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The rhetoric of realism: American psychology and American literature, 1860-1910

Sandra Webster

University of New Hampshire, Durham

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**The rhetoric of realism: American psychology and American
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Webster, Sandra, Ph.D.

University of New Hampshire, 1994

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THE RHETORIC OF REALISM:
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY AND AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1860-1910

BY

SANDRA WEBSTER
BA Cleveland State University, 1986
MA Cleveland State University, 1988
MA University of New Hampshire, 1990

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire
in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Psychology

May, 1994

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Sandra Webster

This dissertation has been examined and approved.

Victor A. Benassi

Dissertation Director, Victor A. Benassi
Professor of Psychology

Brigittee Bailey

Brigittee Bailey, Associate Professor of English

David Devonis

David Devonis, Assistant Professor of Psychology
Teikyo-Marycrest University

John Limber

John Limber, Associate Professor of Psychology

Deborah Johnson

Deborah Johnson, Assistant Professor of Psychology
University of Southern Maine

William Wren Stine

William Wren Stine, Associate Professor of Psychology

Date

10/16/93

This volume is dedicated in gratitude and respect to
Dr. Stephen R. Coleman

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PREFACE

In this study, I assume that the written word provides a valid source of information about the ideas and issues of central importance to a particular culture at a particular historical moment. I have further assumed that the verbal meaning of a text is determinable and stable and that, accordingly, the act of textual interpretation is comparable to the acts of observation that express the methodology of natural and social sciences.

These assumptions are not as radical as they might appear on first reading. In the late nineteenth century, textual interpretation received support by the work of the influential philosopher and social scientist, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), who proposed a science of hermeneutics that would serve as the basis for interpreting all forms of writing in the human sciences, including literature, the humanities and the social sciences.¹ In Dilthey's formulation, the determinate meaning of a text consists of an interaction between the meaning of the text as a whole (made explicit by reference to the general norms of the language of the culture, time, or discipline; the author's cultural milieu and personal characteristics and biases) and the meaning of the text's constituent parts (the meaning of particular words and sentences; the use of particular metaphors and analogies to convey ideas). According to Dilthey, it was possible to achieve a valid interpretation of a text by a sustained, mutually qualifying interplay between the reader's evolving sense of the whole and retrospective

understanding of its component parts.

I submit, in this regard, that the procedures employed by scientists are similar in kind: In both the natural and social sciences there exists a sustaining and mutually qualifying interplay between a whole (defined as theory or hypothesis derived from theory) and the scientist's retrospective understanding of the low-level observations and measurements that constitute the theory's "component parts."² In the sciences and in textual interpretation, hypotheses can be confirmed or disconfirmed by continued reference to the data: in the humanities, by reference to the text; in the sciences, by reference to original or replicated observations. If the alternative hypothesis is disconfirmed, it can be replaced by an alternative hypothesis which conforms more closely to all the components of the text or to all relevant observations. The most that can be achieved in either textual interpretation or in scientific observation is to arrive at the most probable interpretation. In textual interpretation, according to Abrams, "this logic of highest probability...is adequate to yield objective knowledge, confirmable by other competent readers concerning the meanings of both of the component passages and of the artistic whole in a work of literature."³

The central objective of this study is to compare expressions of the concept of consciousness in nineteenth-century psychological and literary texts. The success of this endeavor relies on the validity of the interpretation of passages drawn from these texts. These passages serve as the

"data" from which I draw conclusions about similarities, differences, and changes in the way consciousness was conceptualized in nineteenth-century American discourse. The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which discipline-specific methodological commitments (in psychology, to objectivity; in literature, to the recreation of subjective experience) determined the way in which consciousness was conceived. Accordingly, my conclusions are valid only to the degree that the passages I have selected for analysis adequately embody the conventions adopted by nineteenth-century proponents of these traditions. For this reason, I have selected passages from the works of those writers and psychologists who are routinely cited in the secondary literature as major contributors in these areas. Specifically, I have judged a passage to be "representative" of a particular genre and author if it is in substantial agreement with the conventions adopted by the leading proponents of the genre (as elucidated by the secondary literature) and if it is in accord with relevant aspects of the author's stated or implied personal biases and objective (as understood from careful reading of an author's major works, autobiographical statements, correspondence, etc.).⁴

In interpreting the meaning of these passages, I have relied on the method advanced by Dilthey and elaborated by E. D. Hirsch in his *Validity and Interpretation* published in 1976.⁵ According to Hirsch, meaning is conferred on a text a priori by virtue of the hypotheses or theories a reader brings to the text. In this study, I have derived hypotheses

about the potential meaning of a particular text or passage from the study of the characteristics of a particular discursive tradition as these characteristics have been elucidated and described in the secondary literature. In the case of literary realism, for example, these characteristics include: internationalization of action within a central consciousness and reference to the commonplace, the ordinary. These hypotheses may be confirmed if they correspond to the author's verbal intention, ascertained by his or her use of disciplinary-specific verbal conventions; by reference to an author's stated or implied agreement with those conventions; by reference to an author's statements (implicit or explicit) about his or her own work and intentions; and by consideration of the extent to which a passage accord with those conventions and intentions. "Meaning" in this context is thus a measure of the extent of agreement between a component part (word, sentence, passage) of a work and the whole (the work from which the passage was drawn, the author's corpus, the literary genre, the disciplinary tradition). Following through on the above example, we may say that the meaning of a passage drawn from the work of Henry James (realist) is constituted by his adherence to that convention of literary realism that relates the action of the narrative within a central, sentient consciousness; by his repeated statements substantiating his acceptance of that conventions; and by the observed correspondence of that passage with his work as a whole. Where such correspondence exists, we can assume with high probability that James

intends the passage to reflect a particular, quasi-implicit "theory" of the nature of consciousness.

This statement of method and procedure is intended to allay qualms about the validity and reliability of my conclusions, which I hereby submit to the reader's own theory of meaning.

Preface Notes

¹ M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 5th ed. (Fort Worth, Texas: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1988), pp. 85-86.

² Late twentieth century scholarship in the history and philosophy of science gives support to this interpretation. See, for example, Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, rev. ed. (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1970); Imre Lakatos & Alan Musgraves (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Larry Laudan, *Science and Hypothesis: Historical Essays in Scientific Methodology* (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel).

³ M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, p. 87.

⁴ The specific details of selection are not discussed in this study.

⁵ E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1976).

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ABSTRACT

THE RHETORIC OF REALISM: AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY AND AMERICAN
LITERATURE, 1865-1910

by

Sandra L. Webster
University of New Hampshire, May, 1994

The period following the end of the Civil War in America and extending to just after the turn of the century witnessed the emergence of an independent discipline of psychology as well as the emergence of a uniquely American literary tradition. Though these developments occurred independently and operated out of different traditions, they shared a common interest in the concept of "consciousness." The present study is a comparison of models of consciousness expressed in psychological and literary texts of two periods: The first period covers the emergence of literary realism and American philosophical psychology (1865-1885); the second period covers literary naturalism and the emergence of psychology as a science (1886-1910). Content analyses of selected passages revealed that psychologists portrayed consciousness as a unidimensional entity, divisible, in principle, into various "powers" or aspects of perceiving, thinking, reasoning, and the like. Novelists, in contrast, portrayed consciousness as a multi-dimensional, feeling-toned arena, indivisible and unclassifiable. However, both psychologists and novelists of the early period depicted a passive consciousness wholly

contained within the experiencing subject; while in the later period consciousness was readily depicted as actively engaged in on-going interaction with the world. These developments are discussed within the context of the particular methodological commitments and traditions attending the nineteenth-century development of two American disciplines: the science of psychology and the American novel.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study has two objectives: to examine changes in theories of consciousness in American literature and American psychology from the end of the Civil War to just after the turn of the twentieth century; and to compare selected passages from literary and psychological texts for the purpose of assessing the extent of interdisciplinary exchange. Because this work focuses on a single concept--consciousness--and a defined time-period and culture (nineteenth-century American psychology and literature), it represents a more finely-tuned analysis than other surveys of the connections between psychology and literature. Nonetheless, such recent work as Michael Kearns's comparative study of metaphorical representations in eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature and psychology and Gordon O. Taylor's work on the analysis of models of mind/consciousness in nineteenth-century novels provide useful background.¹

Kearns compares selected psychological and literary British and American texts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries for examples of the metaphorical language of mind. His purpose is to "analyze how the actual language used to talk about mind changed during these two centuries and how the changes correlate with changes in the concept of the mind."² Comparing across literature and psychology for the two-hundred year period, Kearns finds that the dominant

metaphor of mind in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in both disciplines is that of the mind as a material entity that can be segmented into distinct elements--ideas or faculties--which receive "impressions" from the external world. The metaphors associated with this "mind-as-entity" perspective depend on analogies with the physical world: Locke's definition of mind as "white Paper, void of all Characters" or Hume's conception of mind as "nothing but a heap of collection of different perceptions, united together by certain relations" are salient examples of the mind-as entity world view.³ In the works of Locke and Hume (as well as in the work of the Scottish philosophers which we will examine), the mind was seen as a passive "corpuscular system [in which] each impression was discrete, each idea was a unit, and consciousness consisted of a string of ideas and impressions or a train of thoughts, coupled together but still separate."⁴

One advantage of the mind-as-entity metaphor, according to Kearns, was that it enabled psychologists and physicians to assume a strict correspondence between mind activities and brain activities and a correspondence between physical objects and the the mind's knowledge of those objects.⁵ Viewing mind and consciousness as passive responders to sensory input without the capacity to organize or transform that input allowed nineteenth-century philosopher/psychologists to assert a) that the analysis of mental phenomena was not different from the analysis of physical phenomena, and b) that our knowledge of the world was direct and unmediated. The first assertion justified the

use of introspection as a methodological tool because the objects of the introspected act--simple or complex ideas and sensations--were assumed to be independent of the will; the second assertion--that our knowledge of the world was direct and unmediated--allowed philosophers to side-step issues related to a mediating "self" imposing its own interpretive structure on external events; as we will see, such issues could not be easily encompassed within an avowedly classificatory system of nineteenth-century science.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, however, this conception of mind was "extended," according to Kearns, in the literary works of Henry James and George Eliot.⁶ The new conception of mind, the concept of mind-as-sentient-being employed in on-going interaction with the world, is identified with a questioning self whose aim is to make sense of his or her experience. In this perspective, "mind/consciousness," the "self" and even the individual "will" were conceived as complex interactive processes through which sensory information was ordered into knowledge of both internal and external worlds. This idea, the idea that consciousness served a dynamic constructive function, was taken up by nineteenth-century novelists whose goal was to portray (in the words of Henry James) "the very drama of [a] consciousness [at once] bedimmed and befooled and bewildered, anxious, restless, fallible,"⁷ but always as an active agent engaged with the world, where "engaged" is to be understood in the special sense of acting and being acted upon.

Despite the fact that novelists of the mid-nineteenth

century adopted this or similar perspectives on mind and consciousness, Kearns notes that most psychologists of the time continued to describe mind in predominantly physicalistic terms as an entity (rather than a process) that existed apart from a knowing self. In fact, for most psychologists of the mid-nineteenth century, "mind" and "consciousness" were described as distinct entities, essentially, and for all practical purposes, passive recorders of external and internal events, respectively.⁸

Gordon O. Taylor's intent is to describe the changes in psychological representations in American fiction in the period 1870-1900.⁹ Unlike Kearns, Taylor does not rely on metaphors to establish units of comparison between psychological and literary ideas. Instead, he writes:

We must first consider the novelist's psychological assumptions as they can be inferred from his text and seen as a set of related ideas about the mind and its workings.... [We must also consider] the ways in which the novelist uses the techniques of fiction--diction and imagery, characterization...point of view, narrative method...--to make his psychological assumptions operative in the fictive world...The relation [between technique and assumptions about mind and consciousness]...will be one of our principal concerns.¹⁰

Thus, Taylor's main interest is in assessing the relation between literary techniques and theories of mind and consciousness represented in the works of mid to late nineteenth-century American novelists, specifically, Henry James, William Dean Howells, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, and Theodore Dreiser. Like Kearns, however, Taylor describes a shift in psychological representation in the American novel from a view of the mind as composed of static, discrete, mental states with an emphasis on the typicality of those

states "toward a concept of organically linked mental states requiring representational emphasis on the nature of the sequential process itself,"¹¹ a shift that parallels Kearns's descriptive categories of "mind-as-entity and "mind-as-sentient-being." His intent is to describe these changes in terms of the development of specific literary techniques that provide the novelist with the means to create mimetic reproductions of the more complex experience. That is, Taylor is less concerned with comparative assessments of psychological and literary texts than he is with assessing the "goodness of fit" between literary technique and a novelist's assumptions about mind and consciousness. His purpose is to correlate changes in literary technique with changes in the representation of conscious experience that occurred in the period 1870-1900.¹²

Definitions of Crucial Terms

It is the purpose of this dissertation to describe theories of consciousness as they were expressed in literary and psychological texts of the late nineteenth century. Because I am drawing on literature from two separate fields, my task will be facilitated by providing definitions for some of the terms I will be using throughout this work.

Consciousness

There is no single definition of this term that successfully encompasses the variety of meanings and intentions of this literature. However, several important points should be emphasized at the outset. First. Although post-Freudian readers are accustomed to consider consciousness in opposition to an unconscious--the source of

instinctual wishes and repressed ideas that bedevil our conscious lives--late nineteenth-century Americans were either unaware of the concept of "unconscious ideas" or unwilling to consider that ideas could exist outside of consciousness.¹³ The concept of consciousness, therefore, in the years before Freud's work became known, encompassed a much wider range of mental phenomena--including altered conscious states, hypnotic trances, and psychopathology--than our current understanding would acknowledge.¹⁴ Though this idea will be taken up at length in Chapter 5, the important point to remember is that the concept of consciousness evolved in nineteenth-century America in the absence of a viable understanding of what would later be called "Freudian" processes, a fact that may account for the variety of meanings and functions of different models.

Second. In this work, I make an explicit distinction between the concept of "mind," and the concept of "consciousness." This distinction is warranted by the fact that virtually each of the psychological theorists of the early period (1800-1885) whose work we will examine put forth a similar distinction. The reason they did so is a direct consequence of their epistemological objectives: Their intent was to formulate an account of the mental operations of sense perception, concept formation, judgment and reasoning; the task was inherently reductive in that it led, quite naturally, to analysis of these operations as relatively independent processes originating in an "entity" they called "mind."¹⁵ The role of consciousness in these early models was that of reliable observer of these

processes.

In contrast, models of consciousness of the later period (1886-1910) were necessarily more complex. "Necessarily," because the function of consciousness was conceived as active, not passive; integrative and selective, not discrete. In neither period, however, was consciousness conceived as identical to mind, but rather more often as "mind-full." It might "observe" mind and "record" or "accompany" its operations; it might "select" and "attend;" but it could do so only as long as it remained distinct from mind in some unspecified sense. The problem of the nature of the relation between mind and consciousness was an important part of the debate among mid-nineteenth century psychologists (Asa Mahan, Mark Hopkins, James McCosh); and the different solutions to that problem are a singular part of this story.

Third. That novelists of this period made a similar distinction is one of the interesting results of this study, one which I will address in depth at a later point. In general, however, it suffices to say that the novelists of this period were less concerned with epistemological questions than they were concerned with the portrayal of subjective experience, including sensory experience and the experience of emotion. Perhaps because of this emphasis on felt-experience, consciousness, rather than mind, was the primary object of their interest. A quote from Henry James is indicative of this tendency:

Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative--much more when it happens

to be that of a man of genius--it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations.¹⁶

In Henry James's novels and short stories, it is always consciousness that assumes center stage, distinct from mind, within which sensory experience is converted into revelations. And Henry James is not alone: Virtually all of the authors I will examine in this study gave to consciousness the unique capacity to make contact with the external world and to learn from that contact.

Rhetoric/Discourse

Both "rhetoric" and "discourse" refer to the descriptive, explanatory, and narrative texts of nineteenth-century American psychology and literature. I do not intend the use of "rhetoric" in the classic sense, that is, of language that seeks to persuade or influence. I use the term in the more general sense as "the art or science of literary composition, particularly in prose, including the use of figures of speech." Similarly, by "discourse," I mean "a communication of thoughts by words; the expression of ideas."¹⁷

The use of these terms assumes that different discourses are structured along different lines, depending on the intentions or objectives of the writer. In their epistemological and empirical quest, nineteenth-century philosopher/psychologists sought general laws of mental operations; accordingly, discourse assumed an objective posture, devoid of self-reference and subjective interpretation. Novelists, in contrast, sought to describe the individual experience; accordingly, discourse assumed a

subjective posture, drawing on the notion of individual, multiple realities and seeking to convey the on-going felt experience. As we will see, the concept of consciousness received different treatment in these distinct discourses.

Realism

In literary theory, "realism" refers to that particular mode of fiction writing which takes as its common theme the accurate reproduction of experience amid cultural and material change. The term is opposed to "idealism," a mode of fiction-writing that described man and man's experience as transcending and transcendent, and which upheld the notion of a permanent stable order (Emerson and Thoreau are well-known examples of this school). M. H. Abrams describes the typical realist as one who "sets out to write a fiction which will give the illusion that it reflects life and the social world as it seems to the common reader....[one who] prefers the average, the commonplace, and the everyday over the rare aspects of the social scene."¹⁸ Donald Pizer, however, argues that there is a greater diversity in the subject matter of American realism and a more subjective and idealistic view of human experience than is generally recognized.¹⁹ Nonetheless, the central focus of literary realism is the internalization of action within a central consciousness. In general, this action involves the presence of a moral dilemma which is resolved by the story's end with a consequent increase in self-awareness.

American literary realism is to be distinguished from philosophical realism on two levels: First, literary realism is intended to describe a literary genre--a style of writing

that purports to describe the common experience; it does not necessarily imply a philosophical position on the independent existence of physical objects and events. In fact, a more appropriate term--and one which has become part of the language of literary theory--is "psychological realism," a term which defines the literary realist's explicit aim of rendering the ordinary experiences of life through a single interpreting consciousness. Second, to the extent that literary realism does assume the independent existence of physical objects and the direct perception of them, the primary interest remains the individual consciousness irrespective of epistemological issues.

Chronological Development

Throughout the forty-five year period of this review (1865-1910), American psychologists and novelists were engaged in a process of defining and articulating the goals and objectives of their disciplines.²⁰ In the early years of this period, American psychology was largely a philosophical enterprise under the dominion of Scottish philosophical psychology; by the end of this period, American psychology was established as an experimental science with its own laboratories and recognized professorships.²¹ In the same forty-five year span, American literature sought its particular voice in the representation of common, ordinary, human experience and developed a set of methods to ensure that the "new realism" of the mid-nineteenth century would capture the American experience.²² By the turn of the twentieth century, American writers had yielded to the spirit of "naturalism," espousing Darwinian themes (along with a

deterministic pessimism) and portraying humankind at the mercy of biological and social forces.²³ Within each tradition, the concept of consciousness underwent a series of conceptual refinements.

Psychology

In the early period (1800-1885), American psychologists were intent upon constructing models of mind and consciousness that would account for the acquisition and structure of knowledge. That is, they were concerned with such epistemological issues as a) the role of sensory information in the formation of ideas of physical objects; b) the compounding of simple ideas into complex ideas; and, c) the "powers" of judgment, reasoning, abstraction, and the like. One problematic issue these thinkers confronted was the relation between "mind," often conceived as a constellation of powers or "faculties," and "consciousness," variously conceived as part of mind, distinct from mind, or some uneasy combination of these two alternatives.²⁴

Coincident with these epistemological issues about the relation between mind and consciousness was a more specific concern with the nature of consciousness itself. Is consciousness merely an adjunct of mind, acting as a sort of passive recorder of the mind's activities? Thomas Reid, for example, asserted that consciousness is just that "immediate knowledge which we have of our present thoughts."²⁵ Is it the very essence of the self, the certain knowledge of one's own existence? Virtually each one of the psychologists whose works we will examine assumed that consciousness is the source of the self-concept. Does consciousness itself have

specific powers of selection and association independent of mind activities? Not until William James's work in the 1880s would consciousness be described as the "realm of pure experience," with the power to select, order, and integrate sensory information, a conception already employed by his novelist-brother nearly a decade earlier.²⁶

In the mid- to late nineteenth century, these questions were not minor concerns; by the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, they served to direct the focus of debate away from epistemological concerns toward issues more explicitly "psychological," that is, toward the description of consciousness as a series of feeling-toned sensations, or toward the description of altered conscious states (hypnotic trances, psychotic episodes, or sleep).²⁷ In psychology, this objective took the form of an analysis of the development of the faculties of knowing, feeling, and thinking, the "phenomena of consciousness."²⁸ In contrast to the earlier period, psychologists of this later period (1886-1910) were concerned with both the content and function of consciousness: They wished to describe not only conscious states, but their development over time; to describe not only conscious acts, but their role in the complicated adjustment of an individual to the environment.²⁹ In this post-Darwinian period, the concept of consciousness was indeed "extended" (to borrow Kearns's terminology) to include the means by which an individual acquired the knowledge to adapt to a world that operated according to immutable natural laws.³⁰

Literature

American literature of the immediate post-Civil War

period (1865-1885) explicitly and self-consciously took subjective experience as its cardinal theme and sought to portray the "common, the ordinary, and the true" of human existence as it was known to the experiencing subject.³¹ Readers of realist fiction were asked to identify with a moral dilemma fought within a central consciousness, an arena in which sensory experience, conscious reflection, Puritan morality, and practical necessity must have their say.³² The moral dilemma, the conflicted consciousness, was not new to realist fiction; it emerged out of a long tradition of theological questioning. What was new and different--what marked this period off from the period which preceded--was the idea that consciousness might serve an adaptive function. Rejecting both the Poe-like descent into madness as the inevitable result of a mind turned inward upon itself as well as the transcendent visions of an Emerson or Thoreau, American realists adopted the belief that conscious reflection would yield positive gains in terms of an individual's knowledge of his world and his place in it. For consciousness to serve such an adaptive function, they reasoned, it must be receptive, it must be modifiable.

This theme is pursued by each of the three American realists we will examine. Readers of realist fiction were invited to participate in a developmental process--to witness, as it were, the gradual "unfolding" of a self-aware consciousness. For Henry James, this objective was met by reference to a central character whose intelligence and sensitivity and personal integrity were extraordinary, capable of ever finer discriminations, as he writes in the

following excerpt from the Preface to his New York edition of The Princess Casamassima:

This in fact I have ever found rather terribly the point--that the figures in any picture, the agents in any drama, are interesting only in proportion as they feel their respective situations; since the consciousness, on their part, of the complication exhibited forms for us of their link or connection with it. But there are degrees of feeling--the muffled, the faint, the just sufficient, the barely intelligent...the acute, the intense, the complete, in a word--the power to be finely aware and richly responsible. It is those moved in this later fashion who "get most" out of all that happens to them and who in so doing enable us, as readers of their record, as participators by a fond attention, also to get most. Their being finely aware--as Hamlet and Lear, say, are finely aware--makes absolutely the intensity of their adventure, gives the maximum of sense to what befalls them.³³

A finely tuned consciousness, according to James, would serve characters of great depth and complexity. Variations on this theme will be seen in the work of realist novelists selected for this study: Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's The Story of Avis (1879), William Dean Howells's The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885), and Henry James's Roderick Hudson (1876) and What Maisie Knew (1897).³⁴

Realist authors of this early period recognized a clear demarcation of subject matter and style between their work and that of the preceding Romantic era (1840-1865).³⁵ The demarcation between nineteenth-century American realism and "naturalism" is, however, less clearly defined, though present-day literary historians generally agree that by the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century a new literary style emerged.³⁶ In contrast to the realist affirmation of the human potential for growth through sensitive self-awareness, late nineteenth-century naturalist writers viewed humankind

in perpetual struggle against "natural" forces--whether biologically or culturally driven. In the words of literary historians Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, these authors wrote within an atmosphere of Darwinian pessimism, "in search not just of the 'facts' but of the iron laws behind them that 'really' determined existence--the biological constitution of man, the impersonal machinelike operations of society, the functions of evolutionary process."³⁷ This literature, in contrast to the moral liberalism of Phelps, Howells, and James, assumes a characteristic 'scientific' posture: an image of humankind at the mercy of large impersonal forces. Donald Pizer notes, however, that it is just this deterministic ethos that allows the naturalist writer to create characters who find meaning and dignity not in the resolution of a moral dilemma, but in the battle against forces beyond their control,³⁸ whether those "forces" be social and cultural or biological. In this context, moral "laws" were as fixed and immutable as any laws of the physical world, as this brief quote from Theodore Dreiser shows: "[Others] did not believe, as I still did, that there was a fixed moral order in the world which one contravened at his peril."³⁹ The theme of struggle and survival is characteristic of each of the literary texts published under the rubric of "naturalism" I have selected for this study: Henry Adams's autobiographical work, The Education of Henry Adams (1907), Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892), and Theodore Dreiser's novel, Sister Carrie (1900).⁴⁰ Table 1 lists the psychologists and novelists by period whose works form the basis of this study.

