. (James, 1903, p. 199)*

May helps Marcher understand that his insecure feelings are the result of his odd amorous behavior; however, Marcher never grasps what she means by love. According to Griffiths, “Marcher experiences *numbness* [emphasis added] at May’s pregnant mention of ... falling in love” due to his fear for “the failure of his self-estimation” (1993, p. 54). May tries to dispel this fear by suggesting love as the remedy for his obsession, but he has no aesthetic faculty to identify May’s desire for an equal relationship celebrating her love not as an agreeable companion but as an autonomous woman; he finds her language incomprehensible and even blameworthy for miscommunication.

At the beginning of the story, May drifts toward Marcher when they meet each other in a gathering that makes possible their reunion. The first spark of May’s desire for Marcher’s love is detected in “her guessing that he had, within the couple of hours, devoted more imagination to her than to all the others put together” (James, 1903, p. 191). As they engage in a dialogue, May expresses her satisfaction with whom she has been and the way she has lived by resisting what Marcher’s speech implies. Indeed, the interrogative statement she utters suggests that she rebuffs the idea of living away from what she has been. This feeling of satisfaction makes her the erotic lover who, according to Lee, is “content with h[er] life ... and is ready for love, but not anxiously looking for it” (1977, p. 178). May is noticeably eager for Marcher, and being a remarkably perceptive woman discerns the special attention he is giving her as she gladly welcomes his approaches.

May suits Lee's definition of erotic lover on other terms as well, as her content life results from her good memories in her warm relationship with her great-aunt "since losing her mother" (James, 1903, p. 201). These family relationships, Lee argues, influence the lover's search for "a beloved whose physical presentation of self embodies an image already held in the mind of the lover" (1977, p. 174). Although May never confesses her love for Marcher, her permanent presence beside him indicates he fits her ideal image. Further, in their last dialogue, she admits to her "content" and "glad" life, suggesting Marcher should also enjoy such life (James, 1903, p. 230). Not only does she stay with him to the end, but also she develops their relationship to "such a daily habit" that she cannot relinquish it until her death (James, 1903, p. 208). That she strives to maintain her relationship against all odds is the indication of her erotic love style that defines its ultimate goal as the establishment of "profound rapport" (Lee, 1977, p. 178). She is eager to resume the dialogue with Marcher that cements their relationship, despite "its lightness and of its occasional oscillation" (James, 1903, p. 215). Her attitude towards him is one of acceptance and appreciation, as she revels in her love for him and refuses to impose a change without his consent. Always holding back from asking him to "repay" her love, (James, 1903, p. 215) she instills love into him by adopting "his own curiosity" as "the basis of her life" (James, 1903, pp. 216-217). As an erotic lover, May "enjoys intensity without demanding or obsessive possession" since she "is self-evident in love, rather than anxious" (Lee, 1977, p. 178). Although her attempt to make Marcher her lover is ultimately successful, his lack of commitment and his refusal to acknowledge his love bothers her.

This lack of commitment to love categorizes Marcher as a ludic lover who, according to Lee, "expect[s] love relationships to fit into his existing schedule of activities" (1977, p. 178). Marcher's ludus love style is illustrated in the way he strings May along for years and keeps her at a distance that, he justifies, is for her protection. He believes in the "things that in friendship one should ... take account of" (James, 1903, p. 203). His prudent opinions lead their relationship to "a long act

of dissimulation" (James, 1903, p. 207) that accords with what Lee defines as "an open game" (1977, p. 178). In such a game, "[t]he fair player is likely to continue enjoying ludus from one relationship to the next" (Lee, 1977, pp. 178-179); therefore, "[t]he degree of 'involvement' is carefully controlled" (1977, p. 174). Kwon considers this idea of love game as "a circle of deception" (2015, p. 156) in comparison to those critics adopting Sedgwick's perspective on proto-queer protagonists of James's fiction who suggest dissimulation and theatricality, love games, and lack of commitment while adopting impeccable manners are the signs of James's male protagonists' "queer-leaning" profiles (Haralson, 2003, p. 37).