Table 1

The table lists the four comparison cells containing the names of the psychologists and novelists whose works forms the basis of the present study.

| Period | Psychology | Literature |
|-------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1800 - 1885 | Thomas Reid | Elizabeth Phelps |
| | Laurens Hickok | William D. Howells |
| | Asa Mahan | Henry James |
| | Mark Hopkins | |
| | James McCosh | |
| 1886 - 1910 | William James | Henry Adams |
| | George T. Ladd | Charlotte P. Gilman |
| | James Mark Baldwin | Theodore Dreiser |

Method

The purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which discipline-specific methodological commitments influenced the development of models of consciousness in nineteenth-century psychological and literary discourse. Because the comparisons I wish to make are between disciplines (broadly understood) and not between persons, I have selected passages from the works of those writers and psychologists who are routinely cited in the secondary literature as major proponents of the conventions adopted by each discipline during each of two time periods:⁴¹ 1865-1885 (philosophical psychology and American realism); and 1886-1910 (experimental psychology and American naturalism). These period divisions reflect the end (in 1886) of a largely speculative American psychology (George Trumbull Ladd published his widely celebrated text Elements of Physiological Psychology in 1887); and the beginning in 1887 of a new strain of realist literature, one which is often distinguished from its predecessor by its allegiance to an "iron" determinism, a belief that existence is controlled by forces beyond human control.⁴² Included in the survey of the first period of (pre-experimental) psychology are Laurens Hickok, Asa Mahan, Mark Hopkins, and James McCosh; and American realist novelists, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Henry James, and William Dean Howells. In the second period of experimental psychology I cover psychologists George Trumbull Ladd, William James, and J. Mark Baldwin; and naturalist authors Henry Adams, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Theodore Dreiser. Chapter 2, a discussion of the Scottish philosophy,

is intended as necessary background to the later chapters.

Selection of Passages

My procedure involves a comparative analysis of passages about consciousness or conscious processes selected from the major psychological and literary works of the writers and psychologists identified above. Like Kearns and Taylor, I selected passages that are both characteristic of the period and the discipline as well as characteristic of a particular author or psychologist. In the first instance, "characteristic" was assessed against those objectives that defined a particular discipline during a specified period: for example, epistemological and scientific/empirical objectives in psychology and the reproduction of subjective experience in the literary tradition. Thus, a passage could be said to represent late nineteenth century psychology, if, in describing consciousness, it gave prominence to classificatory issues or addressed the mind/body problem or described the function of consciousness within the human psyche.

In the second instance, "characteristic" was assessed in accord with all that was stated or could be inferred about the model of mind/consciousness assumed by the author or psychologist of interest. In general, it was not difficult to draw very precise conclusions about the models of mind/consciousness proposed by the psychologists because their primary concern was to clarify issues concerning human mental function and the models they proposed were described unambiguously. The novelists, however, whose concern was not to clarify mind/consciousness issues, but to portray the felt

experience, posed a certain challenge. Inferences about their models were drawn from close readings of their work (including critical essays, autobiographical works, and correspondence) and re-evaluated against a selection of the vast secondary critical literature that exists of the periods under review. A passage could be said to "represent" a particular model of consciousness if it accorded with the general model of consciousness assumed by the author.

This procedure of checking each passage--first, against the more general objectives of the discipline and, second, against the more specific model of consciousness stated or implied by the author or psychologist of interest, yielded a selection of passages that may be reliably considered representative of late nineteenth-century discourse concerning consciousness. This purposive selection process rests on a careful analysis of the objectives of each tradition as well as the methods used to achieve them. These analyses are reproduced in text where appropriate, along with a descriptive account of the models proposed by the authors and psychologists included in this review.

Textual Analysis

Because models of consciousness are often couched in metaphorical language, the selected passages will serve as a source of key words and phrases that signal a particular approach to consciousness. A salient example of this method of identification can be seen in the analysis following this passage drawn from Laurens Hickok's Rational Psychology of 1849:

The pure object [of experience] is put within this [mind's] light, and thus the mind possesses it in its

own illumination, and this is the same as to say that the object stands in consciousness. Not as an act, but as a light; not as a maker--for that is the province of the intellectual agency--but rather as a revealer: after such analogies shall we doubtless best conceive of consciousness, and which may thus be termed the "light of all our seeing."⁴³

Consciousness, as Hickok conceived it, had no power to create; nor did it function as a source of ideas. In this passage, Hickok explicitly identifies consciousness as that "light" in which the separate mental powers--reasoning, perceiving, intuiting, and willing--played out their distinct roles. Wholly passive, its function was conceived as similar to that of the action of a single spotlight upon an actor during a lengthy monologue. This "spotlight" theory of consciousness is unique to a psychology that gave to consciousness unspecified "transcendent" powers. The passage serves its purpose in providing a salient example of the method I will be following in this study.

While psychological models of consciousness will be analyzed in terms of such key metaphorical terms, analysis of literary passages turns on drawing out the implications of a writer's theory of consciousness in accord with characteristic (realist or naturalist) objectives and narrative strategies for achieving those objectives. A brief analysis of one passage will illustrate the procedure I intend to follow. The passage is chosen because it serves as a characteristic example of literary realism, and the analysis which follows is intended as an example of the procedure I will be following in the ensuing chapters.

The passage is from Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's The Story of Avis, published in 1879:

A stillness and strangeness deeper than a bruised muscle could strike, came upon her when she closed the door of the long-deserted place, and, striking a fire in her little grate, sat down to warm her hands. The autumn sun stepped in, and stood cool and calm against the wall, like the friend who never forgets, or suffers as to forget, the resolve or the aspiration which we once expressed....Avis looked about her with a singularly defensive feeling, as if she were summoned by some invisible tribunal to answer for an impalpable offense. She had something of the recoil which a man has in turning to his books or his business after a night's dissipation.⁴⁴

Elizabeth Phelps is writing in the realist tradition with the objective of relating the story through a central consciousness. It is immediately apparent that Phelps, working within the realist tradition, is not interested in the physical realities of existence, except to the extent to which they dramatize the subjective experience. In the passage, a narrator reports the confusion of barely-articulated feelings of guilt, loss, and regret, feelings that are conveyed metaphorically: She is met with the 'cool autumn sun' whose 'calm presence' reminds her of her former self; her guilt is established by an 'invisible tribunal' against which she has no worthy defense. The context is not one in which any one mental operation--perceiving or judging, for example--dominates. "Consciousness," as Phelps describes it, is an arena of fleeting impressions and half-articulated thoughts each competing for dominance. This concept of consciousness is not unique to realist literature, but it is one of its most salient characteristics, as we will see.

Prospectus

My intent is to describe developments in the representation of consciousness in both psychological and

literary discourse in the last half of nineteenth-century America. Accordingly, the chapters are organized chronologically: the first period (Chapters 3 through 4) details the ideas of the Scottish school, American pre-experimental psychology and American realism; the second period (Chapters 5 through 6) examines American experimental psychology and American naturalism.⁴⁵ In Chapter 7, I conclude by examining changes in theories of consciousness in literature and psychology from the end of the American Civil War to just after the turn of the twentieth century as a function of disciplinary objectives and I compare selected passages from literary and psychological texts for the purpose of assessing the extent of interdisciplinary exchange.

I have deliberately selected a chronological arrangement for this study because my primary interest is to compare across disciplines within a particular time-period. Other formats might have been selected. Kearns, for example, adopts a loose chronology subsumed by the two categories of mental metaphors he proposes: mind-as-entity and mind-as-sentient-being. Though this approach reflects clear trends in the language of the mind, it tends to overlook movements within psychology or literature that may not be easily encompassed under those headings. Though both Locke and Reid adopted a mind-as-entity point of view, for example, their analyses of mental function were quite different. Kearns clearly recognizes this difference,⁴⁶ but his analysis obscures issues that are central to intradisciplinary development. These issues--disciplinary conventions and

methodological commitments are central to this study. The final chapter (Chapter 7) will address these issues in some detail. As we will see, the issues that concerned psychologists and the themes of literary realism and literary naturalism (respectively), though drawn from movements outside either discipline, were shaped by those conventions.

Chapter Notes

¹ Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind in Fiction & Psychology (Lexington, Ken.: University Press of Kentucky, 1987) and Gordon O. Taylor, The Passages of Thought: Psychological Representation in the American Novel (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969). A lesser known but equally representative perspective is offered by Allan Gardner Smith in his The Analysis of Motives: Early American Psychology and Fiction (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Rodopi N.V., 1980). Other important contributions to this field are Ethelbert C. Barksdale, Cosmologies of Consciousness: Science and Literary Myth in an Exploration of the Beginning and Development of Mind (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1980).

² Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind, p. 16.

³ Cited in Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind, pp. 48, 53, 81.

⁴ Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind, p. 61.

⁵ Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind, pp. 90-91, 98-99.

⁶ Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind, pp. 179-226.

⁷ Henry James, "Preface to Roderick Hudson," reprinted in Henry James, The Art of the Novel. Critical Prefaces (pp. 3-19) (New York: Scribner's, 1934), p. 16.

⁸ Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind, pp. 132-134.

⁹ Gordon O. Taylor, The Passages of Thought. Psychological Representation in the American Novel. 1870-1900 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 4.

¹⁰ Gordon O. Taylor, The Passages of Thought, p. 5.

¹¹ Gordon O. Taylor, The Passages of Thought, p. 6.

¹² Gordon O. Taylor, The Passages of Thought, p. 4.

¹³ see, for example, William James's discussion of unconscious thought in William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience. A Study in Human Nature (1902), Martin E. Marty, ed. (New York: Penguin, 1985), p. 207.

¹⁴ As we will see in Chapter 2, early American

psychologists were concerned with epistemological issues. The concept of an "unconscious" was necessary only if one was intent upon constructing an explanation for pathological or "exceptional" mental states. Even then, however, men like Jean Martin Charcot, Pierre Janet (in France), Frederick Myers (England), whose work on hysteria and spiritualism preceded Freud's discoveries, preferred to expand the concept of consciousness to include a "subconscious" or "subliminal" aspect. See, for example, Eugene Taylor's William James on Exceptional Mental States. The 1896 Lowell Lectures (Amherst, Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts Press, 1984); Gardner Murphy and Robert O. Ballou, eds., William James on Psychical Research (New York: Viking, 1960); James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology. Senses and Intellect (1889) (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1972), pp. 45-58.

¹⁵ The distinction between mind and consciousness was made by Locke in his An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690) W. Yolton, ed. (New York: Dutton, 1961) whose ideas provided the source for David Hume's (1748) An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, T. J. McCormack and M. W. Calkins, eds. (Lasalle, Illinois: Open Court, 1963). The Scottish philosophers, responding to Hume, made a similar distinction. See, for example, Thomas, Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (1785) (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969); Dugald Stewart, Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. 1 (1811) (Westmead, England: Gregg International, 1971); and Thomas Upham, Elements of Mental Philosophy, vol. 1 (New York: Harper, 1848). Throughout the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the distinction between mind and consciousness was upheld by American psychologists whose work I will examine.

¹⁶ Henry James, "The Art of Fiction" (1884-1888), reprinted in Henry James. Literary Criticism. Essays on Literature, American Writers, and English Writers, Leon Edel and Mark Wildon, eds. (New York: Literary Classics, 1984), p. 52.

¹⁷ Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), pp. 522, 1555.

¹⁸ M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms (Fort Worth, Texas: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1988), pp. 152-153.

¹⁹ Donald Pizer, Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-century American Literature (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), pp. 2-5.

²⁰ Daniel H. Borus provides a cogent account of this

period in American intellectual life in Writing Realism (especially pp. 12-26); for a thorough review of the development of American psychology in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, see John M. O'Donnell, The Origins of Behaviorism. American Psychology, 1870-1920 (New York: New York University Press, 1985).

²¹ See, for example, A. A. Roback, History of American Psychology (rev. ed.) (New York: Collier, 1964), pp. 137-195; James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology (New York: Henry Holt, 1889); Ernest R. Hilgard, Psychology in America. A Historical Survey (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), pp. 3-66). William James established a demonstration laboratory at Harvard in 1875, though G. Stanley Hall is generally credited with founding the first "official" American psychology laboratory. Professorships in the "new psychology" were established at the University of Pennsylvania in 1888.

²² In many ways the "new realism" of the third quarter of the nineteenth century was particularly well suited for the development of an American literary voice: In stressing the common and ordinary of human experience it was inherently democratic; it opened up new avenues for regional literature; and it provided the means for vivid portrayal of the individual man or woman in social context. The most widely known authors of the period (Henry James and William Dean Howells) were instrumental in establishing the standards that defined realism. (See Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism to Postmodernism. A History of American Literature (New York: Viking, 1991), pp. 181-218.

²³ Frank Norris (The Octopus, 1901; The Pit, 1903) and Jack London (Call of the Wild, 1903; The Sea-wolf, 1904) are the writers whose work is most closely identified with late nineteenth-century naturalism, a genre that both explicitly and implicitly recognized humankind's existence as governed by impersonal forces. (See Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism to Postmodernism, pp. 225-245.)

²⁴ For a discussion of this epistemological tradition in early American psychology, see Jay Wharton Fay, American Psychology Before William James (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1939).

²⁵ Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (1813) (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969), p. 10.

²⁶ See William James, "The Knowing of Things Together," reprinted in William James. Writings, 1878-1899 (pp. 1057-1076) (New York: Library of America, 1992), pp. 1061-1062 and

his Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 (1890) (New York: Dover, 1950), pp. 288-289.

²⁷ See, for example, James Mark Baldwin's Handbook of Psychology. Senses and Intellect (New York: Henry Holt, 1899), pp. 43-68.

²⁸ George Trumbull Ladd, Primer of Psychology, (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1894), p. 7. See also James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology. Senses and Intellect, vol. 1 (New York: Henry Holt, 1889), pp. 8-9.

²⁹ See, for example, James Mark Baldwin, Handbook, vol. 1, pp. 43-68.

³⁰ See, for example, William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol 1 (1890) (New York: Dover, 1950), Chapters VIII, IX, X.

³¹ For a discussion of the characteristics of American literary realism, see Daniel H. Borus, Writing Realism, pp. 12-26; George J. Becker's discussion of literary realism in Europe and America in the Introduction to his edited Documents of Modern Literary Realism (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 3-38.

³² Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism to Postmodernism, pp. 188-218.

³³ Henry James, "Preface to Princess Casamassima," reprinted in Henry James, The Art of the Novel. Critical Prefaces (pp. 59-78) (New York: Scribner's, 1934), p. 62.

³⁴ These novels as well as the "naturalist" novels which follow are widely regarded by major secondary sources as "representative" of their respective traditions. See footnote 41.

³⁵ In the last half of the nineteenth century, American realists articulated their objectives in an on-going series of critical commentary. Statements of Henry James's literary objectives may be found in any of the Prefaces to the New York Edition of his works (written in the first decade of the twentieth century) and collected in Henry James, The Art of the Novel; in his "The Art of Fiction" (1884), reprinted in James E. Miller, Jr., ed., Theory of Fiction: Henry James, pp. 28-44. William Dean Howells's critical theory is expressed in his editorial columns for the Atlantic Monthly and Harper's Magazine (1871-1881 and 1886-1892, respectively) and reprinted (in part) in Clara Marburg Kirk and Rudolf

Kirk, eds., Howells's Criticism and Fiction and Other Essays (New York: New York University Press, 1959).

³⁶ For a discussion of the development of literary realism in America, see Daniel H. Borus, Writing Realism; Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism to Postmodernism, pp. 188-194; Warner Berthoff, The Ferment of Realism. American Literature 1884-1919 (New York: The Free Press, 1965), pp. 1-47; Jay Martin, Harvests of Change: American Literature, 1865-1914 (Englewood, Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967); Amy Kaplan, The Social Construction of American Realism (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 8-14. These references are representative of a vast literature on the topic of American literary realism and its late-nineteenth century counterpart, American naturalism.

³⁷ For a discussion of literary naturalism, see Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism to Postmodernism, pp. 223-235 (quoted passage, p. 224).

³⁸ Donald Pizer, Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature, rev. ed. (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), pp. 9-12.

³⁹ Theodore Dreiser, Newspaper Days

⁴⁰ Theodore Dreiser, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Kate Chopin are considered credible representatives of the naturalist period of American literature.

⁴¹ By "representative" texts I refer either to a) in psychology, models of mind and consciousness that were typical of those constructed in the specified periods: 1865-1885 or 1886-1910 or were most well-known and influential (e.g., William James; or b) in literature, works by those novelists who were considered both in their own time and in current histories as embodying and promulgating the realist or naturalist strategies most explicitly. Secondary sources from which this information was drawn include (psychology): Jay Wharton Fay, American Psychology Before William James; David J. Murray, A History of Western Psychology, 2nd. ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988); Ernest R. Hilgard, Psychology in America. A Historical Survey (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987); (literature): Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism to Postmodernism; Harold H. Kolb, Jr., The Illusion of Life; Writing Realism. Daniel H. Borus, Howells, James, and Norris in the Mass Market.

⁴² Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism

to Postmodernism, pp. 223-235.

⁴³ Laurens P. Hickok, Rational Psychology (1849) (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1973), pp. 169-170.

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis (1879) (New York: Arno Press, 1977), pp. 217-218.

⁴⁵ The reader is cautioned that where the historical accounts of either discipline differ from "traditional" accounts, it is to the American experience I refer, rather than to more general accounts.

⁴⁶ Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind, pp. 35-36.

CHAPTER 2

MIND-AS-ENTITY AND THE HUMAN WILL

Throughout the 1800s, Scottish commonsense philosophy dominated American psychological thought.¹ Indeed, the influence of the Scottish philosophers was so profound that many of their ideas about the mind and consciousness persisted in American psychology even after American students, returning from study abroad, brought with them the ideas and experimental methods they encountered in European laboratories and universities.² Supported by the ideas of Scottish philosophers, nineteenth-century American psychologists justified their science on the basis that it had a defined subject matter ("the science of mental life") and a legitimate method of investigating it - introspection.³ Because the history of American psychology in the nineteenth century is a history of the Scottish influence, I begin this chapter with a brief summary of the models of mind and consciousness which these philosophers proposed.

My review of these ideas is both more deliberate and more detailed than that offered by either Kearns or Taylor, for my intent is to describe a particular epistemological tradition. My purpose is two-fold: to establish a pattern for later discussions of the link between models of mind and consciousness and the disciplinary traditions that support them; and to provide a context against which changes in representations of consciousness in psychological and

literary discourse may be assessed.

The Scottish Psychology of Mind and Consciousness

In the "Preface" to his Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man, Thomas Reid states that the purpose of his inquiry is to discover the "nature and force" of mental faculties in order that man might learn to apply them ever more successfully to the development of all science. Reid believed, as did his followers, that a natural science of the mind, properly carried out, would provide a foundation of all knowledge; indeed, he asserted (quoting Hume) that natural philosophy "is the centre and capitol of the sciences, which being once masters of, we may easily extend our conquests everywhere."⁴ Once the properties of the mind were understood, the laws governing the formation of ideas well defined, the sources of error and false beliefs clearly articulated, natural philosophy would be in a position to adjudicate the knowledge claims of the natural sciences (astronomy, chemistry).

To understand the human mind and its operations was to lay a foundation for the future of all science. This was not a new idea in the early nineteenth century; indeed, this clear epistemological objective had been assumed by most Western philosophers since Descartes first formulated his method of doubt in the sixteenth century.⁵ While this belief ensured philosophy's crucial role among the natural sciences, it also was compellingly clear that little progress had been made: the questions of philosophers about the mind and its properties had achieved no certain solution. What was needed, Reid believed, was a method which, when applied to

the analysis of mental phenomena, would yield general laws about the mind of the same kind that attended Newtonian mechanics.⁶

Like their eighteenth-century counterparts (Locke, Hume, Berkeley), the Scottish philosophers believed that the success of the natural sciences was owed to the systematic application of careful observation and experimentation.⁷ As mental phenomena differed from physical phenomena only in respect to their locus of operation, there was little doubt that proper attention to method and analysis would yield a similar outcome for natural philosophy.⁸ "It was natural," concludes Isaiah Berlin, author of The Age of Enlightenment, "and indeed almost inevitable, that those who had been liberated by the new sciences should seek to apply their methods and principles to a subject which was clearly in even more desperate need of order than the facts of the external world."⁹

The way to a science of the mind was through observation and experimentation. Accordingly, Reid's explicit epistemological objective was buttressed by a traditional methodological directive: "The chief and proper source of [knowledge of the mind and its faculties]," he states, "is accurate reflection upon the operations of our own minds.... the same kind of operation with that by which we form distinct notions of external objects." As Reid defines it, reflection is to knowledge of the mind as observation is to knowledge of external events. It is, he asserts, "a kind of [reasoned] intuition [which] gives a like conviction with regard to internal objects, as the faculty of seeing gives

with regard to objects of sight."¹⁰

Properly used, reflection (the introspective method) would lead to the discovery of general laws of mental phenomena. Specifically, Reid was concerned with both the conditions under which certain powers of the mind were expressed (the power of perception, the power of reason, for example), and the conditions which led to their optimal development. According to Reid, introspective data were not alone sufficient for drawing general conclusions about the workings of the mind (after all, on the basis of introspective data alone, David Hume drew the conclusion that humankind was incapable of 'true' knowledge of the world). The philosopher who would develop a sound model of the mind and consciousness must, according to Reid, validate his conclusions against observations of a more general character, taking into account a wide range of human actions. One might study, for example, the behavior of parents toward their children in order to determine habitual modes of thought and conduct. Or, one might study human errors or prejudices, because such fallacious reasoning would provide evidence of the way in which the human mind may be led to false conclusions and incorrect interpretations.¹¹ This reference to sources of information other than introspection would serve as a check, Reid believed, on the tendency to regard introspective evidence as absolute; and it would serve, at least in principle, the role served by crucial experiments in the natural sciences.¹² For the purpose of this study, it is against these specific epistemological and methodological objectives that the Scottish model of mind and consciousness

should be understood.

The Scottish School

The Scottish philosophers (Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart, Thomas Upham, and others) specifically rejected the conclusions of John Locke and David Hume, even though their models of mind and consciousness were constructed upon a similar foundation, a foundation supported by the Newtonian model of science. In applying the Newtonian model of the physical world to the properties of the mind, for example, Locke envisioned the human mind as an entity (having extension and limits) that contained a number of uniform particles ("ideas") which, in their simplest form, could not be reduced. According to Locke, these simple ideas (corresponding to sensations and emanating from the external world) either remained isolated and discrete or, in accord with associative laws of similarity and contiguity, were compounded into complex ideas, similar to the way in which objects in the external world were compounded out of atoms and molecules. Throughout the process, the mind, envisioned as a mere receptacle, remained passive: the compounding of simple ideas into complex ideas occurred automatically, irrespective of desire or the will, according to laws that could be precisely articulated.¹³ This model of the mind is a salient example of what Kearns intends by a "mind-as-entity" world-view.

Locke's thoroughgoing associationism drew forth strong reactions (from Immanuel Kant and the Scottish philosophers), for it implied that nothing could be known for certain, not

the existence of physical objects, nor the existence of God, nor even our own identity: All that could be known were the simple or complex "ideas" the mind contained. Indeed, was it possible that the only sound conclusion philosophers could draw after centuries of debate was that certain knowledge was unattainable? This inevitable conclusion was unthinkable for Thomas Reid, and his solution to the problem, though seemingly simple in retrospect, marked a turning point in philosophical inquiry, leading to a rejection of questions of mere epistemological form and toward a preference for questions of psychological import.

The essence of Reid's metaphysical position was that the human mind is not passive, but active. Knowledge is no mere compilation of sensory impressions, but a unified whole corresponding one-to-one with events and objects in the external world. The mind contains not a mere constellation of simple and complex "ideas," as Locke would have it, but a complex hierarchy of powers and capacities, both natural and acquired. Reid's task, as he saw it, was to delineate these powers and operations, their characteristics, the conditions under which they operated, and the manner in which they could be improved. In this regard, Reid's task differed from Locke's at the outset: his intent was to provide an analysis and classification of mental powers and their development, not to provide an analysis of the origin of knowledge.

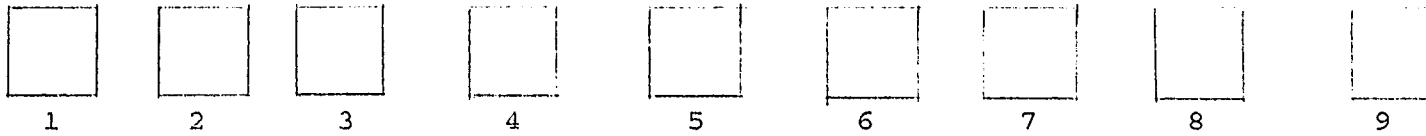
Figure 1 is a representation of Reid's model of the mind consisting of two parallel series, one labeled "Understanding" and the other labeled "The Will." Each series consists of a hierarchy of natural "powers" or

Figure 1

Series I - The Understanding

Perception Memory Conception Resolving Judging Reasoning Taste Moral Consciousness

Perception



"Stream of Thought"

Series II - The Will



Attention

Deliberation

Resolution

Figure 1

Series I represents powers of the Understanding; Series II represents powers of the Will.

(Adapted from Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man [1813-1815] [Cambridge, Massachusetts, M.I.T. Press, 1969], p. 70ff.; and Thomas Reid, Essays on the Active Powers of Man [1815] [Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969], pp. 76-89).

"faculties" (represented as numbered squares). In Series I (the Understanding), the powers are arranged in the order corresponding to successive steps in the acquisition of knowledge; those in Series II are arranged according to degree of effort. The long horizontal line in the middle of the page represents the entire "train of thought," capturing the succession of thoughts emanating from the separate powers over time.¹⁴

The model Reid proposes is a process model; my purpose in presenting it in this way is to underscore the similarity between Reid's model of the mind and twentieth-century information-processing approaches to the mind, though Reid opts for different categories--"powers"--rather than processing levels.¹⁵ Like these later models, however, Reid intends us to understand that the separate powers of the mind operate both successively and in tandem: the powers of the Understanding are influenced by those of the Will; perception is a prerequisite to reason and judgment.¹⁶ This interactive aspect gives Reid's system the following structure: The powers of mind can be classified as predominantly Active (involving primarily the Will) or Passive (involving primarily the Understanding) and as Natural (innate) or Acquired (that is, developed over time and dependent on training or education). Within this structure, there are four possible divisions of mental operations: Natural Passive powers are faculties (the power to reason, to judge, or to perceive--represented as powers of the Understanding in Figure 1); Natural Active powers are capacities (such as the capacity to attend or the capacity to deliberate--represented

in Figure 1 as powers of the Will); Acquired Passive powers Reid calls "dispositions" (moral taste or a love of beauty); and Acquired Active powers are habits (ethical reasoning or moral judgment).¹⁷

As a first-order power of the Understanding, perception is grounded in physiological mechanisms, granted to humankind according to God's will. According to Reid, sense organs receive impressions from objects in the external world; these impressions are then transmitted from the organ to the nervous system, and from there to the brain, though "we cannot give a reason why [or how] it is so." Perception, according to Reid, is direct and unmediated: "(B)y fixed laws of nature...[perception] corresponds exactly to the nature and conditions of objects in the world...Without this exact correspondence," he continues, "the information we receive by our senses would not only be imperfect, as it undoubtedly is, but would be fallacious, which we have no reason to think it is."¹⁸ Perception is limited and circumscribed, by God's will, by the nature of the sense organs themselves (we see very little, if at all, in absolute darkness); even so, what we do perceive directly corresponds exactly to what exists-- and it is God's will that this be so.

The natural powers of the Will are similarly grounded in physiological mechanisms, though Reid is not prepared to submit an analysis of their origin, except to say that they are granted by God.¹⁹ Acquired powers, in contrast, are only potential, not fixed; their emergence depends on external conditions, education, moral training, as well as love of God and humankind and the desire to make the most of one's life.²⁰

Thus, the development of a love of beauty or the capacity to reason ethically depends on both innate propensities and a prescribed educational and religious program.

In this respect, Reid's view of the mind was very different from Locke's conception of a passive mind, as he intended it to be. Reid saw his work as a necessary response to Locke's passive sensationalism and Hume's skepticism, both of which, in denying that the mind contained innate powers and capacities, did not provide an explanation for observable differences among people in either abilities or conduct. By assuming that knowledge accrued independently of the will, Locke (and Hume) seemed to deny what was very clear to Reid, namely that the elite (the philosopher, the academic, the theologian) was of a different character than the "vulgar and insensitive," who must be led to right conduct.²¹ Moreover, though Locke's model had much to say about the origin of ideas, it had little to say about conduct. Reid's model, in contrast, founded on the assumption of the interaction of the various powers of the Will and the Understanding, had much to say about the development of the "higher powers" of reason and moral good, though, admittedly, much less about the origin of ideas.²² It is for these reasons that I have stated that Reid's model is less concerned with epistemological form and more concerned with psychological issues. And it is for these reasons that the Scottish approach, originating in Reid, served as a more useful model of mind and consciousness for early psychologists than Locke's model alone.

The model proposed by Reid is reductive in that it

assumes that classification of the mind into distinct powers (or faculties) and analysis of those powers in terms of discrete characteristics and the conditions under which they operated would yield general laws of human mental function. The Scottish philosophers believed, however, that once these laws were known, once the modes of operation were understood (including those instances of false perception, illogical reasoning, and immoral judgment), philosophy would then be in a position to assume its role as the arbiter of scientific claims. As Dugald Stewart, a student of Reid, states the matter:

The more knowledge of this kind we acquire, the better can we accommodate our plans to the established order of things, and avail ourselves of natural Powers and Agents for accomplishing our purposes.²³

Though Reid and his followers were convinced that a thorough knowledge of human mental function would provide a firm foundation for the sciences, they also believed that their analyses would have profound religious and ethical implications. Certain powers, for example, ethical reasoning and moral judgment, reverence for beauty and God, were powers that could be acquired through proper training and exercise.²⁴ Indeed, this particular idea is so often repeated throughout Reid's essays that it must be understood as a central tenet.²⁵ In the final analysis, reason and conduct are so intertwined in Reid's model that the proper development of the former leads inevitably to "right" conduct and "the honour, dignity and worth of a man."²⁶

In many respects, Reid's concept of moral development is more important than his epistemological agenda. Ultimately,

he appeals both to human intellect and human will; and it is the human will that distinguishes humankind from animals, civilized man (the philosopher) from savages (the "vulgar and inattentive"), and adults from children.²⁷ Reid's moral agenda is intertwined with the belief that God-given powers require constant effort and continued assessment in order to ensure the development of ethical reasoning and moral judgment. Indeed, this developmental thesis is implicit in all of Reid's work, as is evident in the following quote:

The power of reflection upon the operations of their own minds does not appear at all in children. Men must come to some ripeness of understanding before they are capable of it....Like all our other powers, it is greatly improved by exercise; and until a man has got the habit of [it], he can never have clear and distinct notions of them, nor form any steady judgment concerning them....To acquire this habit, is a work of time and labour, even in those who begin it early, and whose natural talents are tolerably fitted for it; but the difficulty will be daily diminishing, and the advantage of it is great.²⁸

The ability to reflect is such a power acquired, and though humankind may be endowed with the capacity to form such a habit, its development depends on both "natural talent" and concerted effort, that is, the human will (see Figure 1).

My purpose in emphasizing this aspect of Reid's thought is two-fold: Reid was one of the first, in all likelihood, to insist on a distinction between innate powers of the mind (perceiving, reasoning, judging) and innate capacities of the mind (such as the capacity to reflect or the capacity to appreciate beauty) and to incorporate into his model the idea that one might develop both by an effort of the Will. The idea that the Will and the Understanding might interact, that their interaction was part of a developmental sequence, was

the primary difference between the mental models proposed by Reid and those proposed by Locke, for example, and Hume.²⁹ In summary, Reid's explicit concern with the properties of the Will enabled him to a) account for individual differences among peoples (the vulgar versus the the elite, children versus adults); b) suggest means by which God-given powers might be improved; and c) account for error and false beliefs, none of which Locke was able to account for successfully. Moreover, it accorded with the idea, common to nineteenth-century Americans, that knowledge of God and purity of soul were a product of individual effort (good works), not merely given by divine fiat.³⁰ One reason, then, for the enduring influence of the Scottish tradition in America is precisely that their ideas gave such profound support to individual effort.

My second purpose in emphasizing this aspect of Reid's thought is that this idea--the idea that persons differed in their ability to reflect upon their own thoughts (as well upon the events which occasioned them) and, by extension, to act upon their reflections--was assumed by each of the writers whose works I will examine in Chapter 4. To greater or lesser degree, each of these novelists described characters whose lives were directly affected by their ability to take in information about their world, to reflect on that information, and to act on their conclusions.

Consciousness and Reflection

As we will see in the succeeding chapters, the distinctions Reid makes between "consciousness" and "reflection" are upheld by both late nineteenth-century

psychologists and novelists. In the Essays, Reid defined "consciousness" as a power of the Understanding, and "reflection," as an innate capacity which depends for its development on the activity of the Will (see Figure 1). Reid believed the distinction was important because reflection was regarded as the primary tool of the mental philosopher, and the capacity for reflection (acquired over time) was regarded as the primary feature that distinguished those who aspired to true knowledge of the world and those who merely existed within it.

In the words of Thomas Reid, "consciousness is an operation of the understanding of its own kind, and cannot [therefore] be logically defined;"³¹ that is, reduced to elements such as "ideas" or "impressions," as Locke would have it. Though consciousness included pains and pleasures, hopes and fears, desires and doubts, "in a word, all the passions, and all the actions and operations of our own minds, while they are present,"³² its activities were confined to the present instant. That is, consciousness might "know" of these operations, and know them with certainty, but only as they occurred; consciousness was without memory. Within this context, however, "consciousness" assumed the character of a perceptual act, an ever-present observer of the mind's operations, "the evidence, the only evidence," Reid insists, "which we have or can have of [the] existence [of the operations of our minds]." ³³ Like Reid, American pre-experimental psychologists and realist novelists would recognize in consciousness this same orientation to the present; unlike Reid, the novelists would regard the

sensations of consciousness as primary.

In contrast, reflection, says Reid, is "like to the difference between a superficial view of an object...and that attentive examination which we give to an object when we are wholly employed in surveying it."³⁴ Reflection, as we have seen, is the philosopher's tool. Accordingly, while consciousness is restricted to present phenomena, reflection is the power to examine with careful attention both the present and immediate past experience. While simple consciousness is constrained by immediate experience and transitory sensations, reflection, because it is founded on a combination of the powers of memory, reason, and judgment, is effectively timeless: past, present, and future coalesce. It is through the acquired ability to reflect, according to Reid, that we come to have knowledge of our minds and through which we come to understand our desires; it is, of course, reflection that provides the philosopher's data. As we will see, in the hands of the novelists, "reflection" becomes the source of self-knowledge.

Reid distinguishes consciousness and reflection on other grounds as well: Consciousness is described as involuntary, operating independently of judgment and reason, and unfocused; reflection is described as voluntary, operating within the constraints of judgment and reason, and focused.³⁵ Reflection, not consciousness, is the source of invention, the poet's creative act. Dugald Stewart argues this point in some detail in a passage that resonates with metaphorical imagery:

Of the powers which the mind possesses over the train of its thoughts, the most obvious is its power of singling

out any one of them at pleasure, of detaining it, and of making it a particular object of attention. By doing so, we not only stop the succession that would otherwise take place, but in consequence of our bringing to view the less obvious relations among our ideas, we frequently divert the current of our thoughts into a new channel.³⁶

It is "reflection" that enables the poet and scientist to halt the progression of images, to focus on one thought to the exclusion of others, to discover relationships among images and ideas, and thereby to create a novel image, embark on yet untraveled terrain.

The difference between consciousness and reflection that Reid sought to establish may seem contrived, because within a mind-as-entity perspective, because such distinctions were considered the hallmark of careful analysis. Nonetheless, the method, patterned after the method used in the natural sciences, was inevitably classificatory, analytical, and reductive: Distinctions, like that established between "consciousness" and "reflection," were regarded by those who advanced them as indications of progress in knowledge about the human mind and human mental function.

Yet, reductive analysis of this kind generated its own set of conceptual difficulties. One difficulty that was not to be satisfactorily resolved even into the twentieth century was that of accounting for the human sense of self. The models devised by Locke and Reid within a mind-as-entity perspective assumed relatively stable classificatory distinctions; in Reid's model, for example, memory is but one component of the Understanding (see Figure 1). In contrast, the self-concept, introspectively known, endured through time and across situations. How, for example, might the

philosopher account for the fact that each individual knows with certainty that each thought is his or her own thought, distinguished from all others' thoughts? Though the question seems odd from a twentieth-century perspective, in a classificatory system (such as Reid's) which ought to be made to account for all aspects of mental function, the problem of an enduring self was not easily resolved. Where, in such a system, would an enduring self be located? In such a model it would have been as logically defensible to locate the self-concept in Reason or the Will or Memory as in any other delineated power.

In order to maintain consistency, Reid located the self (or self-concept) in consciousness. The implications of this idea are interesting: Though reflection might serve the creative pursuit, though the Will in its various forms preceded every conscious act, though Memory might serve as the locus of former selves and past events, only consciousness, innately given and oriented to the immediate moment was capable of providing the essential and pervasive sense of a self. Reid writes:

[Though] (t)he thoughts and feelings of which we are conscious are continually changing, and the thought of this moment is not the thought of the last, still, there remains, under this ebb and flow of thought, a constant sense of certainty that the self that existed in a single moment of perception is the same self that existed yesterday or would exist tomorrow.³⁷

The very core of consciousness, in Reid's model, is the abiding sense of self.

Reid's solution to the question of a sense of self was not a sweeping reappraisal of previous theories of consciousness, but it is significant, if only because he

firmly established a "self" within immediate, on-going experience and, in doing so, took the first step in the development of a psychology of experience. In a very real sense, the psychological characterization of experience as self-owned and promulgated was at one remove from the neutral (and neutralizing) epistemological programs of Locke and Hume. In this regard, Reid appears as a transition figure, leading the way into a psychology that paid heed to individual experience. As we will see in the next chapter, however, Reid's solution to the problem of the location of the self or self-concept was not adopted without revision by the next generation of psychologist/philosophers (1865-1885), although each of them recognized the necessity of accounting for the known-self in their own classification systems. Realist authors, however, unencumbered by classification systems and reductive analysis, assumed the known-self as an integral and defining characteristic of consciousness.

As we will see, psychologists of the later period (1886-1910), less inclined to classification, supported a self-owned consciousness, even, as with James Baldwin, predicating the development of the individual on the ability to distinguish between self and not-self. In the search for general laws of human nature, the "new psychology" of this later period was attenuated not by the development of classification systems, but by the use of aggregate data and the development of psychological "norms" of adjustment.³⁸ A brief passage from William James's Principles of Psychology will reveal the influence of this idea on late nineteenth-century psychology:

Each pulse of cognitive consciousness, each Thought, dies away and is replaced by another. The other, among the things it knows, knows its own predecessor, and finding it 'warm,' in the way we have described, greets it, saying: 'Thou art mine, and part of the same self with me.' Each later Thought, knowing and including thus the Thoughts which went before, is the final receptacle--and appropriating them is the final owner--of all that they contain and own.³⁹

By the mid-nineteenth century, consciousness was conceived in three different senses: It was conceived as the source of our knowledge of the discrete operations of our mental powers by which general principles of mental function could be determined. In this context, consciousness was both immediate and simple, capable of recording present experience and elementary sensations; and reflective, capable of turning back upon itself and recording thoughts on that experience and recognition of those sensations as sensations in accord with other sensations and past experience. As simple consciousness, it remained an independent act of mind; as reflective consciousness, it was under control of the separate powers of the will--attention, deliberation, and resolution---and included the powers of judgment and reasoning. Simultaneously, consciousness also served as the sense we have that all our thoughts emanate from a single self, that they are our thoughts. In this sense, consciousness provided the continuity that was necessary for a system otherwise divided in theory.

Finally, both consciousness and reflection were conceived as the source of all our knowledge of the external world of physical objects and events and the internal world of mental processes, of the passions, and of the body's

physiological responses to internal and external stimulation. Where epistemological and moral issues dominated the mode of representation, consciousness was a necessary, but problematic, dimension of mental functioning: necessary, because it provided the means for an analysis of epistemological and moral issues (within the constraints of a mind-as-entity perspective); and problematic, because consciousness itself could not be "brought into" reductive analysis. As we will see, mid-nineteenth century psychologies of mind and consciousness offered no clear solutions.

The Scottish Influence

The distinction Reid established between immediate consciousness and reflective consciousness occurs repeatedly in the psychological literature throughout the nineteenth century. It occurs, for example, in the epistemological models of mind and consciousness set down by American pre-experimental psychologists and it occurs in the models of consciousness offered by William James and later experimental psychologists like James Mark Baldwin and George Trumbull Ladd.⁴⁰ Invariably, consciousness is described as consisting of a succession of thoughts, sensations (pleasure and pain), fears and hopes, memories, and the like, always "of the present," that is, occurring in the here and now. Reflection, when the distinction is made, has duration: the process extends over time, involves attention, deliberation, and (often) resolution. It is willed and focused, and, as Reid describes it, it is the source of knowledge and invention.⁴¹ As we will see in Chapter 4, the distinction between consciousness and reflection serves as a useful

characterization of modes of consciousness in nineteenth-century realist literature.

In contrast to Locke's over-valuation of experience, the Scottish appeal to innate principles effectively forged a compromise between a nativist theory of mind which supported humankind's dependence on God and an empirical theory of mind which allowed for the gradual shaping of mind through education and experience.⁴² Certainly, the Scottish view appealed to the American democratic ideal that individual effort counted for much more than innate endowments in regard to the pursuit of a moral life. In G. Stanley Hall's words,

The Scotch philosophy represented by Reid, Stewart, Brown and Hamilton, opened a far safer way. The "common sense," which was its watchword, contained an immediate conviction of right and wrong, of the reality of the external world, freedom, etc., about which there was no need or warrant for debate or doubt, while its discussion of association, desire, will, and feeling, was lucidity itself, and fitted our practical country and had a wider vogue here than in Scotland itself. In this form, psychology was very widely introduced in American colleges.⁴³

Like their twentieth-century counterparts, the Scottish philosophers were acutely aware that a valid and useful "science" of the mind depended on objectivity, unbiased observation, and a more careful analysis than even the natural sciences employed. And they were just as self-consciously aware that the language of their science--indeed the very subject matter--was even more than normally prone to distortions and misinterpretations.⁴⁴ The self-conscious "scientism" exhibited in their work may be considered by contemporary psychologists to be somewhat misplaced, but it is there, nonetheless. Their goal was clear: Careful

observation of the operations of the mind through conscious reflection would yield simple and general laws of mental function; and from those laws, through the process of reasoning, one might discern the effect of any given combination of them.⁴⁵ As we have seen, this scientific/analytical approach justified both their mental science and the assumption with which they began: namely that our knowledge of mental events and our knowledge of real-world events were the same in kind.

Later psychologists would follow the spirit, though not the letter, of the program Reid set forth. As we will see, they were no less concerned than he was to ensure that a science of the mind should be protected against speculative self-interest. One way to do that, of course, was to adopt the conventions of classification/analysis to mental science just as Reid did. This strategy provided assurance that the author's work would be accepted within the tradition. In a sense, mental science in America up until the late 1880s followed a program of "normal science," a term originated by Thomas Kuhn that refers to the practice within a discipline of refining an accepted paradigm.⁴⁶ As we will see, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, American psychologists were engaged in the practice of normal science in just this sense, elaborating Reid's model of the human mind and consciousness.

Indeed, far too little recognition has been given to the Scottish influence in traditional history-of-psychology texts. Graham Richards, for example, notes that Associationist accounts of the mind (e.g., Locke, Hume, Mill)

are accorded 84.3% coverage in contemporary history-of-psychology texts, while the Scottish Enlightenment position (Reid, Stewart, Hamilton) is accorded a mere 15.7% coverage.⁴⁷ According to Richards, this unequal representation is the result of a concerted effort among latter-day historians to justify psychology's "scientific" heritage: the Associationist account is, in its particulars, more in accord with the "'positivist', reductionist, 'materialist' ['empiricist'] tradition" that psychologists have self-consciously claimed as their own.⁴⁸ The persistent neglect of Scottish ideas, according to Richards, serves the essential purpose of maintaining the belief that psychology--as a science--has its origins in a train of philosophical ideas that, in spirit, support its goal of "prediction and control."⁴⁹ Though I have presented only a brief overview of Scottish ideas (primarily Reid's), it should be evident that their work is attended by a particular sensitivity to the idea that a science of the mind should be approached no less objectively than a science of the physical world. Though their success in that endeavor may be questioned, their acute awareness of the problem was at least as influential as Associationist accounts in setting the stage for the eager acceptance of the experimental tradition by American psychologists seeking justification for their work.

Though reduction of the mind to powers seems no less a reduction than to (Lockean) ideas, the categorization Reid proposed was more than relabeling: it represented a dramatic shift in emphasis no less important than that which displaced humankind from the center of the universe. The reason is

clear: Locke's model of a passive mind could not satisfactorily explain why individuals of similar experience so often disagreed; it could not explain differences in development (especially moral development), or, even, differences in behavior over time. In this account, I have attempted to show that the Scottish thinkers accorded greater emphasis to motivational issues than Locke (for one) had granted, even if that emphasis rested on a theological foundation. From a presentist point of view, we might find in Scottish thought the origin of a number of ideas that have contributed to the development of psychology as a science. Richards, for example, proposes several: the development of a psychology of education (which can be traced to the Scottish idea that certain "habits" can be acquired); the development of a psychology of individual differences (which can be traced to the Scottish idea that talent and effort both determine behavioral outcomes, foreshadowing Gall's phrenology and providing a context for evolutionary thought); and proto-psychiatry (which can be traced to the idea that "excesses of the imagination," unattended by reason, would lead to improper behavior, poor health, and madness).⁵⁰ I would add a fourth, namely Reid's idea that there is a necessary correspondence between physiological processes and mental powers. All these ideas would be taken up by the "new" psychologists of the late nineteenth century.