However, in contradistinction to such queer analyses or the reductive treatments of James's characters as deceitful or self-sacrificial, Marcher's engagement in amorous conduct violating the ethics of reciprocation can be seen as a ludic lovestyle joined with its opposite lovestyle, the erotic. His failure to repay May's kindness represents his ludic view on women, as he resists her desire to be loved "by his not eternally insisting with her on himself" (James, 1903, p. 213). Such selfishness can be predicted to have existed in the other "imbecile" offers, James assumes, Marcher has made to women in his youth (James, 1903, p. 195). Indeed, in Marcher's life, there seems to be no other woman during his relationship with May, but his negligence in seeing "her suddenly looking much older ... after so many years" of being in contact portends the presence of other women in his life (James, 1903, p. 217). James declares at the story's beginning that Marcher has been with different women by then: "He had new ones enough—was surrounded with them, for instance, at that hour at the other house" (1903, p. 194). This mismatch, however, does not presuppose a relationship based on abuse or dissatisfaction, as long as May's response to Marcher's ludic love strategy is her storgic love style which relies on "a secure family background" (Lee, 1977, p. 179).

May's secure background, standing out in her first dialogue with Marcher, is the reason for the "difference" he notices in her character (James, 1903, p. 215). He notices this

difference in her amorous advances after “the death of ... her great-aunt” (James, 1903, p. 201). Inheriting the aunt’s property, May takes the initiative to start “a sensible bond” with Marcher, as she now affords to be in a relationship (James, 1903, p. 201). As Carolyn Tate argues, May’s “economic independence” helps her “manage[] her own life choices” (2012, pp. 25-26). Indeed, the brave choice May makes about loving Marcher corresponds to what Lee’s storgic lovers expect from their beloveds. What May wants from her beloved is the security that can never be threatened by the “long spells of [his] absence” (Lee, 1977, p. 179). These absences are evident in the “long intervals” between their encounters, as James depicts (1903, p. 213). Herbert Perluck removes the spells of such intervals by rejecting the binding promise of love, and asserts between May and Marcher there is “an exquisite sense of the ‘ache’ that ... is engendered by ... individuality” (1991, p. 244). The sadistic ache that, Perluck contends, results from the separateness or absence of the lovers, in May’s storgic lovestyle, however, requests Marcher’s presence. Although Perluck believes these lovers are held together by a sense of ache, not by love, this ache can be the reason for the empathy they develop in their dialogue. They find the opportunity to express this empathy in the “common interest[] and activities” their relationship offers (Lee, 1977, p. 179). This common interest is named differently in their dialogue; to Marcher, the interest lies in “curiosity,” but to May, in “absorption” (James, 1903, p. 209).

Why May attributes their common interest to absorption can be explained by what Lee discusses about self-disclosure that in storgic love is based on “an avoidance of self-conscious passion” (1977, 175). Indeed, May’s avoidance of her bodily passion casts her in the passive role of a “mere confidant” (James, 1903, p. 203). This passive role quotes her “price” for Marcher in the “mercy, sympathy, seriousness” she shows towards his fate (James, 1903, p. 203). She not only withdraws from self-disclosure in their association but also lets “this association give shape and colour to her own existence” (James, 1903, p. 152). Marcher’s lack of commitment also prevents her sexual disclosure, although she once makes during her sickness when she

makes a “movement” to show herself “all draped and all soft, in her fairness and slimness” (James, 1903, p. 224). Though noticing May’s sexual advance, Marcher feels ambivalent about the reason for this self-disclosure, as he doubts whether it is for a “generous assurance” or a “recovery of youth” (James, 1903, p. 224). This ambivalence has its roots in “their renewal of acquaintance” (James, 1903, p. 189) when Marcher, receiving May’s attention, hesitates between taking it “as a part of her general business” (James, 1903, p. 192) or as “an interest or amusement” (James, 1903, p. 190). These two examples further prove Marcher’s maniac love that, as Lee defines, reflects the “desire to hold back feelings and manipulate the relationship” (Lee, 1977, p. 179). The manifestation of this ambivalence is the love-hate relationship Marcher gets stuck in to prove his selflessness. What he defines as selflessness paradoxically makes his selfishness more insidious to May who, he believes, is “no better than himself” (James, 1903, p. 214).