Summary and Prospectus

My purpose in this chapter was to provide a context in which to assess changes in the concept of consciousness throughout the nineteenth century. For this reason, it is

important to establish a clear sense of the concept as it was understood by the leading philosophy of the time. In various places throughout his work, Reid refers to consciousness as an "internal sense," similar in all respects to the act of seeing. The dominant metaphor of consciousness is that of a perceptual act, "reflection" no less so: Both are to the mind what the senses are to the external world.⁵¹ Later theories of consciousness (e.g., Asa Mahan, William James, Herbert Spencer), though retaining in principle Reid's distinction between consciousness and reflection, do not adopt his metaphor. Indeed, by 1870, most psychologist/philosophers did not even consider consciousness to be a "power" of the mind at all.

The solution of later thinkers to the 'problem' of consciousness had already been articulated by Reid in a chapter entitled "The Train of Thought." As Reid defined it, the train of thought was not consciousness, but that which we may be conscious of. Distinct from consciousness, the train of thought was caused not by external stimulation but originated entirely within the "constant intestine motion" of the mind itself. It may be called, Reid asserted, imagination, though he is cautious about the implications of that label which implied a lack of moral constraint.⁵²

According to Reid, the train of thought consisted of either ideas "that flow spontaneously, like water from a fountain, without any exertion of a governing principle to arrange them;" or it may be "regulated and directed by active effort of the mind, with some view and intention."⁵³ The similarity between these descriptions and Reid's account of

consciousness and reflection are too powerful to ignore: The train of thought may be, that is, either like "consciousness" (immediate, involuntary, and unfocused) or like "reflection" (voluntary, focused, and involving reason and judgment). Figure 1, an adaptation of Reid's model of the mind based upon his work, depicts the "train of thought" as continuous with the operation of the various faculties, of which consciousness is one.

The distinctions Reid makes between consciousness, reflection, and the train of thought, however consistently he holds to them, are not compelling. I point this out, not to point out weaknesses in Reid's system, but to establish a possible connection between later models of mind and consciousness and the model Reid describes. By the mid nineteenth century, many philosopher/psychologists would build on Reid's "train of thought;" would, in fact, take this idea as the defining characteristic of consciousness. In later psychologies (see William James), Reid's "train of thought" comes to serve as an apt metaphor for the experience of consciousness itself.

Chapter Notes

¹ For a discussion of the Scottish influence, see A. A. Roback, History of American Psychology (rev. ed.) (New York: Collier, 1964), pp. 53-72); Ernest R. Hilgard, Psychology in America. A Historical Survey (San Diego, California: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987), pp. 5-6; Jay Wharton Fay, American Psychology Before William James (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1939), pp. 4, 50-128. The extent of the Scottish influence in America is noted by all historians of psychology. See also G. Stanley Hall's "American College Textbooks," American Antiquarian Society, April, 1894.

² See Jay Wharton Fay, American Psychology Before William James, pp.129-131; John M. O'Donnell, The Origins of Behaviorism. American Psychology, 1870-1920 (New York: New York University Press, 1985), pp. 1-51.

³ See, for example, William James, Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 (1890) (New York: Dover, 1950), pp. 183-198; James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology. Senses and Intellect (1889) (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1972), pp. 1-34.

⁴ Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (1814-1815) (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969) (hereafter referred to as Essays I), pp. xxxvii-xxxix.

⁵ Isaiah Berlin, The Age of Enlightenment. The 18th Century Philosophers (New York: Penguin, 1984), p.16.

⁶ Isaiah Berlin, The Age of Enlightenment, pp. 15-19.

⁷ See, for example, Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 41-52.

⁸ See, for example, Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 59-64.

⁹ Isaiah Berlin, The Age of Enlightenment, p. 15.

¹⁰ Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 21, 34, 54, 552.

¹¹ Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 55-56, 736-737.

¹² The role of observation (introspection) and experiment (the need to check conclusions against observed habits and actions) in natural philosophy was based on the

Newtonian model of science. Isaiah Berlin states the case very well:

If the laws were correct, the observations on which they were based authentic, and the inferences sound, true and impregnable conclusions would provide knowledge of hitherto unexplored realms, and transform the present welter of ignorance and idle conjecture into a clear and coherent system of logically interrelated elements--the theoretical copy or analogue of the divine harmony of nature, concealed from the view by human ignorance or idleness or perversity. (Isaiah Berlin, The Age of Enlightenment, p. 16)

¹³ See Isaiah Berlin, The Age of Enlightenment, pp. 11-29; David J. Murray, A History of Western Psychology, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1988), pp. 96-100; and, of course, John Locke, Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690), 4th ed., Peter Nidinch, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), pp. 12, 55, 67, 104-105, 236-237, 335.

¹⁴ Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 436-462.

¹⁵ See, for example, Stephen K. Reed, Cognition Theory and Applications, 2nd ed. (Pacific Grove, California: Brooks/Cole, 1988), p. 56; or any introductory cognitive text.

¹⁶ Thomas Reid, Essays II, p. 65.

¹⁷ Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 6, 65.

¹⁸ Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 82-83.

¹⁹ Thomas Reid, Essays II, p. 1.

²⁰ Thomas Reid, Essays II, pp. 222-230.

²¹ Thomas Reid, Essays II, pp. 360-370.

²² Baruch A. Brody, "Introduction" (1969), in Thomas Reid, Essays II, p. xiii.

²³ Dugald Stewart, Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind, vol. 1 (1811), in Dugald Stewart, Collected Works, vol. II, p. 6.

²⁴ Thomas Leahey, A History of Psychology. Main Currents in Psychological Thought (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:

Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 257. See also Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. xxxviii-xxxix. There are many references in Reid's text similar to the following:

Although the capacity be purely the gift of Nature, and probably given in very different degrees to different persons; yet the power of reasoning seems to be got by habit, as much as the power of walking or running. Its first exertions we are not able to recollect in ourselves, or clearly to discern in others. They are very feeble, and need to be led by example, and supported by authority. By degrees it acquires strength, chiefly by means of imitation and exercise. (Thomas Reid, Essays I, p. 712).

See also Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 7, 35, 58; Essays II, pp. 55-56.

25 Thomas Reid, Essays II, pp. 214-215.

26 Thomas Reid, Essays II, p. 2. The following quote is typical:

I believe it will be allowed by every man, that our happiness or misery in life, that our improvement in any art or science which we profess, and that our improvement in real virtue or goodness, depend in a very great degree on the train of our thinking, that occupies the mind both in our vacant and in our more serious hours. As far, therefore, as the direction of our thoughts is in our power, and it is so in a great measure cannot be doubted, it is of the last importance to give them that direction which is most subservient to those valuable purposes. (Thomas Reid, Essays I, p. 461)

27 Thomas Reid, Essays II, pp. 48-56.

28 Thomas Reid, Essays I, p. 58.

29 David Hume speaks of the will as (simply) one of the immediate effects of pleasure and pain. He describes it as "the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motion of our body, or new perception of our mind (David Hume, A Treatise on Human Nature, vol. 1 [1739-1740], L. A. Selby-Bigge, ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955], p. 399). The will, then, according to Hume, is not cause, but effect. In Reid's model, the will was explicitly causal.

30 James Hoopes, Consciousness in New England. From Puritanism and Ideas to Psychoanalysis and Semiotic (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

- 31 Thomas Reid, Essays I, p. 617.
- 32 Thomas Reid, Essays I, p. 617.
- 33 Thomas Reid, Essays I, p. 34.
- 34 Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 54, 57. (Note the perceptual metaphors.)
- 35 Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 57-58.
- 36 Dugald Stewart, Collected Works, p. 267.
- 37 Thomas Reid, Essays I p. 620.
- 38 See, for example, James Mark Baldwin's Mental Development in the Child and the Race (New York: Macmillan, 1895).
- 39 William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 (1890) (New York: Dover, 1950), p. 339.
- 40 Succeeding chapters will illustrate this idea more explicitly. I make reference to the works of Asa Mahan's A System of Intellectual Philosophy, 1st ed. (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1854), pp. 47-56; Mark Hopkins, An Outline Study of Man, Mind and Body in One System with Illustrative Diagrams and a Method for Blackboard Teaching (New York: Scribner, 1878), pp. 57-190; James McCosh, The Intuitions of the Mind, Inductively Investigated (1860; 3rd ed. rev. New York: Scribner, 1874); William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 (1890), pp. 291-401.
- 41 Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 436-462.
- 42 Allan Gardner Smith, The Analysis of Motives: Early American Psychology and Fiction (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Rodopi, 1980), p. 127.
- 43 G. Stanley Hall, "On the History of American College Text-Books and Teaching in Logic, Ethics, Psychology, and Allied Subjects," American Antiquarian Society, April, 1894, pp. 137-174.
- 44 See, for example, Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 1-30, 41-52, 59-64.

⁴⁵ Dugald Stewart, Collected Works, p. 8. Stewart states the issue very clearly:

As all our knowledge of the material world rests ultimately on facts ascertained by observation, so all our knowledge of the human mind rests ultimately on facts for which we have the evidence of our own consciousness. An attentive examination of such facts will lead in time to the general principles of the human constitution, and will gradually form a science of the mind not inferior in certainty to the science of body. For this reason, Reid was very clear about the dangers of the reflective/introspective method and the difficulties attendant upon the its indiscriminate use. He was aware that at any point in time reflection must yield to the number and quick succession of the "train of thoughts" (see Figure 1). He was also aware that the introspective act would itself change the nature of the operation, perhaps to dispel it entirely. Finally, he was aware that effective introspection depended on the ability "to distinguish accurately ...minute differences; to resolve and analyze complex operations into their simple ingredients; and to unfold the ambiguity of words" so that clear and precise accounts are obtained. Indeed, Reid's cautionary advice would be taken up by William James and others nearly a century later (Thomas Reid, Essays I, pp. 59-61).

⁴⁶ Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (rev. ed.) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

⁴⁷ Graham Richards, Mental Machinery. The Origins and Consequences of Psychological Ideas. Part I: 1600-1850 (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), pp. 238-239. Percentages represent a proportion of the total number of pages entered in the index of any one volume for Associationists (Locke, Berkeley, Hartley, Bentham, J. Mill, Hume, Brown, Hutcheson) and Scottish Enlightenment philosophers (Reid, Stewart, Hamilton, Fergusson, Whytt, A. Smith, Kames, Monboddo, Gregory). The history-of-psychology texts he examined were those by Murphy & Kovach (1972), T. Leahey (1987), G. Brett (1921), J. Brennab (1982), D. Klein (1970), R.I. Watson (1968), D. Robinson (1981), E.G. Boring (1950), J.M. Baldwin (n.d.), Brett (1953, R.S. Peters, ed.), Roback (1964), Hearnshaw (1987), Wertheimer (1979), Schultz (1975), Misiak & Sexton (1966). A sampling of David Murray's text, A History of Western Psychology, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1988) yields the following results: Out of the total number of pages given to the Associationists and Scottish Enlightenment figures (80), 80% (64) cover the Associationists, and 20% (16) cover the Scottish thinkers. These results are roughly consistent with those found by Richards.

48 Graham Richards, Mental Machinery, p. 240.

49 Graham Richards, Mental Machinery, pp. 7-8, 241.

50 Graham Richards, Mental Machinery, pp. 7-8, 241.

51 Thomas Reid, Essays I, p. 552. Reid writes:

Reflection upon the operation of our minds is the same kind of operation with that by which we form distinct notions of external objects. They differ not in their nature, but in this only, that one is employed about external, and the other about internal objects; and both may, with equal propriety, be called reflection.

52 Reid describes the "train of thought" in his Essays I, pp. 436-462, from which the ideas presented in this paragraph are drawn.

53 Thomas Reid, Essays I, p. 437.

CHAPTER 3

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY, 1845-1885

American psychology in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was founded on the ideas laid down by Thomas Reid. Specifically, the psychologists whose work we will examine in this chapter upheld Reid's belief in a mind that consisted of separate powers or faculties which gave a true and accurate picture of the world. With some minor changes, they adopted the divisions of mind Reid had proposed; and they assumed, like Reid, that the separate powers of the mind, the Will and the Understanding, interacted in specific and determinable ways.

Despite this implicit acknowledgement of Reid's influence, however, American psychologists of 1845-1885 were much less interested in the moral issues that had so preoccupied Reid and his followers than they were concerned with devising models of human mental function that accorded with the latest research into human physiology, particularly the functions of the brain and nervous system. Accordingly, there is an incipient materialism in the work of this period that is not present to the same degree in earlier work. Moreover, as we will see, all of these models incorporated a developmental perspective, to a greater degree of specificity than Reid had done. These ideas were influenced, in part, by the evolutionary theories of Herbert Spencer, whose ideas had come to acceptance in both American popular culture and in

the academic halls.¹

Although the influence of Scottish thought continued until well into the 1880s, many of the models of mind and consciousness developed in this period reflect the uneasy opposition of two other lines of thought: The first perspective, derived from British empiricism, we encountered before in the brief discussion of John Locke's theory of mind. Locke's position received support from David Hume and J. S. Mill and remained a potent force in British theories of mind throughout the nineteenth century, though less so in America until the rise of Behaviorism in the twentieth century.

The second perspective was derived from German idealism, a philosophy of mind that emphasized the transcendent and intuitive nature of human thought. The primary source for German philosophy in America was Immanuel Kant, who, like Thomas Reid, was unwilling to accept the conclusions which Hume had drawn from Locke's metaphysical position. Kant believed that the human mind was endowed with certain innate capacities to organize experience: In particular, Kant asserted that the mind was innately capable of organizing experience in space and time, determining cause and effect, and, through memory and reflection, of acquiring such notions as the concept of beauty or good.²

Many of Kant's ideas were also proposed by Reid. For example, like Reid, Kant also divided the mind into distinct faculties or powers, though he accorded the imaginative faculty much greater respect than Reid was inclined to do. Unlike Reid and his followers, however, Kant believed that

our knowledge of the world was limited to that which could be gained through sense experience, that is, to phenomena. The world of noumena, that is, of objects-in-themselves, was beyond sense-experience and thus beyond our ability to know with certainty, though the imaginative faculty, operating in accord with reason, was capable, in principle, of acquiring higher-order knowledge of this sort.³

These ideas were enthusiastically taken up by the American Transcendentalists (Emerson, Thoreau) who advocated reason and intuition over earthly experience as a means to certain knowledge.⁴ As a literary movement, however, American Transcendentalism seemed to have little influence on mid-nineteenth century American psychology, though that influence can be seen toward the end of the nineteenth century in the work of William James (both William and his brother, Henry, grew up in an atmosphere of close contact with Emerson, Thoreau, and the others, who were part of their father's circle).

Nonetheless, German idealism did infiltrate American psychology, however briefly, in the work of two early American psychologists, Asa Mahan and Laurens Hickok. There is no indication in available records to suggest that these men garnered their ideas from the Transcendental movement alone; rather, it appears that their debt is to a burgeoning interest in German philosophical ideas that occurred in the mid-nineteenth century among American philosophers. At least one source traces the emergence of this interest to the publication of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 1833 American edition of Aids to Reflection, though there is evidence that

the work of both Kant and Hegel was offered in American colleges and universities in the early nineteenth century.⁵ In the tradition of Kant and Hegel, these particular American theorists gave greater powers to consciousness than Reid, for example, had allowed.⁶ As we will see, consciousness from this perspective is couched in "energy" metaphors: it assumes the quality of an "internal light" or an "inner power."

Laurens Hickok (1798-1888)

In Hickok's work, we see a salient example of consciousness cast as an internal light, though expressed in an explicitly psychological text, Hickok's Rational Psychology, published in 1848. Because the text accorded with the basic tenets of Christian theology, it was widely used in American colleges and universities prior to the Civil War to introduce advanced students to the scientific study of the mind. Like Reid, Hickok offers an extended discussion of the faculties of sensing, perceiving, judging, intuiting and their relations. Unlike Reid, Hickok suggests that these activities are made known to us by the luminate quality of consciousness:

The whole process of the construction [of the pure object of experience], all stand out in the mind's own light, and such illumination will be available to reveal what has been done, and to show the product. The pure object is put within this light, and thus the mind possesses it in its own illumination, and this is the same as to say that the object stands in consciousness. Not as an act, but as a light; not as a maker - for that is the province of the intellectual agency - but rather as a revealer: after such analogies shall we doubtless best conceive of consciousness, and which may thus be termed the "light of all our seeing."⁷

Hickok's concept of "consciousness" as that which illuminates and reveals mental processes represents a

significant departure from Reid's conception of consciousness as a perceptual act. Consciousness, in Hickok's system, was envisioned as a substance-less 'power', invisible and formless, capable of "receiving all things" without altering its characteristics. By definition, however, it could shed no light on its own operations:

It is that inward illumination in which all that is therein constructed may appear, while itself is a light too pure and transparent to admit that it should be seen.⁸

It remained an undefinable operation which possessed different characteristics at different times--now of reason, now of intuition, now of understanding, now of willing, yet possessing no two simultaneously. In Hickok's system, consciousness appeared as that medium, changeless and formless, in the light of which separate faculties--reasoning, perceiving, intuiting and willing--played out their distinct roles. The image expressed by Hickok is wholly in accord with his view that an empirical psychology of mind must be buttressed by appeal to "transcended experience."⁹ Though this view of consciousness is expressed in the work of the American Transcendentalists, it was discarded by those who promulgated the new American literary tradition of the mid-nineteenth century, American realism.

Asa Mahan (1799-1889)

Asa Mahan's major textbook, A System of Intellectual Philosophy, was published first in 1845, reissued in 1847, and issued again as an enlarged edition in 1854.¹⁰ What is different about this text is that Mahan is clearly not concerned with constructing a conception of either mind or

consciousness that meets the requirements of his theological principles.¹¹

Taking his cue from Reid, Mahan insists on a distinction between two different kinds of consciousnesses: The first consciousness, occurring earliest in time, is self-consciousness--defined as "the being aware of ourselves, as of the me, in opposition to the not me;" this consciousness was also called "simple consciousness." The second consciousness, emerging in late childhood or early adulthood, is referred to as "philosophical" consciousness--a process similar in many respects to Reid's concept of "reflection."¹² Although Mahan believed both forms of consciousness were contingent upon Reason--the organ of all "universal and necessary truths" (the elevation of Reason to the source of all truth ensures that Mahan is working within the idealist tradition), it is through simple consciousness, Mahan believed, that humans, through the gradual recognition of the self as separate from all else, come to develop their intellectual capacities.¹³ Like Reid, Mahan believes the "philosophic consciousness" is directed by the will, and capable of yielding certain knowledge about the activities of our minds.¹⁴

From these basic principles, Mahan constructed a model of consciousness that is explicitly concerned with explicating the series of mental events from which we derive our knowledge of the world. Knowledge begins, according to Mahan, with the perception of a material object. Simple perception is attended by simple consciousness, a mere recognition of object as distinct from self. From this

perception, reflective consciousness extracts certain ideas about the object, such as that it has shape and form, exists in space and time, etc. Over time, reflection extracts from the perception of physical objects the concept of abstract notions of "contingency," for example the idea that the existence of an object implies the existence of physical space or that an event must have a cause. Similarly, reflection extracts from the repeated perceptions of physical objects and events the abstract concept of "necessity," the idea that physical space is a necessary condition for the existence of a physical object or the idea that a cause is a necessary condition for an event to occur. Over time, these ideas, originally given by simple consciousness and subjected to the process of reflection, are analyzed, arranged, and generalized by the intelligence, and presented as certainties to the Mind, the overseer of all mental operations.¹⁵

Figure 2 represents the process Mahan has outlined. Of the first stage of consciousness, there is only the perception of an external object or event; of the second stage, of reflective consciousness, there is both abstraction and synthesis (according to the laws of association) and consequent classification and generalization. This last stage submits to the Intelligence the phenomena "so arranged" which yields them, in turn, to the mind.

Summary

The models of mind and consciousness described by Hickok and Mahan are not characteristic of mid-nineteenth century models more generally. However, like Reid, they relied on a

Figure 2

| | <u>Source</u> | <u>Processes</u> |
|---------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Stage 4 | Mind | Reason |
| Stage 3 | The Intelligence | classification and generalization |
| Stage 2 | Reflective Consciousness | abstraction and synthesis |
| Stage 1 | Simple Consciousness | perception* |

* where Intelligence is considered a special function of Mind and consciousness (both simple and reflective) is considered a special function of the Intelligence.

Figure 2.

Representation of Asa Mahan's concept of mental function.

(Adapted from Asa Mahan, A System of Intellectual Philosophy, 1st ed. [New York: A. S. Barnes, 1854], pp. 47, 50-52. 55-56.)

faculty psychology, segmenting the mind into separate and distinct powers of reasoning, judging and the like; and like Reid, they distinguished between immediate (simple) and reflective consciousness. The elevation of the faculty of reason (synthesis and abstraction) reveals Kant's influence.

Likely because of the Kantian influence, both Hickok and Mahan gave to consciousness specific powers that Reid did not. For Hickok, consciousness was that internal light that illuminated the operations of the mind and took on their specific and discrete characteristics. This "reflective" capacity is interesting: The metaphor suggests that consciousness was not a power of the mind (as an "internal sense" was such a power), but held a somewhat tangential position, merely serving to mirror the activities of the mind. This idea was taken up by Mark Hopkins and James McCosh, psychologists whose work represents the prevailing ideas of the period in psychology just after the Civil War. It is not a particularly compelling view (as we will see, later American psychologists believed consciousness alone to be the "proper" subject-matter of psychology) and it certainly was not the view held by the literary realists of the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

Mahan, in contrast, proposes a "consciousness" of a wider scope, one that is active, capable of development, capable, at later stages, of abstraction and synthesis, classification and generalization. Mahan's consciousness consists of levels: simple/reflective, immediate/extended in time. It is a combination of Reid's consciousness/reflection distinction without the limitations imposed by equating both

with a perceptual act. As we will see, this model of consciousness is very much in accord with the models adopted by the literary realists discussed in the next chapter.

These models, as other nineteenth-century psychological models of mind we will examine that reduced mind to a constellation of separate powers, the dominant metaphor, was that described by Michael Kearns as the "mind-as-entity" world-view, even though, like Reid, these men envisioned the mind as composed of powers, not merely ideas, simple or complex. As Kearns states:

The image suggests that the interior of the mind is no longer the simple space presented by Hume and Hartley but a textured place with localized features within which a percipient principle [i.e., consciousness] can experience certain impressions unavailable from the external world....[The Scottish philosophers] place more value on the mind's activity [but that principle is phrased] in metaphorical language that still allows the mind the qualities of extension and impressionability. {The mind} is localized, hence extended, although here it is living, active, and willful, rather than passive.¹⁶

Thus, it is the "reduction" of the mind to "localized features" that is the primary characteristic of a mind-as-entity world-view, not (necessarily) the assumption of passivity, according to Kearns.

Still, there is something incongruous about a label that includes Locke and Hume and Reid (and, by extension, Hickok and Mahan) without some qualifying remarks. The differences between an active mind, consisting of discrete powers modified by the Will, and a passive mind, consisting of discrete ideas, combined according to associative law, are major, and much too important to be trivialized under a single all-encompassing label. Reid's model, in contrast to

Locke's model, for all its possible faults, allowed for the possibility that the mind might develop over time; allowed for the possibility that individual differences, in talent and propensity to put forth effort, would lead to different modes of conduct; and suggested a source for error and false beliefs.

A Psychology of Mind and Body

Hickok and Mahan published their ideas just before the outbreak of the American Civil War. By 1870, however, the epistemological/philosophical cast of American models of mind and consciousness had faded into the background and there occurred a shift in emphasis from a study of the human mind as an aspect of the soul to a study of the mind as an aspect of the brain and nervous system. There were several reasons for this shift. Traditional accounts regularly and accurately cite the influence on American thought of the work of psycho-physicists Gustav Fechner and Hermann Helmholtz in Germany and physician/philosophers Thomas Laycock and W. B. Carpenter in England.¹⁷ The work of these men was founded on the belief that psychological phenomena (that is, of the mind) were closely related to physiological phenomena, that is, of the brain. We have seen this idea, of course, in Reid's theory of the process of perception. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, however, there seemed a compelling need to clarify this connection and to incorporate the latest findings into models of the mind.