Marcher is also insecure about the attraction he exerts on May; for example, he once buys her a “small trinket” for her birthday to show “that he had not sunk into real selfishness” (James, 1903, p. 208). Although he knows the gift is not fair to compensate for her self-sacrifice, he insists on his own “immense regard” for her (James, 1903, p. 209). His simultaneous insecurity and ambivalence indicate another characteristic of a maniac lover in him, as he seeks “repeated assurance of being loved” by May (Lee, 1977, p. 175). May, as the “wise keeper” of Marcher, “the most harmless of maniacs,” is responsible for repeating her “unremunerated” (James, 1903, p. 206) love and is “bound” to offer quick answers in his favor (James, 1903, p. 212). Although he introduces himself “a man of courage,” Marcher is always in need of her supportive answers (James, 1903, p. 212). Preferring to keep his obsessive preoccupation with his imaginary beast, which Michael Anesko defines as his “castrating fate,” Marcher manipulates their relationship to a loveless friendship requiring May’s company as a fellow believer (2008, 242). Indeed, Marcher’s manipulative strategy is part of his maniac love style that results in May’s ignorance of his manipulative “power to

conceive" the course of their relationship (James, 1903, p. 223). Only after May's death does Marcher realize "the part of himself" that was missed in her love (James, 1903, p. 238); in this way, the question of homosexuality as the cause of his inattention to May is unjustifiably emphasized.

May's Reaching the End without Climax

Central to Tennyson's argument is that the "interpretation" of the lover's behaviors by the beloved forms a limerent relationship (1988, p. 18). Similarly, May and Marcher's love grows in intensity in the expectation of the future reciprocations their "organs of love" offer (Tennyson, 1988, p. 19). The organs of love, Tennyson argues, are not "the genitals or even the heart" but the "eyes" of the lover (Tennyson, 1988, 18). Indeed, the gaze frequently connects Marcher with May, portending the haunting anticipation in the non-fulfilment of Marcher's expectation of his momentous experience and May's yearning for him despite the circling proto-stasis of their interactions. When Marcher is "face to face with her," (James, 1903, p. 229) "the light in her eyes" convinces him of her devotion and continuing presence (James, 1903, p. 198). The certainty her "cold sweet eyes" (James, 1903, p. 226) gives him indicates the "objective attractiveness" necessary to sparkle love (Tennyson, 1988, p. 27). Marcher, however, only in her old age, realizes "the cold charm in her eyes," (James, 1903, p. 224) and throughout these years fails to see in her eyes her limerent desire for reciprocation.

Coming "with him every step of the way," (James, 1903, p. 229) May pursues her limerent desire through their "physical union" (Tennyson, 1988, p. 20). This union, however, fails to work under the best conditions of their limerent relationship that, according to Tennyson, should be "accompanied by the growth of the emotional response more suitably described as love" (1988, p. 23). The reason is May and Marcher are not attracted to each other in the same way, but pursuing different limerent strategies, and start their relationship by following Tennyson's advice that "too early a declaration on the limerent's part or ... too early evidence of reciprocation ... prevent[s] the development of the full limerent

reaction" (1988, p. 26). They indefinitely postpone their declaration of love to the extent that they pass up the opportunity to see such "full limerent reaction" in each other's behaviors. Marcher remains ignorant of his repressed love for May by adhering to his false knowledge that "something rare and strange, possibly prodigious and terrible" will happen to him (James, 1903, p. 198). James implies in the story:

for our gentleman [Marcher] this [false knowledge] was marked, quite as marked as that the fortunate cause of it was just the buried treasure of her knowledge (James, 1903, p. 202).

Indeed, May's reason for hiding her knowledge about Marcher's beast is to retain his companionship. Nevertheless, this secrecy leads to "the respectful distance" Marcher maintains from her (Kwon, 2015, p. 157). Quite aware of May's play of concealment, Marcher starts to "look at her with suspicion" (James, 1903, p. 210); yet, May fails to see the growth of suspicion in his behaviors. The question is why May, with her "finer nerves," is blind to Marcher's gradual detachment (James, 1903, p. 215).

According to Tennyson, "[i]dealization implies that unattractive features are literally overlooked ... [or] seen, but emotionally ignored" (1988, p. 31). Similarly, May's erotic love style convinces her that Marcher is her idealized beloved, inducing her to ignore his less attractive characteristics. In search of the reason for this ignorance, Eugene Goodheart refuses to see May's "[b]lindness" to Marcher's defects as the reason for her devotion (2003, p. 117); he believes May is not only knowing, but also particularly keen. She enjoys a "prophetic status" that gives her the "insight into the mystery of Marcher's consciousness and being" (Goodheart, 2003, p. 117). While Tennyson's discourse on blindness and Goodheart's contentions about May's perceptiveness are at odds, careful scrutiny in the definition Tennyson gives for blindness to explain the conscious "perception of the limerent object" in lovers offers new insights into May's ignorance (1988, p. 29). Tennyson introduces the term 'crystallization' to compensate for the conceptual reduction her

definition of blindness leads. To clarify this term's meaning, Tennyson gives the example of "the salt crystals on a twig [that] magnify the attractive features" of it (1988, p. 30). Similarly, Tennyson argues, the beloved's "attractive characteristics are exaggerated" or "revisualized in the [lover's] limerent consciousness" (1988, p. 30). The process of crystallization in May's consciousness goes back to the scene of gathering at the story's beginning when Marcher attracts her with the "simpler sort" of his character (James, 1903, p. 192). His simple character that is at odds with "the gloating of some of his companions" (James, 1903, p. 190) prompts May to leave the company of those "tiresome people" (James, 1903, p. 191). However, when they get engaged in dialogue, she notices he has nothing to attract her "but some words spoken by himself quite without intention" (James, 1903, p. 189). Marcher's lack of intention in his speech appears as the first "unattractive characteristic," to which May, as a limerent lover, gives "little or no attention" (Tennyson, 1988, p. 30).

Nevertheless, her intentional neglect of Marcher's unintentional words proves that her crystallization is not confined to this initial impression. Her limerent consciousness continues to be "unconcerned about the defects" of Marcher, while a "concerned outsider" like the story's reader regards Marcher as "an unsuitable individual" to be in a relationship (Tennyson, 1988, p. 30). This conclusion on the reader's part requires a few "underappreciated imperfections" to be seen in Marcher (Tennyson, 1988, p. 33). One of his imperfections is the oblivion troubling him when May is trying to jog his memories about their first encounter. May notices Marcher's oblivion in that first dialogue with him, when he recalls "most things [about that encounter] rather wrong," but she hides her "disappointment" about his false "recollections" beneath her "amendments" or "corrections" (James, 1903, pp. 192-193). Regarding Marcher's oblivion as his "downfall," Diandra Bobé believes that May's amendments constitute her "efforts" to "spark whatever interest she can" in him (2003, p. 12). That "May's affections are stronger than" those of Marcher's, according to Bobé, promotes her investment in the relationship

(2003, p. 12). However, Bobé's view of May as the investor goes counter to Tennyson's crystallization that considers Marcher as the investor in May's limerent consciousness. To trace the crystallization of Marcher's words in May's consciousness, her unspoken agreements with him are good examples. For instance, when she sees his failure to "remember the least thing about her," she hides her "feeling of an occasion missed" in her facial expression (James, 1903, p. 193). This volunteer concealment demonstrates how May comes to an unspoken agreement with Marcher about her own past. After noticing Marcher's oblivion, May crystallizes his words that their "contact ... in the past" has "no importance" for their present (James, 1903, p. 190). The present Marcher means is obsessed with what Tennyson suggests as the lover's "intrusive thinking" on the past (1998, p. 33).

Intrusive thinking, Tennyson explains, occurs when "all events, associations, stimuli, [and] experience[s] return" the lover's thoughts to the beloved "with unnerving consistency" (1998, p. 34). This unnerving consistency, though interrupting the logical "connections" of the lover's thoughts, is achieved by "the perpetual presence" of the beloved in the lover's mind which "defines all other experience[s] in relation to that presence" (Tennyson, 1998, pp. 34-5). Indeed, May's presence in Marcher's mind has the same effect on his intrusive thoughts. The starting point for these thoughts is during May's sickness when:

she was then unable to see him, and as it was literally the first time ... in ... their acquaintance he turned away, defeated and sore, almost angry—or feeling ... that such a break in their custom was really the beginning of the end—and wandered alone with his thoughts ... that he was unable to keep down (James, 1903, p. 228).