A second factor that supported attempts to clarify the mind/body connection emerged as a direct result of the Civil War. Physicians and neurologists of the late nineteenth

century had become aware that many of the soldiers who survived the war were suffering from a variety of ailments (such as battle fatigue and shell shock) for which no clear organic cause could be found, however serious and readily apparent their physical symptoms.¹⁸ Neurologists and physicians of the time looked for a "psychological" explanation for these illnesses. A similar explanation was advanced for "neurasthenia," an illness characterized by vague symptoms such as insomnia, headache, fatigue, and depression which kept many people from completing even routine tasks. The cause of neurasthenia was often laid to the conditions of the fast-paced world of American urban life--stress, overwork, competition--though the physical symptoms were debilitatingly real.¹⁹ Most physicians had come to believe there was a connection between the mind and the body which precipitated such symptoms, even though the organic basis was not well understood.

Given this emphasis on mind/body relations, it is to be expected that the models of mind and consciousness that dominated American thought from 1865 to 1885 would attempt to bring into account some aspect of the connection. It is interesting that they did so even while retaining in spirit many of the ideas that Reid had established over fifty years earlier. As we will see in the work of Mark Hopkins and James McCosh, the idea that the mind consisted of separate semi-autonomous powers proved too powerful to reject.

Mark Hopkins (1802-1887)

Mark Hopkins, president of Williams College (1836-1872), published his Outline Study of Man. The Body and Mind in One

System in 1878 as a record of his lectures. It was reissued in 1886, and again in 1891 (revised), just one year after William James published his Principles of Psychology. In this work, Hopkins offers a Kantian-like higher-order system of classification of the faculties of the Intellect according to their specific epistemological function. Thus, the Intellect is described as possessed of four distinct regulatory functions: a presentative faculty or power through which we have knowledge of our minds and the physical world; a regulative faculty through which we have knowledge of a priori ideas and truths; a representative faculty that operates through the association of ideas and the imagination; and an elaborative faculty that yields knowledge through comparison and abstraction.²⁰ The following is a reproduction of Hopkins's diagram of the regulative and presentative powers:

| THE REGULATIVE FACULTY | | | THE PRESENTATIVE FACULTY | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| (a <u>priori</u> knowledge) | | | (immediate knowledge) | | |
| N | P | | | | { willing |
| e | r | {Resemblance | | The inner sense | { feeling |
| c | o | {Number | | | { thought |
| e | d | {Personal Identity | | _____ | |
| s | u | {Space | | | |
| s | c | {Time | | Sense perception | { percepts |
| a | t | {Being | | | { objects ²¹ |
| r | s | | | | |
| y | | | | | |

In the diagram, the section to the right side of the

elongated double line represents the knowledge man receives from the external world through sense perception, and from the observation through the "inner sense" of the operations of his own mind. The section to the left side of the double line represents a priori knowledge, elsewhere in Hopkins's text referred to as intuition or the Reason.

Within this bipartite division, Hopkins defines consciousness as "the knowledge by the mind of itself as the permanent and indivisible part of its own operations," a definition which does not seem very different from any that we have encountered before. Yet Hopkins continues in a different vein: "This implies, he continues, "a knowledge of the operations, but leaves that knowledge to be given by its own specific faculty while consciousness holds the whole as unity by a constant reference of the different acts and states of mind to the indivisible self or ego."²² It is not the role of consciousness, argues Hopkins, to transmit knowledge of the mind's operations--that function is taken up by the specific faculty which carries out those operations. Thus, we know of willing through the willing faculty; judgment through the judging faculty, etc. The role of consciousness, as Hopkins defines it, is to provide the necessary unity to the system by ordering these different "acts and states" to a "permanent and indivisible self or ego."

Consciousness, as Hopkins describes it, is not under control of the will; it is automatic; it admits of no diversity. Consciousness is the glue that holds the system together and it does so, Hopkins suggests, because

"consciousness is not [itself] knowledge, it is that which accompanies knowledge."²³ It is the indisputable self-referent of every mental act, and, accordingly, cannot be regarded as a valid and trustworthy record of those operations.²⁴ The analogy Hopkins adopts reflects his physician's training:

Consciousness belongs to another sphere. Its office is to bind all the operations of the Mind into unity. It does for the mind just what the cellular system does for the body....the cellular membrane is found in connection with every part of the body. It enfolds, for instance, each fibre of the muscles. It is never by itself. It always accompanies something else, is for the sake of something else; and it gives unity to the body. And consciousness does the same thing for the mind. It is, as it were, its cellular membrane, combining everything connected with it into unity; never found by itself, but always present in connection with every other mental operation.²⁵

Unlike Reid, Hopkins does not regard consciousness as a separate power on a par with other powers of the Understanding, nor does he credit consciousness with any power at all, but for its capacity to bring together as one the separate operations of the mind. Like every other philosopher whose work I have reviewed, however, Hopkins is intent upon the idea that consciousness is the sole origin of the concept of the self.

James McCosh (1811-1894)

Though James McCosh published his major works in psychology after 1885, his work is more closely allied with the Scottish tradition than representative of the new age of experimental psychology of the later period.²⁶ In fact, by the time his books were published, McCosh had been teaching psychology as intellectual philosophy in Scotland, Ireland,

and the United States for nearly thirty years. Because McCosh is, as A. A. Roback suggests, the last representative of this long tradition in American psychology, his inclusion in this section is justified.²⁷

McCosh's psychology consists of the same division of faculties which we encountered in Hopkins (whom McCosh did meet briefly on his American tour of 1866)²⁸: His two major texts represent the cognitive (mental) and motive (appetitive) powers separately; the powers of the mind are successively discussed as presentative ("cognitive"), representative ("reproductive") and comparative powers. Though McCosh includes recent physiological information, he insists that while

(i)t is proper to add that light may be thrown on the operations of the mind by the physiology of the brain and nerves[and that] light may be thrown on the action of the conscious soul by careful study of the parts of the body most intimately connected with the action of the mind....[still] (o)bservation in psychology is to be conducted mainly by self-consciousness.²⁹

And it is to self-consciousness that McCosh appeals throughout.

McCosh defines self-consciousness as the power by which "we know self in its present state as acting and being acted on."³⁰ McCosh describes this self-consciousness as follows:

(W)hen I perceive a material object, when I recollect an occurrence, when I draw an inference, when I am sorrowing, or rejoicing, when I am wishing or willing, I am conscious that I do so. In short, consciousness seems inseparable from the exercise of all our faculties and to accompany every operation of the mind.³¹

Self-consciousness for McCosh has the same character as did consciousness for Hopkins--with one notable difference:

McCosh dispels Hopkins's claim that consciousness provides the necessary unity to the system through its constant reference to a permanent and indivisible ego. It was clear to McCosh (as it was clear to Reid and his followers) that self-consciousness is solely oriented to the present. In self-consciousness, we know only of a self as having being; it is only by comparing a memory of a past self with our consciousness of a present self that we can speak of a sense of personal identity (this idea, of course, is expressed by Reid).³² Quoting a poem by Wordsworth, McCosh suggests that self-consciousness is like a "shadow" which cannot be parted from the substance, "a gleam of [one's] own image crossing the eye's discoveries."³³ Because Hopkins gave to consciousness the explicit function of unifying the mental system, it was, essentially, timeless.

Unlike self-consciousness (which "merely" accompanied mental operations) "intuition," as McCosh defined it, was a distinct faculty, the source of all our ideas of relations--of time, of cause and effect, of resemblance. Because McCosh wanted to distinguish his concept of "intuition" from the sense in which it was used by the Transcendentalists, he insisted that even intuitions must be constrained by the properties of real-world things and events. In McCosh's formulation, intuitions are not formed apart from objects [as Kant and others suggested] but are in fact discoveries of something in objects, or relating to them.³⁴ Though the use of the word "intuition" seems to suggest a higher-order form of knowledge, in fact, McCosh's "intuitions" are no different than Mahan's "generalization and abstraction" processes or

even, one suspects, very much different from Reid's reflective consciousness.

Though McCosh believed that experience alone might account for the notions of abstract relations of time and space, and the like, he was certain that experience alone could not provide the full import of these concepts and could never yield to our convictions of the universal manner of their occurrence.³⁵ McCosh's "intuitional realism," however, is not an indelible a priori law of the mind, but a distinct capacity of the mind that depends on experience for its execution. What intuition grasps is the reality of the relations among events and objects in the world. Those relations, when brought within the intuitive faculty, are held to as general laws, not of the mind, but of the reality of things of both internal and external worlds.

Despite McCosh's arguments for an intuitive faculty, he insists, however, that the science of psychology is properly founded on the self-conscious observation of "states or affections" of the mind even though that self-consciousness is little more than a shadow which attends mental operations with the sense that it is the I who perceives (or thinks). McCosh's consciousness is clearly neither an intuitive consciousness nor a perceptual consciousness. We might, for the sake of convenience, refer to McCosh's concept of consciousness as the "shadow" theory of consciousness, as it has neither power nor endurance nor form nor task.

Conclusion

Three conclusions might be drawn from the models of consciousness reviewed in this chapter. First. From Locke

and Reid through Hopkins and McCosh, there is general agreement that consciousness is the source of our knowledge of both external and internal events as well as the source of our knowledge of God and God's power. Even though consciousness was conceived in this way, the means by which it served this function were never made explicit; it was accepted as a "first principle" that consciousness is a reliable source of information. Second. There is general agreement that consciousness consisted of two aspects: immediate and simple (consciousness conceived as "awareness"), and reflective and complex (consciousness conceived as a capacity of the mind). This division implies the notion of levels of consciousness, though none of the philosopher/psychologists we have reviewed in this period referred to consciousness in this sense or explicitly asserted that their models implied a hierarchy of conscious experiences. This idea was to await the recognition of mental pathology as altered conscious states, a perspective that would gain ground in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

Third. There was general agreement that consciousness serves as the embodiment of the self or the self-concept. Certainly, where the mind was conceived as an entity divisible into specific operations, some aspect of mental function must be given over to the sense of felt continuity, the notion that all our thoughts are attended by the sense that they are our thoughts. Consciousness served this function, though there is no necessary reason why consciousness, any more than reason or memory, should serve

this function. (Indeed, Kant believed that the self-concept was learned, not innate.)

That few of the nineteenth-century psychologist/philosophers whose models we have examined explicitly addressed these issues is, in all likelihood, the result of their preference for epistemological issues over psychological ones, even in an age when there appeared to be increasing interest in the relation between mental function and physiological symptoms. What is missing from these models is a clear attempt to address psychopathological symptoms, symptoms which Reid and his followers frequently explained as a lack of will or an excess of imagination. Madness, insanity, neurosis, none of these could be satisfactorily explained within a model principally oriented to conscious processes. If psychology was to be a science, however, it must come to terms with both the fallibility of mind and the existence of altered conscious states; it must adopt a peculiarly psychological point of view that encompassed all aspects of man's experience. This was to be the legacy of William James and the psychologists of the late nineteenth century, whose ideas we will encounter in the fifth chapter.

As we have seen, America's philosopher/psychologists adopted the methods and assumptions of the Scottish philosophers, the same methods that defined most nineteenth-century science: the belief that the proper goal of any science was to submit a classification and hierarchical ordering of its subject matter; and the assumption (always implicit) that such classification constituted a sufficient

explanation of the subject.³⁶ These ideas dominated the work of Mark Hopkins, and James McCosh who, following in the tradition of Scottish faculty psychology, believed they were setting mental philosophy upon the certain and respectable path of science. In contrast, the novelists of this same period adopted a different approach. More concerned with the subjective experience, less concerned with epistemological issues, the writers whose works are the topic of the next chapter replaced "mind" with "consciousness" as the primary subject of investigation, acknowledging it as the "ultimate and legitimate authority." Consequently, from the literary perspective, the central issues of consciousness--that it consists of both immediate and reflective (intuitive) aspects, that it embodies the self-concept, that it is the source of all knowledge--become the central themes of literary representation.

Chapter Notes

¹ This tendency to incorporate into traditional theological/psychological discourse a materialist ethic is also noted by George Sidney Brett in his A History of Psychology Vol. 3. Modern Psychology (1921) (Ann Arbor: Michigan, University Microfilms, 1970), pp. 257-259. George Brett, however, describes this period of the history of American psychology as one in which "(o)riginality is the feature most conspicuous by its absence" (p. 256). For a discussion of Spencer's influence, see John W. Rathbun and Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905, vol. II (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1979), pp. 86-87 and Paul F. Boller, Jr., American Thought in Transition. The Impact of Evolutionary Naturalism, 1865-1900 (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1981).

² David J. Murray, A History of Western Psychology, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1988), pp. 131-135.

³ Allan Gardner Smith, The Analysis of Motives, p. 146.

⁴ Jay Wharton Fay, American Psychology Before William James, pp. 129-167.

⁵ Jay Wharton Fay, American Psychology Before William James, pp. 117, 204, 222-223.

⁶ See J. David Hoeverler, Jr., James McCosh and the Scottish Intellectual Tradition from Glasgow to Princeton (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 147-162.

⁷ Laurens P. Hickok, Rational Psychology (1849) (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1973), pp. 169-170.

⁸ Laurens P. Hickok, Rational Psychology, pp. 169-170.

⁹ Laurens P. Hickok, Rational Psychology, pp. 17, 22, 23.

¹⁰ A.A. Roback, History of American Psychology.

¹¹ Victor Cousin was a nineteenth-century French philosopher whose ideas - in the manner of German idealism - were instrumental in fostering the Transcendental movement

in the United States and whose influence on American psychology before the mid-nineteenth century is little recognized (see Roback, History of American Psychology, pp. 55, 86, 155, 156). Cousin believed that what philosophy stood in need of was a systematic policy of eclecticism - a concerted welding together of the valuable elements contained in different systems. Applying this idea to the psychology of man, Cousin argued that man was a composite being of different powers and activities whose organization was determined by the relative strengths and specific attributes of different capacities: the intellectual, the voluntary, and the physical. (See Frederick Copleston, S.J., A History of Philosophy. Book 3 (New York: Doubleday, 1985); pp. 42-47). Cousin's Elements of Psychology was translated by C.S. Henry in 1834 and was adopted by many of the leading advocates of the Scottish school as a particularly coherent statement of human mental function. In general, however, the appeal was more to Cousin's eclectic spirit (and the appearance of compromise) than to his psychological principles.

¹² Asa Mahan, A System of Intellectual Philosophy, 1st ed. (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1854), p. 47.

¹³ This distinction is stated baldly:

In simple Consciousness, we have a knowledge of whatever passes in our mind. In reflection, we have the same phenomena classified and generalized, according to fundamental characteristics thus perceived and affirmed. (See Asa Mahan, A System of Intellectual Philosophy, pp. 50-51.)

¹⁴ Asa Mahan, A System of Intellectual Philosophy, p. 51.

¹⁵ Asa Mahan, A System of Intellectual Philosophy, pp. 51-52.

¹⁶ Asa Mahan, A System of Intellectual Philosophy, pp. 55-56.

¹⁷ Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind in Fiction and Psychology (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), pp. 86-87.

¹⁸ See, for example, Jay Wharton Fay, American Psychology Before William James, pp. 129-131; George Sidney Brett, A History of Psychology, pp. 257-259; David J. Murray, A History of Western Psychology, pp. 158-161, 170-195.

¹⁹ F. G. Gosling, Before Freud. Neurasthenia and the

American Medical Community, 1870-1910 (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1987), pp. 16-20.

- 20 F. G. Gosling, Before Freud, pp. 9-11.
- 21 Mark Hopkins, An Outline Study of Man. Mind and Body in One System, with Illustrative Diagrams and a Method for Blackboard Teaching (New York: Scribner, 1878), pp. 57-190.
- 22 Mark Hopkins, An Outline Study of Man., p. 96.
- 23 Mark Hopkins, An Outline Study of Man., pp. 104-107 (my emphasis).
- 24 Mark Hopkins, An Outline Study of Man., p. 105.
- 25 Mark Hopkins, An Outline Study of Man., p. 107.
- 26 Mark Hopkins, An Outline Study of Man., p. 107.
- 27 James McCosh, Psychology: The Cognitive Powers (New York: Scribner, 1886, 1892, 1906); Psychology: The Motive Powers (New York: Scribner, 1887).
- 28 A.A. Roback, History of American Psychology, p. 110.
- 29 J. David Hoeveler, James McCosh, p. 307.
- 30 James McCosh, Psychology: The Cognitive Powers, p. 3.
- 31 James McCosh, Psychology: The Cognitive Powers, p. 3.
- 32 James McCosh, Psychology: The Cognitive Powers, pp. 71-72.
- 33 James McCosh, Psychology: The Cognitive Powers, p. 212.
- 34 James McCosh, Psychology: The Cognitive Powers, p. 72. The full text of the poem (which is untitled) is as follows:
 As one hangs down, bending from the side
 Of a slow-moving boat upon the breast
 Of a still water, solacing himself
 With such discoveries as his eyes can make
 Beneath him in the bottom of the deep,
 Sees many beauteous sights, -weeds, fishes, flowers,
 Grots, pebbles, roots of trees, -and fancies more;
 Yet often is perplexed, and cannot part

The shadow from the substance-rocks and sky,
 Mountains and clouds, reflected in the depth
 Of the clear flood-from things which there abide
 In their own dwelling; now is crossed by gleam
 Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
 And waving motion sent, he knows not whence,
 Impediments that make his task more sweet.

"Every word," McCosh insists, might analogically be applied to the reflex process of the human mind, as it observes its own thoughts and reasonings, its sentiments and emotions" (p. 72).

³⁵ James McCosh, The Intuitions of the Mind, Inductively Investigated (1860; 3rd ed. rev. New York, Scribner, 1874), p. 4.

³⁶ James McCosh, The Intuitions of the Mind, p. 228.

³⁷ Salient examples of this strategy in nineteenth-century science are revealed in the construction (in 1869) of the periodic table of the elements by a Russian chemist, Dmitry Ivanovich Mendeleev; the classification of species suggested by Alfred Russell Wallace and Charles Darwin in a joint publication before the London Royal Society in 1858.

CHAPTER 4

THE "LEGITIMATE AUTHORITY": CONSCIOUSNESS EMPOWERED

My intention in this chapter is to describe models of consciousness portrayed in selected works of realist writers Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, William Dean Howells, and Henry James. I do not mean to suggest that these authors necessarily held to the ideas implied by these passages nor that they set out with a particular model in hand, so to speak, and concertedly attempted to "fit" the character to the model. Decidedly, realist authors were little concerned with epistemological questions and were not intent upon constructing philosophical systems. As I hope to make clear, they saw their work as an attempt to recreate, in narrative, the experience of ordinary men and women in quite ordinary circumstances; the experience, that is, of living in the rapidly changing society of late nineteenth-century America.¹ I am suggesting, however, that, because these passages are intended to reflect the experience of ordinary people, they may be considered reliable indicators of the way in which consciousness would be described by people who had no theological or philosophical interest in the matter, no epistemological agenda to pursue.

It will become evident in this chapter that the authors of realist fiction I have selected pursue a very different course from that of the philosopher/psychologists of the preceding chapters. They have no desire to classify or to explain. They are little interested in speculating about the

origin of knowledge or correcting the flaws of previous models of mind or consciousness. Indeed, consciousness is not an entity to be explained, but, from the literary point of view, an on-going series of successive mental and emotional states with which the reader is invited to embrace and to experience as one's own. This implicit (and occasionally explicit) objective of realist fiction virtually obviates against the possibility that realist authors would recognize anything of value in the psychological literature. As we have seen, the psychological literature offers up a consciousness seemingly stripped of emotive significance. It is just that profound difference in intent that makes comparisons between the two disciplines a problematic enterprise.

As Michael Kearns has emphasized, the conception of mind-as-sentient-being was promulgated by novelists long before it was adopted by psychologists.² The reason for this should be clear if we remember that nineteenth-century science was conceived as an analytical and reductive enterprise (see Chapter 3, pp. 78-79 and footnote 35). In order to justify a science of mind and consciousness as science, nineteenth-century philosophers and psychologists adopted the same approach, reducing mind to component "faculties" (consciousness, reason, intuition, and the will) and speculating upon possible interactions. Logically, reductive analysis assumes the existence of a circumscribed entity, for only entities can be segmented in this way.

It will become clear in this chapter that, because psychologists and novelists of this period (1865-1885) were

pursuing different agendas, they adopted quite different perspectives on the nature of consciousness. This outcome, far from devaluing a comparative enterprise, provides grounds for the concluding discussion concerning the constraints imposed by discipline-specific agendas and methodological commitments on the integrity of the object of interest.

What follows in this chapter is a series of passages drawn from the works of noted American realists that serve as salient examples of the mind-as-sentient-being world-view. Because the literary realists of the mid-nineteenth century were less than explicit about their theories of consciousness, however, the strategy in this chapter will rely to a greater degree than before on interpretation of selected passages. The interpretive strategy that I have adopted in this chapter will include reference to the author's explicit statements about his or her work (where available), and the extent to which the passage accords with the conventions and intentions of literary realism. Because literary realists were concerned with expressions of consciousness as experienced, I have assumed that the "meaning" of a selected passage serves as a reliable indicator of a particular, quasi-implicit "theory" of consciousness.

The Tenets of Literary Realism

Olaf Hansen has suggested that the agenda of literary realism may be characterized as one "oriented [both] towards transcendence and towards practicality." And it is certainly characteristic of this literature that there exists within it a fundamental tension between what Hansen has termed "the old

dilemma of having to choose between absolute subjectivity on the one hand [characteristic of the Romantic novel] and absolute objectivity [characteristic of the sciences] on the other."³ Nineteenth-century realist novelists solved this dilemma by assuming that, since their work adhered as closely as possible to the experience of the common man (or woman) engaged in ordinary activities, it could not help but reflect (or come to reflect) general laws of human nature.

Justification for this appeal to a science of human nature was supported by several sources: It was supported by the work of the Scottish philosophers who believed their analyses and classifications of the faculties and powers of the mind represented general laws of human mental phenomena (see Chapter 2); it was supported by a tradition long associated with Calvinist theology that assumed man's life and struggles could be explained as part of a Divine plan, that is, a higher order of laws;⁴ and it was supported by the optimistic "evolutionism" of men like Herbert Spencer and Hippolyte Taine who, seeing "progress in every corner," promulgated the idea that development (whether natural, human, or cultural) advanced in orderly stages.⁵ Within this context of ideas, realist authors saw their work as one with the spirit of the times--an age in which subjective experience was considered but one small part of a universe of ordered phenomena.

As readers of realist fiction, we are asked to identify with a moral dilemma fought within a central consciousness, an arena in which sensory experience, conscious reflection, Puritan morality, and practical necessity must have their

say: a "theatre," according to William James, "of possibilities."⁶ Yet, though Herbert Spencer (and, to a lesser extent, Hippolyte Taine; see Appendix) might have supplied such a context, there is little evidence of their influence in this early period. The moral dilemma, the conflicted consciousness, was not new to realist fiction: it emerged out of a long tradition of theological questioning. What was different about realist fiction, in contrast to the fiction of the preceding Romantic period, were the kinds of questions that were asked. Realist authors brought to their task an overriding concern for the relation between the individual man or woman and the rules and standards accorded the society in which they lived.⁷

That realist writers did have a moral agenda, however, cannot be questioned, and their work should be seen in that context. They were very much aware of the changes that had taken place since the end of the American Civil War: the transition from an agricultural economy to an industrial one; the growth of cities; westward expansion; the growth of a large band of "urban poor" and of a middle class. They were no less aware of the more subtle changes: the passing of the "genteel tradition;" the decline of a religious ethic; changes in women's roles (though not, necessarily, in expectations). Recognizing these changes, they tended to view the individual as continually striving against a society perpetually in flux. The crucial point is that these authors believed that the striving itself was important and that success depended on an individual's ability to make sense of his or her experience. Their stories are stories of men and

women who succeed (when they succeed) because of the knowledge they have acquired from their experience. As readers, we are permitted to witness this process, this striving, through the internalization of action within a central consciousness.