Now that May's sickness has acquainted him with his imminent "forlornness," he relives the vivid memories of her companionship (James, 1903, p. 228). The vividness of such memories is to the extent that "each word and gesture is permanently available for review" in his mind (Tennyson, 1998, p. 35). What Tennyson's theory

expects Marcher's memory to be, however, challenges the "differing degrees of memory" that Kwon presumes to exist between May and him (1998, p. 151). Kwon blames May's memory for "Marcher's obtuse failure" to grasp her desire due to his misplaced trust in her memory (2015, pp. 150-151). The result, according to Kwon, is that Marcher becomes "incapable of personalizing his experiences because he lacks the attentiveness to store *the present moment*" (2015, p. 150). Nevertheless, Kwon's reason for Marcher's lack of personalized experiences is inadequate, for it is Marcher's inferior memory that enables him to treasure the present moment, though it is only after May's sickness. Marcher grasps the significance of her aid in her words, but in the review of those words, he searches for alternative meanings in agreement with his opinion.

Such "alternative meanings" are what Tennyson expects her limerent lover to look for in the beloved's "behaviors" during the intrusive thinking phase (1998, p. 35). Although Marcher never admits, May is conscious of his tendency to see the "other side" of her words (James, 1903, p. 231). This tendency is revealed in Marcher's last "speakable protest" against May's words when he responds to her rapidly approaching death by correspondingly citing his own mortality; in this response, James plays with the cliché of wanting to eat one's cake and have it too (James, 1903, p. 232). What distresses Marcher is, in fact, May's deduction that his opportunity for an encounter with the beast is now irrevocably missed, without his even having sensed the loss, for he has exhausted the full spectrum of possibilities. Marcher cannot now abide the prospect of continuing to live without anticipating some seismic reconfiguration of his experiential landscape, since existence and expectation, in his understanding, ought to coincide. Through his effort to materialize such a coincidence, he misses the chance of loving May who is now doomed, as James's subtext according to the frustrated drift of Marcher's reply attests to. Marcher's reply further indicates the ingratitude he consciously extends to her, as he believes her presence is at best "miserable," not being able to answer the question he asks about his fate (James, 1903, p. 228).

Marcher's egocentric focus is seen even during her sickness when he, indifferent about the "common doom" of May's death, selfishly strives for the goal he has assumed for their relationship (James, 1903, p. 228). This goal is "the consummation of infinite waiting" (James, 1903, p. 228); however, he forgets this waiting has been made tolerable for him only by May's presence. Goodheart regards Marcher's death as his moment of consummation when he achieves "a climax in his waiting and seeing" (2003, p. 126). What Goodheart considers as Marcher's climax is, however, a "trifle" for May because she sees love as the climax (James, 1903, p. 205). May has kept her climax in "suspense" all these years, but her sickness incapacitates her to stand this suspense (James, 1903, p. 205). Therefore, the tragic outcome of this suspense proves Marcher guilty of May's unrequited love.

Fictionality of Marcher's Love Object

Cathexis is the Greek word James Strachey suggests as the translation of Freud's term *Besetzung*. Bruno Bettelheim explains, cathexis means when "something—an idea, a person, an object — is being or has been invested with a certain amount of psychic energy" (1983, p. 89). This definition implies a "love-like" state in which "objectification is more pronounced as the cathected object is often not human" (Yeager, 2016, p. 2). Indeed, the relationship between May and Marcher is a good instance of this love-like state, for Marcher, choosing an imaginary non-human creature as his cathected object, vividly illustrates such a diversion of interest from the external world that Freud diagnoses in his narcissist patients. In James's story, this diversion—can also be called sublimation, in Freudian term, since the lover finds sexual satisfaction in the divinity instead of the human beings—can be illustrated by assuming a self/other dichotomy in the different languages May and Marcher use to conceptualize their cathexis.