As we will see, it was the dynamic process of emerging self-awareness and the interactions between an experiencing self and society that captured the imaginations of literary realists. Accordingly, the mimetic representation of subjective experience countermanded the use of classificatory techniques and reductive analysis. Instead, these authors were concerned with the use of literary techniques that permitted the recreation of such complex mental processes as emerging self-awareness, the growth of understanding, and the resolution of moral conflict. The mind-as-sentient-being metaphor is an apt expression for what these authors intended to convey in their work

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (1841-1911)

Elizabeth Stuart Phelps was the daughter of a popular mid-century novelist and a professor of philosophy who taught at Andover Academy in Massachusetts. Her mother's death in childbirth when Elizabeth was eight years old had a profound effect on her work, particular in her selection of topics and her wide-ranging social consciousness. In her autobiography, published in 1896, she writes of her mother's death and her knowledge of her mother's life with deep regret:

At the time of her death she was at the first blossom of her very positive and widely promising success as a writer of the simple home stories which took such a hold upon the popular heart....Her last book and her last baby came together, and killed her. She lived one of those rich and piteous lives such as only

gifted women know; torn by the civil war of the dual nature which can be given to women only....I have sometimes felt as if even the generation that knows her not would feel a certain degree of interest in the tact and power by which this unusual woman achieved the difficult reconciliation between genius and domestic life.⁸

This theme of the gifted woman, sensitive, articulate, capable, coming to terms with the demands and expectations of nineteenth-century domesticity occurs repeatedly in Phelps's work.

From the frequent references to Scottish principles, to Spinoza, Fichte, to the works of Kant and Hegel, there is no reason to suspect that Phelps was not well acquainted with their ideas. Indeed, she writes, almost as a satirical aside, of the practical uselessness of "psychological study...which...unquestionably finds a proper place in the lecture room, where all well-classified feelings go."⁹ It is evident from this quote that Phelps intends to describe a consciousness of quite a different sort than that of the classificatory systems of contemporary philosopher/psychologists. It is not for her to reduce consciousness to a mere adjunct to mind, to a "perceptual act" whose task is to reveal mental operations. Instead, Phelps describes a consciousness of sentient states, of feeling-toned sensations. A particularly telling passage captures many of these ideas:

A being of radiant physique; the heiress of ancestral health...a creature forever more of nerve than of muscle, and therefore trained to the energy of the muscle and the repose of the nerve; physically educated by mothers of her own fibre and by physicians of her own sex,--such a woman alone is fitted to acquire the drilled brain, the calmed imagination, and sustained aim, which constitute intellectual command.

A creature capable of this command, in whom emotion

intensifies reflection, and passion strengthens purpose, and self-poise is substituted for self-extravagance,-- such a creature only is competent to the terrible task of adjusting the sacred individuality of her life to her supreme capacity of love and the supreme burden and perils which it imposes upon her.¹⁰

In this passage, Phelps exalts the intellect over passion, self-command over "self-extravagance," and makes of the capacity to reflect the cornerstone of mental health. But it is the capacity to reflect in accord with emotional commitment and the "capacity of love" that reveals most clearly Phelps's intent to transcend the sterility of academic analysis. Unlike Reid and the early American psychologists we examined in the last chapter, the language Phelps uses has an emotive quality: She commends the one "in whom emotion intensifies reflection, and passion strengthens purpose" where Reid and the others regarded both emotion and passion as anathemic.

Quite ignoring the epistemological cast of American academic philosophy, Phelps describes a consciousness too acutely (though occasionally belatedly) aware of its own frailties and false perceptions, a consciousness which selects, constructs, and reflects back upon itself in never-ending series. In many of her stories, especially those whose central characters are women, Phelps portrays this development through a consciousness so sensitively attuned to itself and its various textures that it appears as though the external reality--the objective events which form the fabric of consciousness--are of less import than the reflective experience.

The following selection is drawn from Phelps's 1879

printing of The Story of Avis. In this example, Phelps equates consciousness with the imagination, and submits that this imaginative quality is a stronger master than Reason:

(1)

Now and then a feature, an attitude, an accent, gets a mathematical hold of our imaginations, as far removed from the aesthetic or magnetic way, yet more imperious than either; like the pattern of the wall-paper in the room which has known some tragedy or ecstasy of our lives. We sit enchained by a trick of speech in the man we hate, or the cut of the brow in the creature we despise, the shadow under the lip of the stranger we neither expect nor care to meet again, or the glance of the friend in whose broken faith eternity could not tempt us to confide. These things happen as the comets march and countermarch, by laws deeper than, though apparently subservient to, caprice.¹¹

The passage depicts a consciousness at the mercy of a series of seemingly trivial events. What is it that directs attention to an isolated feature, a "trick of speech," a passing glance? These small events, Phelps would assert, command our attention and take hold of consciousness more "imperviously" than aesthetic or intellectual study. How could such trivialities take hold so firmly? This is exactly the sort of question which Reid and his followers relegated (with a sense of approbation) to the realm of imagination. It is precisely that "excess" of meaning given to the seemingly inconsequential that is beyond the classificatory procedures adopted by all the psychologists we have reviewed, a state of affairs with which Phelps is clearly aware.

In The Story of Avis Phelps relates the experience of a sensitive, articulate woman, an artist of recognized talent, who must come to terms with the realities of nineteenth-

century domesticity and the (inevitable, to Phelps) abandonment of her career. In this story, as in most of her work, Phelps's awareness of the social constraints imposed on women is prominently displayed: She portrays the struggle of women of talent in a society that has clear and fixed expectations of women's roles. In Phelps's work, however, the struggle takes place entirely within the consciousness of the central character, a woman who is acutely sensitive to the nuances of her own psychic state. Indeed, this is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the realist tradition, as we have seen. The following examples are drawn from this work.

Following Philip's proposal of marriage, Avis returns to her studio after a long absence. This passage reveals her awareness that, by accepting his offer, she may have compromised her artistic future. Standing in the center of her art studio, Avis considers her position and the nature of the compromise she is called upon to make. Note the use of analogy: the studio walls are "like the friend who never forgets" a former resolve; the presence of an "invisible tribunal" standing in judgment. These metaphors convey the moral dilemma, that Avis must resolve:

(2)

A stillness and strangeness deeper than a bruised muscle could strike, came upon her when she closed the door of the long-deserted place, and, striking a fire in her little grate, sat down to warm her hands. The autumn sun stepped in, and stood cool and calm against the wall, like the friend who never forgets, or suffers as to forget, the resolve or the aspiration which we once expressed...Avis looked about her with a singularly self-defensive feeling, as if she were summoned by some invisible tribunal to answer for an impalpable offense. She had something of the recoil which a man has in turning to his books or his business

after a night's dissipation....

"What have I done?" she cried. "Oh! what have I done?"¹²

The quoted monologue (relatively rare in realist fiction) which concludes this passage is not unexpected. By the time of her outburst, we, as readers, already know that Avis is feeling guilt and loss and regret. These feelings are conveyed metaphorically: She is met with 'the cool autumn sun' whose 'calm presence' reminds her of her former self; her guilt is established by an 'invisible tribunal' against which she has no worthy defense. That she suffers a 'radical confusion' encountering her work (in the manner of a man whose 'night of dissipation' leaves him unprepared for the business of his day) suggests--perhaps more strongly than if conveyed directly--her knowledge of what she may lose in marriage.

The use of metaphor allows the reader access to the inner turmoil more directly, more intimately, than if the feelings had been expressed in a more forthright manner (as if to say, "I am afraid..."). The moral dilemma is internalized, represented as a series of conflicting feelings and impressions, as of a simple consciousness (the present "I") overpowered. More important, however, than the fact that consciousness is represented by a succession of feeling-states, is that it is accompanied, finally, by reasoned recognition of their import: it is, in the end, to reflective consciousness (and the deliberating will) that Phelps appeals. As literary historians have noted: "Phelps's appeal to the reader is to the rational mind as well as to the feeling heart,"¹³ a statement that unintentionally

reflects the idea that consciousness is both immediate and reflective.

The following passage, also from The Story of Avis, employs a similar technique. Again, note the use of metaphor to convey the inner conflict: her former passion has become a "diseased life" whose loss cannot be mourned; her husband's image has become indistinguishable from the background of trivialities of her life; and the dilemma posed is one of learning to live without the passion that had once allowed her to rationalize the inevitable abandonment of her career. The italicized passages tell the inner story:

(3)

A certain terror fell upon her at finding in her own heart no sting sharper than that of a sad scorn. She had rather hoped she might find herself a little jealous....She hung over her love for her husband as we hang over a precious, diseased life, of which we have not the courage to despair....Better fire than frost! Better the seething than the freezing death! With a sickening dismay she perceived that Phillip--he too--began to seem to her like a figure seen in the valley of an incoherent dream. She felt as if she had suddenly stepped into a world of pygmies, and had a lilliputian code to learn before she could take up the duties of citizenship therein.¹⁴

In this passage, the metaphors call up images of disease and death and lonely isolation. There is more than a hint of objective distancing (of "dismay" and "sad scorn"), as Avis, always sensitive to her own feelings, becomes aware of the loss of her passion. In this passage, Avis (and the reader) are caught up in a confusing swirl of despair and loss.

In Phelps's work, the use of metaphor gives voice to the inner turmoil. For the psychologists of the same period, the use of metaphor appeared to authenticate their claims to scientific objectivity. The reader will recall,

for example, that Reid equated consciousness with a "perceptual act," an internal sense. This metaphor was taken up by his followers, Stewart and McCosh (though McCosh referred to this sense as "intuition"). Throughout the 1865-1885 period, psychologists adopted a series of other metaphors to "explain" the operation of consciousness (the reader will recall Hopkins's identification of consciousness with the "cellular membrane," and Hickok's reference to consciousness as the "light of reason"), none of these men appeared to consider that consciousness might be equated with a series of feeling states expressed in terms of sensory elements. In Phelps's work, we see this intent most clearly; and the opposition to the work of the analytical philosophers is striking.

Another example from the same work shows Phelps's ability to portray a consciousness filled with visual images, each conveying a sense of lost innocence, regret, and (perhaps) guilt. In this passage, Philip is portrayed as overwhelmed by his knowledge that his callous behavior toward his wife might well have destroyed the only aspect of his life that was truly pure. As before, Phelps relies on a series of rapid, visual images to convey the unreflected conscious state. The reader will note the contrast Phelps suggests between "sensations," as conveyed by the visual imagery, and "reflections," which Philip would avoid. In this passage, Philip would will the images away, though his will is powerless:

(4)

It was Philip who was wakeful that night. Visions which he would just then have gone blind to forget, electrotyped themselves upon the half-lit room. Long

odorous country twilights, the scent of honeysuckle about a farmhouse-door, the pressure of confiding fingers on his arm, the uplifting of a young face, the touch of trustful life, pursued him rather with the force of sensations than reflections. With these came other ghosts, incoherent fancies, aimless fevers, nameless dreams.¹⁵

Despite the many dissimilarities between Phelps's work and Reid's, it is significant that, in this passage, Phelps uses the word "reflections" in contrast to "sensations" in the same sense, and for the same purpose, with which Reid contrasted the terms: that is, to indicate the difference between a train of thought consisting of transitory images and a train of thought consisting of focused ideas. As we have seen, Phelps uses imagery to convey a number of different consciousness states. In passage 2 (p. 93), the technique was used to convey a sense of the moral dilemma that Avis must resolve upon her marriage; in passage 3 (p. 95), the technique is used to convey loss and bitterness, Avis's recognition that the passion that had sustained her commitment to marriage had dissolved and all that remained was obligation. In passage 4 (above), she uses the technique to convey an unreflective consciousness, a series of pictorial images that are unusually concrete, quite as though Philip is mentally reviewing a scrapbook filled with mementos. This, of course, is what Phelps intends. Despite these differences, there is clear indication that consciousness as Phelps conceives it is very different from the sterile entity depicted by the academics.

A final passage provides even stronger support for this conclusion. In the following selection from The Story of Avis, Phelps employs a series of metaphoric images to convey

an "altered" conscious state, characteristic of those under the influence of alcohol.:

(5)

The first thing which she saw was a huge earthen vase, standing by itself against the wall, raised a few inches from the floor, thus, and thus only, indicating to her eyes that it was not what we are used to call a reality....Through a maze of lotus-leaves, Isis went seeking Osiris, the figures moving faintly before her eyes till they had adjusted themselves with what seemed a voluntary motion to their attitudes upon the clay. The figures were black, expressed by gray lights. The leaves were of an opaque green, without veining or shadow. A raised design of silver and steel surrounded the neck, lips, and pedestal of the jar. If it had been light enough, she could have taken her pencil, and accurately copied this design, which was very intricate, and which pleased her....

This appearance, which lasted but for a few moments, was the signal for a kaleidoscope of beautiful and soulless form to stir before her, slowly and subtly, like the outer circle of a whirlpool into which she was to be drawn. Pottery, porcelain, furniture, drapery, sculpture, then flowers, fruits,--a medley of still-life,--swept through strange and half-revealed, but wholly resplendent interiors, which glided on indifferently, like languages that said, "What hast thou to do with this?" Now and then, out of the splendid maze, a distinct effect seemed to pause, and poise itself, and woo her through the dark. An open hand, raised, and turned at the wrist like a flower on its stem, held water-lillies, drooping and dripping. A sunbeam, upon an empty chair in a student's alcove, focused upon a child's shoe and a woman's ribbon. A skull ground a rose between its teeth. Bees, upon a patch of burning July sky, wooed a clover. In a pool in a cliff, a star-fish defined the colors of a tangle of weeds and shells. In a thicket of wildbriar a single rose-leaf had fallen upon a gray stone, across which, and over the miniature clearing in the mimic forest, the tattered and fringed light lay.¹⁶

In this passage, a succession of visual images dominates the conscious state, diminishing the expression of reason and self-awareness. This sort of experience is beyond the range of issues with which the psychologists of this time were prepared to explain. Altered conscious states were not to

concern academics until near the turn of the century.

As a whole, these passages convey a "theory" of consciousness in sharp contrast to the models developed by eighteenth and early nineteenth-century philosopher/psychologists. Given her ideals, it is likely that Phelps's motive was as much personal as it was social: to give voice to her belief that the secondary status accorded nineteenth-century American women was grounded in a false sense of what constituted rationality and a false identification of rationality with the male mind. In response to the perceived "ultra-rationality" of academic philosophy, it is also likely that Phelps intended to convey the idea that consciousness was not necessarily synonymous with rational thought, but included aspects of pure sensation and emotive significance. For Phelps, the use of metaphoric images conveys the impression of a multi-textured feeling-toned consciousness that is quite at odds with the classificatory approach adopted by the psychologists, and only hinted at by her contemporaries, William Dean Howells and Henry James. A consciousness of this sort is not again apparent until the work of William James begins to appear in the 1870's.

William Dean Howells (1837-1920)

William Dean Howells was a mid westerner, born and raised in a small Ohio town. Like many of the literary realists, Howells had little formal education. He began his literary career as a journalist for the Ohio State Journal and continued his journalistic career as chief editor of the Atlantic Monthly (1871-1881) and as a regular contributor to

Harper's Monthly (1886-1920), where he published his most famous and polemic articles advancing the 'cause' of realism in American fiction. As editor of the Atlantic, Howells was singularly responsible for providing a forum for other realists of the period, notably Henry James and Mark Twain, and for encouraging younger writers whose work spawned the naturalist tradition in America, men like Jack London and Frank Norris.¹⁷

Unlike Phelps, Howells was less concerned with the individual response and more concerned with the individual-as-representative-of-a-type, though not, of course, an ideal. The tendency to portray his characters in stereotypical colors is present in all his works from the earliest Their Wedding Journey published in 1872 to his last, Through the Eye of a Needle, published in 1907, all "conventional Howells fare," according to one biographer.¹⁸ Though his early works are largely descriptive of social life (down to the smallest observed details and interactions), his later works came to include a desire to change the social reality; in the words of present-day analysts, "to describe experience in order to disturb man's acceptance of experience."¹⁹ Howells's overriding social agenda led him to conceive of consciousness as purely an inner response on a par with--or in no way more complex than--the outward behavior. Howells's characters are not of the 'type' to reflect deeply or wonderingly, to brood or to analyze; his characters are men and women of more action than thought; more purpose than possibility. Accordingly, Howells approached consciousness much as a scientist might describe the behavior of a biological

specimen--as though it were all of one piece, with no complex turnings or twistings; as though all that could be known could be observed by an impartial observer.

Far more than most realists of the period, Howells was the literary man who believed that scientific method holds the key to progress and to truth.²⁰ Like Hippolyte Taine, whose work he knew well, Howells partially accepted a deterministic interpretation of literature and the literary process.²¹ The author's task, he believed, was merely to set the conditions under which the action would take place and then watch the novel unfold according to the internal consistency of the material. "It is a well ascertained fact concerning the imagination," wrote Howells, "that it can work only the stuff of experience. It can absolutely create nothing, it can only compose."²²

It was Howells's method to set up the plot, map out the central characters, and allow the action to take place, maintaining all the while an objective distance from the inner workings of the character's mental state. As Dorritt Cohn explains it, it is as though the narrator of the story "holds the unwavering stance of a wise and rational psychologist," whose purpose it is to use the character's plight to set forth his (or her) own generalizations about human behavior and society.²³ Because the author assumes an objective posture, he appears in the novel as an omniscient narrator who knows more than his characters; often, the reader comes to identify with the narrator's objective stance. The extent to which the narrator's presence dominates the story is indicative of the extent to which the

character's consciousness comes to play a significant role in the development of the story line. As Dorritt Cohn has asserted: "The more conspicuous and idiosyncratic the narrator, the less apt he is to reveal the depth of his characters' psyches or, for that matter, to create psyches that have depth to reveal,"²⁴ a statement which is aptly applied to Howells's work.

The following examples of this technique are drawn from William Dean Howells, The Rise of Silas Lapham, written in 1885:

(6)

He could see the young people down on the rocks, and his heart swelled in his breast. He had always said that he did not care what a man's family was, but the presence of young Corey as an applicant to him for employment...was one of the sweetest favors that he had yet tasted in his success. He knew who the Corey's were very well, and, in his simple brutal way, he had long hated their name as a symbol of splendor which...he could not hope to realize in his own.

Nothing had moved his thick imagination like this day's events since the girl who taught him spelling and grammar...had said she would have him for her husband.²⁵

This passage is a salient example of an observer's careful reporting of what might well be occurring in the mind of a well-known but not necessarily well-liked acquaintance. We are given to understand Lapham's "brutal way" and "thick imagination" so as to preclude our ability to identify with a character who, incidentally, clearly knows less about his own mind than we are given to know of it. Silas Lapham is a man unencumbered by complexities or acute sensitivities--he is, after all an American businessman, a representative of late nineteenth-century American industrialization. Accordingly, he is less likely than the too-sensitive characters portrayed

in Phelps's works to reflect profoundly or with evident benefit upon either internal or external events. His is a consciousness that must be "interpreted," even as a patient's meandering thoughts might, on occasion, need be explained to him. Lapham is aware only of his sense of pleased satisfaction ("his heart swelled in his breast"); the connection between this feeling and an earlier one are not made by him but by the invisible narrator. The presence of a third-person narrator must have appealed to Howells because it represented (or seemed to represent) the most 'scientific' way of negotiating a compromise between the "dilemma" of subjectivity and objectivity.

In another passage from the same text, however, Howells ventures closer to the conscious state of his character. There are no authorial intrusions of the "thick imagination" type; Howells offers no judgment on his character's actions. Nonetheless, Howells maintains his characteristic objectivity: Lapham's psychic state is observable in behavioral language:

(7)

He could not keep about his work steadily, and with his nerves shaken from want of sleep, and the shock of this sudden and unexpected question, he left his office early, and went over to look at the house and try to bring himself to some conclusion there. The long procession of lamps on the beautiful street was flaring in the clear red of the sunset towards which it marched, and Lapham, with a lump in his throat, stopped in front of his house and looked at their multitude. They were not merely a part of the landscape; they were a part of his pride and glory, his success, his triumphant life's work which was fading into failure in his helpless hands. He ground his teeth to keep down that lump, but the moisture in his eyes blurred the lamps....There was no such facade as that on the whole street, to his thinking.²⁶

Even though Howells permits us, as readers, a more intimate connection with his character, we do not encounter in this passage a man who pauses long enough to consider the meaning of his plight, a man, that is, capable of reflection as Reid used the term. The moral dilemma remains unresolved, if only because the character is inherently (it would seem) incapable of resolving it. For such people, Reid would predict, nothing would be gained by the experience, as Lapham gains little. At the end of the novel, when Lapham's financial ruin is near-complete, Howells, as omniscient narrator, returns:

(8)

He was more broken than he knew by his failure; it did not kill, as it often does, but it weakened the spring once so strong and elastic. He lapsed more and more into acquiescence with his changed condition, and that bragging note of his was rarely sounded. He worked faithfully enough in his enterprise, but sometimes he failed to seize the occasions that in his younger days he would have turned to golden account.²⁷

In this passage, Howells's use of the third-person narrative works well with a character whose ability to articulate his own conscious states is limited; essentially, it has allowed him to create a character whose psychological depth is of less importance than the author's intended social statement.²⁸

Where Phelps realized her social agenda within the confines of a too-sensitive consciousness, Howells realizes his in the social arena. Nonetheless, Howells retains the technique, common to literary realism, of implying that the most important "action" of the narrative is that which takes place within the belabored consciousness of his central character. The difference between Howells's Silas Lapham

character and Phelps's Avis is that Avis is able to profit from her experience and Lapham is not. Phelps's character succeeds, at least, in rising above her situation; she appears to resolve her difficulties; she comes to acceptance. Silas Lapham does not profit from his experience; he does not reflect; he is not self-aware. Silas Lapham fails because he is incapable of reflecting on the nature of his failure, and, consequently, he lapses over time "more and more into acquiescence."

Is it possible to construct a "theory" of consciousness from these brief passages? In many ways, Howells's concept of consciousness parallels that of the academic psychologists. His is a consciousness of single dimensions, the literary equivalent of a unified entity responding passively to external events. Unlike consciousness as portrayed by Phelps, Howells does not suggest that consciousness is anything other than a point of contact between the external and internal worlds. Although Lapham is prepared to respond to events, his responses do not emerge out of increased self-awareness; they are the products of long-held habits, uniformed by changes in circumstance. Where external action dominates the narrative, consciousness recedes; and we have seen Howells's emphasis on behavioral descriptions (see passages 6, p. 101; 7, p. 103; and 8, p. 104) in lieu of visual sensory images. Nonetheless, there is an implicit moral contained within Howells's narrative: The failure to develop the capacity to reflect is a failure with profound moral implications. Both Lapham's success and his failure are a consequence of his single-mindedness;

complexity, intuitions, self-revelations, as experienced and accounted for, are not the character of Silas Lapham. Nor was it Howells's intention to portray such characters. As we have seen even in these brief passages, Howells's social agenda was realized in the creation of characters whose uncertain fate may be laid to their inability to profit from their experience. By extension, we may conclude that Howells's portrayal of a consciousness of simple dimensions was intended to advance his belief that the fulfilled life was inextricably linked to self-knowledge, acquired through full awareness of the felt experience. As we will see, this theme is the central theme of the last realist whose work we will examine in this chapter.

Henry James (1843-1916)

Henry James, Jr., was born in New York, the second oldest son of a man given to grand thoughts and religious and social zeal and a woman of gentle birth and quiet manners.²⁹ He was considered by his family more stable and more trustworthy than his older brother, William James, sometime psychologist, philosopher, scientist, though William's charming manner often overshadowed Henry's quieter nature. There was, indeed, a subtle, though persistent, rivalry between the two, somewhat aggressively pursued by William (whose critical comments on his brother's work suggest, at times, a reluctance to recognize his brother's ability) to which Henry, however, always responded mildly. In 1876, after trying literary life both in New York and Paris, James settled in London, where he would be based for most of the rest of his life.