Such difference in the feminine and masculine conceptualization, Freud argues, arises from the two genders' distinctive "type of object-choice" (1957, p. 88). Though no information is available on Marcher's childhood to help trace his narcissist stages of

development, a careful scrutiny drawing on Freudian discourse reveals the disturbed and regressive redirection of his libido inward to his self (1957, p. 90). Unlike the narcissist Marcher, May, having readily admitted her love, has adopted an anaclitic approach by properly redirecting her libido outward to an object-love. According to Freud, May cannot be a narcissist, for the lover is "humble," having "forfeited" his or her narcissist tendencies (1957, p. 98). The revival of such forfeited narcissism, Freud argues, depends on the return of love, which in the case of May never happens (1957, p. 98). The reason is Marcher's unhealthy obsession and self-involvement with his cathected object that distracts his attention from the love-desire of his companion.

James elucidates Marcher's cathexis in "his conviction, his apprehension, [and] his obsession" with "the crouching beast," which, he thinks, will one day pounce on him (1903, p. 204). Although Marcher once admits "the thing to happen ... never does happen," (James, 1903, p. 209) he employs this cathexis as an excuse "to be accompanied by a lady" like May (James, 1903, p. 204). He directs his cathexis to "the very eyes of the very Beast"; the "incalculable moments of glaring" (James, 1903, p. 211) at its eyes fuel his belief in its "superstition" (James, 1903, p. 235). He, however, realizes the falsehood of this superstition in the final scene when "he flung himself, on his face, on the tomb" of May (James, 1903, p. 244). This scene reveals what he wastes his life on to eventually recognize—probably May's love—has already happened at the moment of her sexual disclosure. In fact, Marcher's imaginary beast has "sprung in that twilight of the cold April when ... she had risen from her chair to stand before him and let him imaginably guess" (James, 1903, p. 243). May not only lets Marcher guess the falsehood of his superstition but also offers him an escape from it, but Marcher never recognizes "[t]he escape would have been to love her" (James, 1903, p. 243). Had he directed his cathexis to May, the conclusion of this story would not have been his unexplained death on her tomb. Indeed, in the story which revolves around his enduring emotional investment in anticipating that mysterious event which is dramatically to assail him and to alter the course of his life,

Marcher appears incapable of entering into a meaningful relationship of mutual recognition as long as his cathexis remains reliant on his narcissist fixation on himself.

Marcher's narcissism, hidden beneath "the chill of his egotism," accounts for his inaction towards May's sexual disclosure (James, 1903, p. 243). According to Freud, such narcissism is seen "in people whose libidinal development has suffered some disturbance, such as perverts and homosexuals, that in their later choice of love-objects they have taken as a model ... their own selves" (1957, p. 88). Perversion and homosexuality, as two separate examples of narcissism according to Freud, are already studied in Marcher's character by Ben Ware and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, respectively, but Freud's arguments about narcissism shed new light on Marcher's cathexis. According to Freud, "the aim and the satisfaction in a narcissistic object-choice is to be loved," so such a narcissist as Marcher looks for a beloved who condones his cathected object (1957, p. 98). When he sees May's long-standing belief in his beast, he defines her as "the only other person in the world then who would have it" (James, 1903, p. 196). He accepts to be with her because he thinks she would pursue the same cathected object, letting his narcissistic obsession ensure the continuation of their relationship. He feels dependent on her to pursue his self-regarding feelings about his cathexis; paradoxically, this narcissism asks for a selfless love that can tolerate his loveless advances. Further, his resistance to love serves as a sort of defense mechanism that not only confirms his egoism but keeps May secularly attached to their unmarried relationship. As Freud argues, "[l]oving in itself, in so far as it involves longing and deprivation, lowers self-regard; whereas being loved ... raises it once more" (1957, p. 99). This self-regard might present Marcher as selfish; one example is his undisguised sense of alienation in the company of the ceremony's guests—the scene making May interested in his seclusive behaviors (James, 1903, p. 191). This alienation further demonstrates the narcissistic reason for Marcher's lack of commitment to love. For, according to Freud, such a "tormented" person as Marcher "gives up his interest in the things of the external world, in so far as [sic] they do not concern his

suffering" (1957, p. 82). This act of giving up is not, however, limited to the abstinence of materialism, Freud argues, but gradually leads to the person's withdrawal from showing love.