Throughout his life and work, James was preoccupied with the theme of the betrayal of the young and innocent. Judith Woolf credits this preoccupation to the effects of the Civil War (many of James's childhood friends were killed in that war) and to the death of a much-loved younger cousin from tuberculosis.³⁰ A psychoanalytic interpretation would suggest that, perhaps, James himself felt "betrayed" by parents who seemingly assented to William's every whim, at some cost to the other members of the family.³¹ Whatever the reason, this theme is present throughout many of his novels and short stories: A child, often female, is left at the mercy of parental whims and insensitivities. In order to survive (to succeed) she must learn to interpret her world correctly, to understand others' motives, to make sense of rejection (if that is what it is), and to realize her real potential. The stories are related through the child's succession of impressions, thoughts, and reflections, through a sensitively aware, ever expanding consciousness. This same technique is used in his "adult" novels as well (e.g., Roderick Hudson, The Princess Casamassima), and toward the same end: the portrayal of a consciousness that expands through aware self-experience. The crucial ingredient, at least for James, is the creation of characters who are (in his own words), "intense perceivers all, of their respective predicaments."³²

Reviewing James's essay "Is There a Life After Death?" Courtney Johnson suggests that James himself was such a perceiver, a man intensely aware of changes in his own internal world.³³ In the essay, James describes what he

considers the important aspects of consciousness, how it functions and how it changes over time. Again, the crucial ingredient is the capacity for self awareness, the ability to reflect on one's experience. According to James, consciousness evolves, not, as Spencer would have it, from a state of "incoherent heterogeneity to coherent homogeneity," but, rather, from simple apperception of the world and ideas to active participation in the world via an on-going, interactive internal dialogue. The result, James proclaims, is that consciousness expands, it becomes infinitely more interesting, more complex, a multi-textured topographical relief. He writes:

(F)or...consciousness at least contained the world, and could handle and criticize it, could play with it and deride it; it had that superiority: which meant, all the while, such successful living that the abode itself grew more and more interesting to me, and with this beautiful sign of its character that the more one asked of it the more and the more it appeared to give.³⁴

The distinction which James intends to convey is between what Courtney Johnson has called "ordinary" consciousness, arising out of sense experience, and an "extraordinary" consciousness, based on sense experience, but drawing upon and emerging out of "something other than that."³⁵ It is Johnson's position that James's distinction between the two kinds of consciousnesses is a "paradox," which cannot be resolved within the context of Kant's assertion that "'all our knowledge is grounded in experience'."³⁶ But we have seen similar ideas expressed before in, for example, the distinction Thomas Reid makes between consciousness as a power of the Understanding ("the only evidence which we have or can have of...the operations of our minds") and the

capacity of "reflection" ("a kind of intuition" acquired over time).³⁷ We have also seen this idea in Mahan's distinction between "simple consciousness" and "reflective consciousness" in James McCosh's "intuitional realism" (see Chapter 3) and it appears as a central tenet of American Transcendentalism, expressed as the belief that reason and a sort of intuition combine to make the transcendent experience possible (see Appendix).

The distinction James is making in this essay and which underlies his approach to fiction, is embedded in a long historical tradition. (One might also argue that the distinction is implicit in Kant's discussion of the difference between phenomena and noumena.) In this essay, James is suggesting that a self-aware consciousness continually strives to make sense of experience by engaging in a dialogue informed by past dialogues, sensory experience, creative "insights," religious ideals, personal desire, in sum, a never-ending, constantly expanding series of thoughts and impressions. The image is one of consciousness spiraling outward, though James conveys an image of a calmer sort:

Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative--much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius--it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations.³⁸

James's view of consciousness as the source of understanding and creative insight is carried out in his creation of characters who have the potential to transcend

their experience. Less concerned than Howells to maintain a scientist's objective stance; less concerned than either Phelps or Howells to promote his own social agenda, Henry James's use of this narrative technique is intended to portray a consciousness actively engaged in observing and reflecting on the world. Several selections which follow are from James's self-acknowledged first novel, Roderick Hudson, written in 1875. This novel, like many of James's later novels, embodies a deliberate effort on James's part to view an entire fictive action from within the mind of a central participating observer. In the 1907 preface to this work, James writes:

The centre of interest throughout "Roderick" is in Rowland Mallet's consciousness, and the drama is the very drama of that consciousness--which I had of course to make sufficiently acute in order to enable it, like a set and lighted scene, to hold the play. By making it acute, meanwhile, one made its own movement--or rather, strictly, its movement in the particular connexion--interesting; this movement really being quite the stuff of one's thesis."

In this context, the narrative technique serves as a vehicle for the depiction of a sensitive consciousness engaged in continual reflection, appraisal and reappraisal of his experience. And, because it permits a character to engage in a kind of retrospective analysis, it makes possible the portrayal of an evolving consciousness within a specified context and without the necessity of inferring the inner process from outward behavior.

Roderick Hudson is the story of a young and relatively rich man (Rowland) who has taken responsibility for the support of a similarly young but very temperamental artist

(Roderick) whose artistic genius he admires. The difficulty presented is that Rowland is singularly attracted to Roderick's fiancée; and Roderick is not a faithful lover. The internal dialogue is presented thus:

[Rowland] had wondered over the whole matter first and last in a great many different ways--he had looked at it in all possible lights. There was something that mocked any sense of due sequences in the fact of [Roderick's] having fallen in love with her. She was not, as Rowland conceived her, the "type" that, other things being what they were, would most have touched him, and the mystery of attraction and desire, always so baffling if seen only from without, quite defied analysis here.⁴⁰

Unlike Howells, James (as narrator) knows little more than his character about "the mystery of attraction and desire;" neither the observer "from without" (James) nor the "observer within" seem to have access to a possible resolution of the feelings of a man for a woman who is not free. As the passage continues, however, James moves further and further away from the figural consciousness: He tells us that Rowland "would have been at a loss to say" why Mary's type failed to appeal to Roderick, had he really confronted the question. He notes that "our virtuous hero did scanty justice" to the idea that Roderick could hardly be held responsible for Rowland's "irregular" attraction. He makes sure we, as readers, see the "subtle sophistry" of Rowland's mental argument. By the time we arrive at the concluding assertion (to the effect that "any other girl would have answered"), we feel screened off from the character's mind.

The movement in the narrative from near-identity with the figural consciousness to a distinct separation from it, suggests that that consciousness has undergone a significant

transformation. It is less open to us; less, in all likelihood, open to itself: the Rowland who openly admitted his bewilderment in the first passage, has concluded, by the last passage, that what he wished not to be true, was not true--that Roderick certainly could not love her, she was not his "type." Unlike Howells, James moves toward the figural consciousness, nearly identifies with it, and moves away from it (in the form of judgment and objectivity) all to suggest a flow of conscious action, a consciousness in process. The "moving away," which results in our disengagement with the character's mind, is symbolic: the technique suggests that the character has "closed off" his mind to himself and is no longer willing (or capable) of uninhibited reflection. The process is halted, suggesting, perhaps, that Spencer's "coherent homogeneity" is not the end James would crave.

A primary theme running through many of James's novels and short stories is that of mental growth, the notion of innocence lost to experience, the gradual coming-to-awareness of a young mind. We have seen evidence of this theme before in Phelps's portrayal of Avis's confrontation with the loss of her career and the loss of her passion. Similarly, it is in James's novels in which a central consciousness comes to possess, over time, a truer sense of "reality" than it originally possessed (something which Howells's characters manage to avoid). Accordingly, the Jamesian consciousness is best described as an on-going stream of sensations, reflections, and retrospections; an eternal "discussion" of faint and vivid thought-series (halos and fringes). As James himself writes in the Preface to the 1907 edition of Roderick

Hudson:

[Relations] are of the very essence of the novelist's process, and it is by their aid, fundamentally, that his idea takes form and lives; but they impose on him, through the principle of continuity that rides them, a proportionate anxiety. They are the very condition of interest, which languishes without them; the painter's subject consisting ever, obviously, of the related state, to each other, of certain figures and things. To exhibit these relations, once they have all been recognised, is to "treat" his idea, which involves neglecting none of those that directly minister to interest....

Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so.⁴¹

The following selections are from James's What Maisie Knew.⁴² The story portrays a young child who is often a pawn in a game of wits and revenge between her divorced parents and their respective spouses. At this point in time, Maisie has begun to understand the conditions under which her presence (or absence) may please (or not) the adults of her life:

She was conscious enough that her face indeed could n't please him if it showed any sign - just as she hoped it did n't - of her sharp impression of what he now really wanted to do. Was n't he trying to turn the tables on her, embarrass her somehow into admitting that what would really suit her little book would be, after doing so much for good manners, to leave her wholly at liberty to arrange for herself? She began to be nervous again: it rolled over her that this was their parting, their parting for ever, and that he had brought her there for so many caresses only because it was important such an occasion should look better for him than any other. For her to spoil it by a note of discord would certainly give him ground for complaint; and the child was momentarily bewildered between her alternatives of agreeing with him about her wanting to get rid of him and displeasing him by pretending to stick to him. So she found for the moment no solution but to murmur very helplessly: "Oh papa - oh papa!"⁴³

The presence of the inner question ("Was n't he trying to

turn the tables on her...?") is characteristic of reflective consciousness portrayed, and the language is that of a child, so different (as we have seen) from James's own. What is given to us to know of this child's mind is coincident with her knowledge of it; there is no other interpretive presence. The conscious moment portrayed is indeed a "discussion" of alternative actions which are suggested on the basis of her past experience. It is, in William James's words, "a theatre of possibilities."

The following selection from the same novel shows us a consciousness that has evolved: the child has become more confident and more aware:

As she was condemned to know more and more, how could it logically stop before she should know Most? It came to her in fact as they sat there on the sands that she was distinctly on the road to know Everything. She had not had governesses for nothing: what in the world had she ever done but learn and learn and learn? She looked at the pink sky with a placid foreboding that she soon should have learnt All. They lingered in the flushed air till at last it turned to grey and she seemed fairly to receive new information from every brush of the breeze.⁴⁴

In this passage, the conscious state is constrained to the present mental instant and to the character's own experience; accordingly, it is subject to the limitations and distortions of the character's own knowledge, sensitivity, reason, and judgment. When employed throughout a novel, in different stages of development, the technique is useful for portraying a consciousness which evolves over time, which appraises, remembers, reflects on and about; a consciousness which makes connections (more or less valid), which flows and teems with "questions, exclamations, repetitions,

overstatements, colloquialisms."⁴⁵ Depending on the narrative context, however, we, as readers, may judge that evolving awareness as more or less truthful, more or less correct, to the extent that the author supplies us with information beyond the character's knowledge or to the extent that our own experience allows us to fill in the gaps.

Discussion: Part I

In the period between 1865 and 1885, neither American literature nor American psychology had achieved the status of professionalization or respectability that would come at the turn of the century. Writing within a tradition of naive realism and under an aura of suspicion with which the Scottish philosophers and their followers regarded the (imaginative) novel, American realists were simultaneously working out and defending the techniques which would come to define the realist novel. One characteristic of American realism was its emphasis on the "ordinary, the commonplace, and the common man," the representative "type," as Silas Lapham was a representative type, as most of Howells's characters were representative types. Since neither Poe's madness nor Emerson's other-worldliness were experiences common to ordinary men and women, rejecting the romantic consciousness led American realists to a confrontation with consciousness as it was experienced to the experiencing subject, a consciousness bound up with, inexorably tied to, the events of everyday life.

The solutions offered by the literary realists to the "problem of consciousness" were as varied as those offered by the psychologists, reflecting their particular agenda as much

as any one author's singular experience and introspective sophistication. To the observant and somewhat superficial William Dean Howells who equated "truth" with emotional distance and "objectivity" with the journalistic eye, consciousness was purely a behavioral phenomenon, to be described as a scientist might describe a chemical reaction. To the compassionate, sensitive, and often-sentimental Phelps, consciousness was described as a series of emotion-laden images and reflective monologues. To the introspective and analytical James, consciousness was described as a series of ever-expanding revelations, the path to certain knowledge, the threshold of personal transcendence.

As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, there are no obvious connections between the concepts of consciousness described by the philosopher/psychologists and the concepts of consciousness employed by literary realists of this period, 1865-1885. Indeed, the passages I have selected provide additional evidence in support of both Kearns's and Taylor's conclusion that the shift toward a mind-as-sentient-being perspective occurred in literary discourse before it became common currency in psychological discourse. Of the novelists whose work we have examined, most were acquainted with the philosophical models I have described, but there is no indication in either published or unpublished sources that suggests they intentionally drew on those ideas; indeed, there are several indications that suggest they deliberately rejected them.

There may be personal reasons for this seemingly deliberate rejection of the academic enterprise. Howells,

for one, was a journalist whose training did not include a background in philosophy or psychology, though he was likely aware of William James's early work through his association with Henry James. As we have seen, both Phelps and Henry James did indeed reject the academic models and purposefully set out to portray a consciousness of sensory complexity with the capacity for self-aware exploration, expansion, and transcendence. Their models of sentient consciousness were a result of their deliberate intent to portray experience as it was experienced; to invite the reader to share in that experience. By internalizing the action of the narrative within a central consciousness, these authors promulgated what has become known as "psychological realism" (defined as the realistic portrayal of experience) that opposed the more conservative (and, perhaps, sterile) philosophical realism of their academic contemporaries. (This emphasis on psychological realism was no less a concerted opposition to the idealism of the early nineteenth-century Transcendentalists.)

Taking consciousness as their central theme led literary realists to a direct confrontation with the nature of consciousness itself. And, although each of the realists whose work we reviewed adopted a somewhat different perspective on that issue, their solutions to the "problem of consciousness" largely ignored the emphasis on rationality and mental segmentations that characterized the psychological enterprise. In contrast to the language of science, the accepted language of the novel of consciousness is replete with self-reference and metaphoric embellishments. That

American pre-experimental psychologists (including Reid) so readily adopted the language of science is testimony to their desire to accord "psychological topics" the same status as the objects of inquiry in the natural sciences. This, of course, was not a literary concern.

Whether assumed objectivity in some way alters the topics under consideration, whether "consciousness" (or the "self," or "emotions"), as experienced, can be wholly captured in objective discourse, is a matter of some debate. Graham Richards, for example, asserts that the "objectification" of psychological terms so central to the goals of prediction and control (the goal of all science) is fundamentally at odds with the goals of "critical self-reflection," and self-understanding that have long been recognized in the humanities (history, literature, clinical psychology).⁴⁶ If this is so, then recognition of these opposing aims would lead us to expect profound differences between, for example, "consciousness" as characterized within an empirical/epistemological system (Locke, Reid, Mahan) and "consciousness" as characterized in the metaphorical language of the nineteenth century novel. As we have seen, there are profound differences between the psychological and literary models of consciousness of this period (1800-1885).

By the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, the Scottish influence had begun to wane, eclipsed by the evolutionary ideas of Charles Darwin. By then, psychology had acquired disciplinary status, aided by the return of American students who had trained in German laboratories. By then, American literature had acquired, if not disciplinary

status of the same sort, at least respectability. In the next section, Part II of this study, I will examine models of consciousness in psychology and literature of this later period, 1886-1910. As we will see, the psychologists of this later period adopted many of the ideas expressed by the literary realists we have just examined. And, somewhat surprisingly, the novelists of this later period addressed many of the issues that came to the attention of these later American psychologists.

Chapter Notes

¹ One could, however, make a strong argument for the possibility that Henry James's characters are never "ordinary" nor are the circumstances in which they find themselves.

² Michael S. Kearns, Metaphors of Mind in Fiction & Psychology (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1987), pp. 179-226.

³ Olaf Hansen, Aesthetic Individualism and Practical Intellect. American Allegory in Emerson, Thoreau, Adams, and James (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. x.

⁴ Wallace E. Anderson, ed., Jonathan Edwards. Scientific and Philosophical Writings, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1980), pp. 129-135.

⁵ See, for example, Herbert Spencer, A System of Synthetic Philosophy, 3rd ed., (1899) (Osnabruck: Proff & Co., 1966); Hippolyte Taine, On Intelligence (London: L. Reeve, 1871).

⁶ William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1, pp. 288-289.

⁷ Daniel H. Borus, Writing Realism. Howells, James, and Norris in the Mass Market (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of Carolina Press, 1989), pp. 13-14.

⁸ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Chapters from a Life (Boston, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1896), pp. 11-12.

⁹ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis (1879) (New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 129.

¹⁰ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis, p. 246.

¹¹ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis, p. 163.

¹² Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis (1879), Carol Farlet Kessler, ed. (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1985), p. 119.

¹³ MaryJo Buble and Florence Howe, "Afterword," in Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Silent Partner. A Novel (1871)

and "The Tenth of January" (1868) (New York: The Feminist Press, 1983), p. 381.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis, pp. 187-189.

¹⁵ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis, p. 169.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis, pp. 145-147.

¹⁷ John W. Rathbun & Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905, vol. II. (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1979), p. 52.

¹⁸ Kenneth E. Eble, William Dean Howells, 2nd ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1982), p. 164.

¹⁹ John W. Rathbun & Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, p. 60.

²⁰ John W. Rathbun & Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, pp. 53-55.

²¹ As in the case of Elizabeth Phelps, there is no compelling reason to assume that Howells intentionally adopted Taine's ideas. That he read Taine's works has been documented, but "Positivism," like evolutionism was "in the air." (See John W. Rathbun & Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, pp. 53-55.)

²² William Dean Howells, "Novel-Writing and Novel-Reading." In Howells and James: A Double Billing (New York: New York Library Pamphlets, 1958), p. 6 [cited in Daniel H. Borus, Writing Realism. Howells, James, and Norris in the Mass Market (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), p. 92. (Even so, Howells leaves unexplained the meaning of his distinction between "create" and "compose." For an unusually unsympathetic, though likely just, analysis of Howells's model of "realism," see Michael Davitt Bell, The Problem of American Realism. Studies in the Cultural History of a Literary Idea (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 17-38.

²³ Dorrit Cohn, Transparent Minds. Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 22-23, 26.

²⁴ Dorrit Cohn, Transparent Minds, p. 25.

25 William Dean Howells, The Rise of Silas Lapham (1885) (New York: Penguin, 1983), p 92.

26 William Dean Howells, The Rise of Silas Lapham, p. 310.

27 William Dean Howells, The Rise of Silas Lapham, p. 354.

28 Though Howells's uses of this technique certainly permitted him to maintain the appearance of objectivity, it is also likely that it was his intent (in Silas Lapham) to represent the character of a rags-to-riches American businessman as someone unused to (and likely incapable of) profound inner reflection. Certainly many of Howells's characters represent a particular type - a stereotype - of the bumbling, naive, "citified" American.

29 For background information on Henry James, see Leon Edel, Henry James. A Life (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).

30 Leon Edel, Henry James, pp. 108-112.

31 Leon Edel, Henry James, pp. 16-61.

32 Henry James, The Art of the Novel. Critical Prefaces. (New York: Scribner's, 1947), p. 63.

33 Courtney Johnson, Henry James and the Evolution of Consciousness. A Study of The Ambassadors (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1987), pp. 5-19.

34 Henry James, "Is There a Life After Death?" In After Days (New York: Harper, 1910), p. 220.

35 Courtney Johnson, Henry James, pp. 7-13.

36 Courtney Johnson, Henry James, p. 9.

37 Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969), pp. 34-35. (Reproduced from The Works of Thomas Reid, vols. I and II (Charlestown, Massachusetts: Samuel Etheridge, 1813/1814).

38 Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," (1884-1888), reprinted in Henry James. Literary Criticism. Essays on Literature, American Writers, and English Writers, Leon Edel and Mark Wildon, eds. (New York: Literary Classics, 1984), p.

52.

³⁹ Henry James, Roderick Hudson (New York: Scribners, 1907), p. xvii.

⁴⁰ Henry James, Roderick Hudson, p. 175 (my emphasis).

⁴¹ Henry James, Roderick Hudson, pp. vi-vii.

⁴² The text of James's What Maisie Knew was published in 1897, which represents in chronological time the period beyond the established parameters of my review. Like his brother's "psychology," however, Henry James's literary style does not change in substance over time; his views of consciousness simply become more refined and more fully expressed in his mature style. Moreover, it is inarguably clear that James cannot be considered a "naturalist" in the sense I apply the term to the next generation of writers, e.g., Kate Chopin or Theodore Dreiser.

⁴³ Henry James, What Maisie Knew (1897) (New York: Scribner's, 1923), pp. 186-187.

⁴⁴ Henry James, What Maisie Knew, p. 281.

⁴⁵ Dorrit Cohn, Transparent Minds, p. 102.

⁴⁶ Graham Richards, Mental Machinery. The Origins and Consequences of Psychological Ideas. Part I: 1600-1850. (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); p. 7.

CHAPTER 5

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS, 1886-1910

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and well into the third quarter, Scottish Commonsense philosophy dominated American thought--particularly in matters relating to concepts of the mind and consciousness. As we have seen, the models proposed by America's pre-experimental psychologists Laurens Hickok, Asa Mahan, Mark Hopkins, and James McCosh, adopted many of Reid's ideas, particularly his analysis of the mind in terms of separate powers or faculties, and his idea that the Will and the Understanding were important interactive processes in determining the direction and flow of thought. What changed in those years between, say, 1813 (the publication of Reid's Essays) and 1886 (the beginning of the "new psychology"), was less a matter of structural change in the models themselves and more a matter of reorganization of the particulars.

For example, following Reid (and the Scottish school more generally), consciousness was no longer regarded as a separate power of the mind but, rather, as an irreducible succession of feeling states, containing all the acts of which the mind was capable (perceiving, judging, reasoning) as well as memories, sensations, and all the properties formerly associated with the Will. Indeed, long before the late nineteenth century, consciousness had come to be identified with Reid's "train of thought" (see Figure 1); as

we have seen, this is the view adopted by Hickok and Mahan, Spencer and Taine (see Figures 2 and 4), and it is certainly the view adopted by the realist writers we examined in the last chapter. The difference between the novelists' models of consciousness and those of the psychologists of 1865-1885 was less a matter of substance than of emphasis: the psychologists we examined held to the view that consciousness was merely an adjunct to the operations of the mind; the novelists regarded consciousness as primary.

By the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, however, even philosophically-minded, experimentally-oriented psychologists had come to regard consciousness as the proper subject-matter of a science of psychology. For example, George Trumbull Ladd, in the "Introduction" to his seminal text, Elements of Physiological Psychology, writes:

(I)t will serve our purpose best to 'define' this science simply by ascribing to it a certain more or less definite sphere of phenomena. Thus we shall consider psychology as that science which has for its primary subject of investigation all the phenomena of human consciousness, or of the sentient life of man.¹

Similarly, James Mark Baldwin in volume 1 of his Handbook of Psychology defines Psychology as the "science of the phenomena of consciousness," cautioning that we must be "careful to include consciousness where-ever and in whatever stages it be found."² William James, perhaps less willing to commit himself, states simply that "Psychology is the Science of Mental Life," though it is clear that he understands mental life as occurring within consciousness.³

The reasons for this shift in emphasis from "mind" to "consciousness" are nowhere stated precisely in these early

works. Granting a certain interpretive license from the perspective of nearly one-hundred years, however, we can recognize several theoretical advantages that resulted from the shift. First. Even a brief survey of their work indicates that psychologists of this later period were no less interested in the intellectual processes--perception, reason, judgment, and other discrete contents of mind--than were psychologist/philosophers of the early period.⁴ However, they were at least as concerned with the emotions and the will (the sentient life of humankind), and, following Reid, with the interactions between intellectual and motivational processes and their consequences in behavior. From a purely definitional perspective, the mind had long been associated with rational acts (the mind could think, reason, and judge) but rarely with acts of feeling or passion. Only consciousness, long since identified with the "stream of thought," encompassed both intellectual and motivational processes, rational and irrational attitudes, sensations as well as ideas. If we consider the terms "mind" and "consciousness" as serving a purely theoretical function (as "mind" served the epistemological objective), then "consciousness" was a more flexible construct with which to identify the wide array of topics that, by the late nineteenth century, had come under the umbrella of psychology.