Such withdrawal leads to a self/other polarity in the relationship between May and Marcher that calls forth "a harmonious marriage" "between the high opinion of [one]self that comes from within ... and the "value derived from ... others" (Macdiarmid, 1989, p. 846). Indeed, Marcher acts as a self-cathecter who is "over-attached not to the object but to [its] inner fantasies," (Macdiarmid, 1989, p. 846) having an "immature" obsession "mak[ing] him spin off into a futile repetitive internal conflict" (Macdiarmid, 1989, p. 850). In all his consultations with May on the true nature of his beast, this self-cathecter is trapped in his subjective world to the extent that he cannot but favor his own interpretation. This world is shaped by May's voluntary submission to the illusory superiority that, as the result of his self-cathexis, accounts for their emotional distance. Such distance persists as long as the May's other-cathexis insists on "disowning or even dissociating ... anything arising from [her] inner world ... that would alienate the other" (Macdiarmid, 1989, p. 850). Indeed, May's dissociation from her inner world in Marcher's favor, quite evident in their initial dialogues in which she detects his failure to grasp her definition of love, helps him enter into a harmonious relationship founded on mutual recognition that accompanies May's refusal to insist on her perspective. Collaborating with him in strengthening his cathexis, May assumes Marcher's inability to recognize her love is due to his inability to fall in love. She echoes his words to obtain his approval, thereby winning his heart, but his self-cathexis problematizes their relationship and prevents May from introducing her cathected object, that is, Marcher himself.

Far too obsessed with the fictionality of his cathected object, Marcher is resigned to a deadly fate that Spencer Brydon, the haunted protagonist of James's "The Jolly Corner"—the story by which James offers a more successful version of a heteronormative relationship—luckily escapes. Though both characters believe in the presence of a fictional creature, which for Marcher is a beast, and for Spencer

his alter ego, the difference between their cases of narcissism arises from their final decision to seek refuge to the loving embrace of their cathected objects or their partners. Shalyn Claggett, in her Freudian reading of Spencer's metamorphosed narcissism, draws an analogy in reference to Narcissus myth between the "dilemma" Spencer confronts between self-knowledge and death (2005, p. 190). This dilemma is similarly seen in Marcher's fate, but the "victory," Claggett assumes, Spencer achieves by encountering his cathected object is indeed a Pyrrhic victory for Marcher (2005, p. 196). The reason is Marcher's belated recognition of the unexpected occurrence of his encounter with his cathected object, coincident with May's sexual disclosure; this epiphany comes too much late when Marcher's love-object is not alive to receive his redirected libido. Hence, Marcher cannot be as lucky as Spencer to escape the deadly outcome of his self-knowledge about his speculative investment in a wrong cathected object.

Conclusion

While May's erotic love style makes her eager for Marcher's love and helps her develop rapport with him, Marcher acts as ludic lover, jealous and controlling in his affairs, always trying to evade responsibility by keeping women at a distance. May's storgic love style then compels her to profess her erotic attachment to Marcher, but being the love style of an emotionally mature person, this love style requires that she confesses her love only when she is certain about its reciprocation. This reciprocation is inaccessible as long as Marcher performs a maniac love style; playing a game of love and hate, he feels insecure in his relation to May and enacts this feeling of insecurity by treating May as the object of his suspicion. While May herself is responsible for Marcher's suspicion, since she constantly makes vague suggestions about his secret, Marcher's love style does not allow a potential limerence to reach full fruition. Therefore, each lover's contribution to the mutual relation turns ambiguous to the extent that May is accused of intentionally miscommunicating her feelings. Nevertheless, May is acting as any conventionally male lover would do, that is, remaining unconditionally in

love. Although she shows herself quite intent on developing love rather than giving in to the socially designated role of the woman as a housewife, Marcher does not reach emotional maturity to recognize her love. The reason is his self-cathexis, represented in the vain hope for the beast that endows meaning to his life, intensified with his narcissism, which leads to his miscomprehension of May's love. His late recognition of this love proves that no passion has ever touched him, a recognition under the weight of which he falls prostrate on May's tomb beneath the huge and hideous leap of the beast descending on him. Viewed from this perspective, May is not reduced to a complementary discourse filling the lacuna about Marcher's psychosexual complexities, but is endowed with a singular subjectivity the analysis of which validates content-oriented approaches to James' story.

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