Second. Purely as a construct, consciousness also had the appeal of neutrality. At one remove from "mind," consciousness was also at one remove from the mind/body debate which, in the wake of new discoveries about the brain,

had become such a central issue.⁵ The relation of mind to brain was assumed by all; the question was whether or not the relation should be understood as one-to-one or many-to-one; whether, that is, whether each mind-act could be reduced to a particular activity within the brain or whether the activities of mind required another level of analysis. The question, phrased in terms of the relation between the powers of the mind and the brain, had profound religious and moral implications, calling into question the freedom of the will, personal responsibility, and God. In contrast, consciousness, long considered a shadowy accompaniment to mind, seemed to have an equally ambiguous relationship to the brain. Most thinkers of the time, however, were willing to admit that certain aspects of consciousness (for example, sensations and affect) had concomitant somatic parallels: the conscious experience of fear corresponded to increased heart rate; grief was expressed as tears.⁶ The relationship of consciousness to somatic processes did not seem to carry with it the same profound metaphysical implications that were part of the mind/brain debate. My point is that consciousness, because it was the more enveloping construct, was more amenable to the objectives of a scientific psychology that sought to encompass both the physical and mental aspects of the human condition.

James Baldwin's defense of this issue is not unique. After presenting a series of reasons why mental states and physical states cannot be considered "one and the same," he concludes:

The absolute separation of psychology from physiology, however, in point of matter does not imply their

independence of each other in point of fact. They are united in fact by a bond which finds analogy only in that which unites the science of the inorganic, chemistry, with that of life, biology. Life introduces a new series of phenomena into nature, but the morphological changes it produces are accomplished immediately through the processes of inorganic or chemical change. So psychology, while introducing a new order of phenomena, proceeds immediately upon the data of physiological change.⁷

All of which suggests that consciousness--as a psychological construct--served the new psychology well precisely because it did not carry with it the limitations and conceptual baggage with which the concept of "mind" had long been associated: consciousness was "life" ("a theatre of possibilities") in a way that "mind" was not.⁸

One issue arising in the late nineteenth century, however, that Reid did not address in any substantive way was the issue of psychopathology. Abnormal mental states, according to Reid, were expected consequences of a too-active imagination coupled with a lack of willful effort, a tendency to allow passion to rule conduct rather than reason.⁹ Such tendencies, Reid believed, were more characteristic of the "vulgar and inattentive" social class than of the elite. By the late nineteenth century, however, a number of highly-positioned people began to complain of symptoms for which no organic cause could be found.¹⁰ Their symptoms--insomnia, headache, fatigue, dyspepsia, depression, persistent anxiety--were sufficiently debilitating to force them to withdraw from normal activities, a cause for concern. Clearly, these men and women, "pillars" of society, could hardly be charged with willful negligence or shameful malingering; their position in society obviated such claims.

The most popular diagnosis was "neurasthenia" (coined by neurologist George Beard in 1869¹¹) a term that was meant to cover a wide variety of such symptoms; the label made it official (as labels do), a legitimate medical condition, but one of psychological import. Psychologists, as scientists of the mind, were obliged to recognize this fact, to incorporate into their models of mind and consciousness some explanation for mental dysfunction.¹²

That consciousness served this role more adequately than the concept of mind is one assumption I intend to illustrate in this chapter. By way of example, consider the meaning of the phrase "She's lost her mind." Most lay people would agree, I think, that the phrase accounts for an apparent break with reality, a disorder of logic, with delusions, hallucinations, and paranoia. This identification of mind with "powers" of reason, judgment, and rational thought was no less powerful in the nineteenth century than it remains today. The symptoms of neurasthenics, however, evinced no break with reality; their symptoms were disorders more of affect than of logic. In retrospect, it seems as though "consciousness," so long as it was conceived as a succession of affect-laden sensations and ideas (the "stream of thought"), served a necessary theory-constitutive function: it was the means by which nineteenth-century psychologists would endeavor to bring into account symptoms and behavior that were clearly maladaptive.

Even so, these later psychologists were drawing on ideas that had long been part of American thinking about the mind and consciousness, ideas drawn largely from the work of the

Scottish philosophers, changing merely the particulars (in line with new discoveries concerning the brain and in response to new demands on the discipline), while holding on to the basic structure. As we will see, the psychologists whose work forms the basis of this chapter--William James, George Trumbull Ladd, and James Mark Baldwin¹³-- shared many of Reid's concerns: a) a concern to establish psychology as a science with clearly defined subject-matter and objective methods (including experimentation), and careful analysis of the conditions as well as the consequences of mental acts; b) an interest in the process of mental development (by the late nineteenth century, "development" was conceived within the context of evolutionism); and c) a concern to incorporate into psychological analysis all the latest advances in the knowledge of human physiological functioning.

In its late nineteenth-century usage, consciousness was implicitly understood as a process akin to awareness and receptivity. It was conceived as the end-point of experience and the source of action. As we have seen, Henry James and the other realist writers we have examined conceived consciousness in this way. By the late nineteenth century, psychologists, too, would come to this view. That they did so even while retaining many of the ideas first proposed by Reid is testimony to what Graham Richards has called the "essential phenomenological and humanistic character" of psychological ideas.¹⁴

In this chapter, I examine models of consciousness developed by George Trumbull Ladd, William James, and James Mark Baldwin. The usual account of faculties and of

consciousness is present in their work; however, each of these men made important contributions to particular topics within the new psychology: Ladd in physiological psychology; James in psychopathology; and Baldwin in developmental psychology. Accordingly, while I will devote some space to a general discussion of their models, I intend to emphasize these important aspects of their work. Because George Trumbull Ladd's important text, Elements of Physiological Psychology, was heralded as the harbinger of the "new psychology" by no less than G. Stanley Hall in 1887, I will begin this overview with a discussion of Ladd's work.

George Trumbull Ladd (1842-1921)¹⁵

George Trumbull Ladd began his career as a psychologist in a program of self-study of the works of Locke, Reid, the British empiricists, the German experimentalists, and all of the Americans, including Mahan, Porter, Hickok and others. Though his intent was to learn all he could about the "new" mental science, his motives were less a reflection of his intellectual interests and curiosity than of his concern lest the application of scientific principles to the study of human nature should run counter to or trivialize classical religious ideals. As Eugene Mills states the issue, "A confirmed dualist, Ladd believed that, whatever might be revealed by the methods of science, there was still a psychological reality immune to scientific method which could be known only by immediate experience."¹⁶ Like his contemporaries, William James and James Mark Baldwin, Ladd believed that the mental life of humankind could not be reduced to "localized features" or brain mechanisms, but

retained always the character and quality of a "something more." Ladd insisted that

the development of Mind can only be regarded as the progressive manifestation in consciousness of the life of a real being which, although taking its start and direction from the action of the physical elements of the body, proceeds to unfold powers that are sui generis according to laws of its own.¹⁷

Psychology could be a science, Ladd would assert, but it would be a science unlike other sciences and its laws would be laws of a different order.

It is strange indeed that a man who was devoted to classical study, a man who was a philosopher first and a scientist (if at all) only second, should claim the distinct honor of presenting the first American textbook oriented almost wholly to the physiological basis of mental life. Yet, the publication in 1886 of Ladd's text is widely recognized as the pivotal event signifying the end of philosophical psychology and the beginning of scientific psychology in America. G. Stanley Hall's comment is typical: "It is at last possible," he writes in November of 1887, "to read a plain statement of the facts of a good part of the field of experimental psychology in English."¹⁸ According to Mills, however, Ladd's purpose in publishing the text did not emerge out of a desire to "set psychology on the proper path of science," but was the result of a long, sustained, and concentrated attempt to make sense of this new field. As a scholar, Ladd was attracted to tasks of this sort, according to Mills, with the result being a careful and systematic summary of the main issues in the field. For this reason, the book established Ladd's reputation as one of the leading

scientists in the field of psychology.¹⁹

On Consciousness

"It will be the task of the book itself," Ladd writes in the Preface to the Elements, "to set forth the assured or alleged results of Physiological Psychology; and this will be done at every step with such degree of assurance as belongs to the evidence."²⁰ This is not, however, Ladd's only objective. An examination of the Table of Contents reveals a second, perhaps primary, concern: Although the first section, entitled "The Nervous Mechanism," contains seven chapters reporting the latest advances in knowledge of the central nervous system, sensory mechanisms, and embryonic development, the last two sections (entitled "Correlations of the Nervous Mechanism and the Mind" and "The Nature of Mind," respectively) contain fifteen chapters discussing localization of function, visual, auditory, and tactile processes, and the physical basis of the higher powers of the mind, ending with a philosophical account of the mind/body relation and a concerted refutation of the materialistic thesis. It is this last section that forms the foundation for much of what follows.²¹

Psychology, according to Ladd, is the science of the phenomena of consciousness. By "phenomena" Ladd means precisely that consciousness consists of a series of events: the yellow of the the watch, the red of the rose, the feeling of cold, or of heat, or of pain, acts of imagination, and pure thought which, according to Ladd, all occur within consciousness.²² More than these events, however, consciousness also consists of "synthetic" acts, events in

themselves, such as discriminating, combining, and localizing of sensations. "Our entire conscious existence," writes Ladd, "...is a continually shifting succession of individual mental activities, no one of which is exactly like any other or is to be considered as a mere repetition of any other."²³ Given the complexity and interrelationship of the phenomena of study, therefore, it would seem that a science of psychology would tackle an impossible task, "(f)or what is infinite in variety and always changing its kind cannot be described;" and that which cannot be described, cannot be science."

But a science of psychology can be attempted, however, with some assurance, because the phenomena of consciousness can be classified on the basis of our immediate awareness of the "likenesses and unlikenesses" of the different states of consciousness which we all experience. (This, of course, is Reid's "reflection".) Such classifications, Ladd believes, are necessary to the science because they "tell us much that scientific inquiry desires to know about the origin or correlations of...mental phenomena." They can tell us, for example,

what special part of the external organ of sense, or what area of the brain, is more directly concerned in producing the psychical state which precedes or causes the mental phenomena....[and] they may demonstrate what kind of physical stimuli result, respectively, in exciting such and such states of consciousness.²⁵

These classifications are necessary, Ladd asserts, because they "set the way" for experimental and physiological elaboration.

Ladd begins, as we have seen, with the same set of

assumptions with which Reid and others have begun. Like them, he agrees that all the "faculties" of consciousness may be assumed under three heads: "phenomena of knowing, phenomena of feeling, and phenomena called acts of will."²⁶ Such classification is permitted, however, only on the assumption that there exists a "real being" called "mind" (the proper subject of the phenomena of consciousness) which is distinguished in every respect from the "real beings" understood as the physical molecules of the brain system. There is no one-to-one correspondence between psychological states and physical states, Ladd asserts, because the mental and the physical are different categories of analysis: "(t)he principles which regulate the formation of classes among the conscious states of the mind are very different from those which regulate...the physical basis of these states."²⁷

This is not to suggest, however, that no relation exists or that conscious phenomena and brain states are absolute and independent operations. Ladd's solution to the difficulty is to envision a system in which the brain acts as the "medium" through which the will "acts" toward its ends, through which sensations and perceptions are "presented" to the mind; the brain acting as a kind of transmission center sending and receiving messages.²⁸ As to the connection between mind and brain, Ladd insists any literal answer would lead at once to absurdity. The answer "best consistent with the facts," according to Ladd, is the same connection we always find between two "any so-called 'real beings':"

The molecules of the brain (so far, at least, as psycho-physical science knows anything of them) are composed of elements of material reality, called atoms; these atoms act by way of motion, according to their constitution

and relations to each other and to their environment. The mind, on the other hand, is a real unit-being of another order than that of the atoms. Its acts are the various modes or states of consciousness. This being called mind is causally related to the beings called atoms; the relation is mutual. The mind behaves as it does because of the constitution and behavior of the molecules of the brain. The molecules of the brain behave as they do because of the nature and activities of the mind....The action of each accounts for the action of the other. But the action of neither is to be explained as solely due to the action of the other; neither mind nor brain can be regarded as the subject for the phenomena ordinarily ascribed to the other.²⁹

As Ladd suggests, this view is unmistakably dualistic; specifically, it is interactionist. The phenomena of consciousness operate according to laws distinct from the laws that govern the operation of the brain, yet mind and brain interact, each one serving on occasion as the cause of action in the other. The fact that each is not conceived as the sole influence, one on the other, leaves open the door for free will, individuality, and the pursuit of higher goals.

There is little in Ladd's conception of consciousness that we have not encountered before; only the distinction between immediate consciousness and reflective consciousness is missing. The introspective method is heralded as "the only way we have "of ascertaining what are the phenomenon that require explanation," but it is never equated with "reflection" in the sense in which Reid intended, nor is "reflection" understood as a capacity which must be developed over time. Though the classification of mind into various "faculties" receives Ladd's support, these faculties are not to be understood as entities "having an existence of themselves;" or as capable of being compounded in any way.

"They are not divisions of the mind," writes Ladd,

nor are they powers of the mind, if by this word be meant some permanent recognizable reality, stored up in a spiritual subject, or attached to it or inherent in it, after the analogy of the relation of physical forces to their subjects, the atoms. The faculties of the mind are the modes of the behavior, in consciousness, of the mind.³⁰

One can not imagine a more decisive refutation of the faculty psychology of Reid and Stewart. Yet the "faculties" are retained, if only because they provide the focus for psychological research. Moreover, it is clear that Ladd, like Reid, would retain a measure of free-will, even in the face of new discoveries of functional correlates within the cortex.

There is one aspect of Ladd's account that is worth mentioning because we will encounter a form of it in the next chapter in the work of Henry Adams. In his discussion of the relation between mind and brain, Ladd develops the following thesis:³¹ Events occurring within the brain are, at base, physical events. All physical events, even those within the human brain, are modes of action, specifically, "alterations in the relations of the material atoms or masses to each other in space." Consciousness, also, is motion, though not of elements in space; consciousness is motion in time, a constantly shifting organization of mental experience. The concept of motion is central, however, to both fields of action and it is that concept that Henry Adams employs (more or less successfully) to describe the historical development of human knowledge.

The publication of Ladd's physiological text was a pivotal event in the history of psychology, indicating the

abandonment of a purely speculative psychology and the development of psychology as a scientific discipline. It is in that context that I presented his views. William James, in contrast, presents a view of consciousness more in the tradition of Reid than of Ladd, not rejecting, but certainly ~~deemphasizing, its physiological aspects. As we will see,~~ consciousness, for James, has active, selecting properties. Perhaps James's most under-rated contribution to psychology, however, was his realization that a theory of consciousness was incomplete that did not also account for abnormal mental states. Because many of James's ideas are reflected in the literature of the time, I will give some account of these ideas.

William James (1842-1910)

William James is the recognized father of American psychology, a man whose contributions to the field are as varied and unclassifiable as they are insightful. During the last half of the nineteenth century, his was the voice of compromise and reason and, though he developed no comprehensive program, the breadth of his knowledge and his incomparable style have carried the weight of his ideas through nearly one hundred years of psychological debate.

James began his work in psychology in the shadow of Scottish common-sense realism and the American Transcendental movement (see Appendix). From the Scottish school, James derived the ideas of a consciousness of immediate experience (of fleeting sensations and transitory impressions) and a reflective consciousness of reasoning, willing, remembering, and judging. From the Scottish school James also derived the

conviction that our ideas and our feelings and passions were as real as the objects of the external world, though, as we will see, he allowed that neither subjective nor objective experience may be exactly what they seem. From the Transcendentalists, James derived the idea that consciousness might serve a higher purpose than the mere ordering and classification of sense impressions. It was from their work and from their presence in his life that James would come to insist on the "something more" of conscious life to which every man aspired.

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of James's thought is that it was well-grounded in every ideological current of his time. Like Ladd, he knew intimately the work of Locke and the British empiricists (many of his ideas reflect his opposition to their reductionistic sensationalism); he knew intimately the work of Kant and the various strains of German idealism which followed (he rejected their Soul and retained their spirituality); he applauded experimentalism (but despaired of German psychophysics); he was well acquainted with the work on hysteria of Pierre Janet and Jean-Martin Charcot in France, of George Beard in America, and of Henry Maudsley in England (though a physician, he did not practice formally); and he was perhaps the sole American supporter of psychical research in both America and England, frequently citing the work of the English psychic researcher, Frederick Myers.

According to James, the science of psychology was defined by the following set of criteria: a) psychology is the study of mental life (the word itself calls to mind a

teeming universe of ideas and emotions); "the knowledge of particular men about the particular things that surround them;"³² b) properly, psychology ought to concern itself with the full range of man's experience, considered as a unified whole, including the emotions as well as the intellect; and c) that there are not and should not be absolute criteria for defining the truth or falsity of ideas or actions except according to their utility. As we will see in the following discussion of James's ideas, these convictions inform every aspect of his thought.

On Consciousness

In the work of John Locke, in the psychologies of Asa Mahan, Mark Hopkins and James McCosh, one encounters a consciousness peculiarly passive--a consciousness whose task was merely to observe and record the operations of the mind. Even Ladd, concerned as he was with the relation between conscious states and brain mechanisms, proposed a singularly unresponsive consciousness. No ephemeral shadowy consciousness such as these could serve James's uniquely psychological point of view, for consciousness as James made use of it was a dynamic process endowed with the capacity to order experience in particular ways, to select, to choose, to compare, to judge, to create, to disregard; it was the Self in active response to both inner and outer worlds. It was sentient, emotional, analytical, synthetic. And it was unquestionably free, as the following quote reveals:

(T)he mind is at every stage a theatre of possibilities. Consciousness consists in the comparison of these with each other, the selection of some, and the suppression of the rest by the reinforcing and inhibiting agency of attention. The highest and most elaborated mental products are filtered from the data chosen by the

faculty next beneath, out of the mass offered by the faculty below that, which mass in turn was sifted from a still larger amount of yet simpler material and so on. The mind, in short, works on the data it receives very much as a sculptor works on his block of stone. In a sense the statue stood there from eternity. But there were a thousand different ones beside it, and the sculptor alone is to thank for having extricated this one from the rest. Just so the world of each of us, howsoever different our several views of it may be, all lay embedded in the primordial chaos of sensations, which gave the mere matter to the thought of all of us indifferently. We may, if we like, by our reasonings unwind things back to that black and jointless continuity of space and moving clouds of swarming atoms which science calls the only real world. But all the while the world we feel and live in will be that which our ancestors and we, by slowly cumulative strokes of choice, have extricated out of this, like sculptors, by simply rejecting certain portions of the given stuff. Other sculptors, other statues from the same stone! Other minds, other worlds from the same monotonous and inexpressive chaos! My world is but one in a million alike embedded, alike real to those who may abstract them. How different must be the worlds in the consciousnesses of ant, cuttle-fish, or crab!³³

In his unique style, James has portrayed a consciousness that, by attending to some things more than others, actively selects from the "arena of possibilities" which the mind conveys. He suggests that this selection is made possible in concert with the various "faculties" of the mind which perform the functions of "filtering" the mass of data available to it. At all levels of this sensory process, consciousness plays the role of choosing which to recognize and which to disregard. It is given in each man's experience, says James, to make those choices in response to his own self-interest and all that he has experienced before. In this way, each of us "carves out" our singular lives. James's model of consciousness is, in part, one of a process of adaptive selection.³⁴ The premise is Darwin's; the

application is uniquely James.

What consciousness selects, however, is only a small part of what consciousness actually is. "Traditional" psychology (i.e., faculty psychology), according to James, because it has focused on primary processes of the mind, has neglected the marginal, hazy, barely perceptible "fringe" of consciousness.³⁵ We think, we plan, we judge, but surrounding that thinking, planning, judging, is an affective web of relations that informs the direction of thought. "What is that shadowy scheme," James asks, "of the 'form' of an opera, play, or book, which remains in our mind and on which we pass judgment when the actual thing is done? What is our notion of a scientific or philosophical system?"³⁶ Any idea or event upon which our thought is focused, shades imperceptibly into these margins of consciousness from which we come to know the form of a thing, its prototypical "gestalt," just as we come to know the thing in itself.³⁷

James describes a consciousness of two aspects: the first is that which commands our attention; the second is the relational fringe. James's terms are the more compelling: he describes them as "resting places" and "places of flight," respectively. The resting places are filled with sensations or images which can be held before the mind for extended periods. These resting places, according to James, have been for too long the sole interest of psychology; they are, he asserts, the source of the ideas of sensationalists (Locke) or faculty psychologists (Reid) who describe a consciousness of discrete events. The places of flight are rapid and transitory; they are "filled with thoughts of relations,

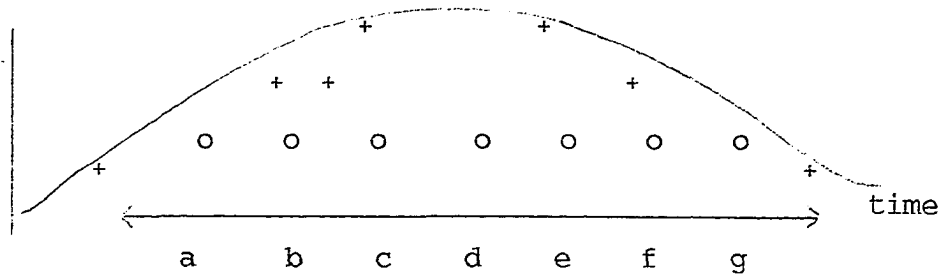
either static or dynamic: "We ought to say," writes James, that these relations are feelings, "a feeling of and, a feeling of if, a feeling of but." The places of flight within the conscious stream are resistant to analysis, according to James; "examination annihilates them; words cannot capture them."³⁸

Figure 3 is an adapted diagram of James's consciousness. In the diagram, time is represented along the horizontal axis, while the height of the curve represents the intensity of the feeling-state. The letters a, b, c, d, e, f, g, represent successive conscious states. All states are present, James notes, in the intensities shown by the curve; the letter "d" representing the most intense state. The small "o's" and "pluses" representing the relational fringe. One might conceive of each letter as a resting place represented by a specific image or sensation or thought; the pluses and "o's" are the relational fringe (the connecting links), the series of associated ideas and images which are concurrently called to mind.³⁹

Consciousness, as James described it, bears striking similarity to the "theories" of consciousness conveyed by literary realists Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and Henry James, suggesting that William James is less interested in epistemological issues than in describing a consciousness of felt experience. There is little of the "simple" and "reflective" consciousnesses described by Reid and his followers in this account, though, like his brother Henry, James believed that, under certain conditions, reflection would yield dividends in terms of higher-order knowledge and

Figure 3.

William James's "Stream of Consciousness" (adapted from William James, *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1 (1890) (New York: Dover, 1950), p. 243).



the emergence of secondary conscious states.

Secondary Consciousness

During the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, there occurred a resurgence of interest in altered conscious states. Following the work of Pierre Janet and Jean-Martin Charcot in France, hypnosis had gained a new respectability in the treatment of mental disease.⁴⁰ In America and in England, spiritualism, mediumship, and demoniacal possession, co-existed with the new psychology, evidence of a particular kind of the popular interest in matters of the mind.⁴¹

Finally, there were a growing number of cases with symptoms like depression, lethargy, withdrawal, and hysteria for which no organic cause could be found.⁴² Surely, thought James, the science of psychology was as responsible to these conditions as it had long been to "normal" function. Unlike many of his contemporaries, James was convinced that a science of psychology was incomplete that did not also attempt to account for these "exceptional" states of human mental life, for they were, after all, psychic states, albeit states with pronounced mystical implications.⁴³

It is, accordingly, no accident that the diagram representing James's concept of consciousness approaches infinity at either end of the time-line, for James believed that there had to exist some aspect of psychic life "beyond the margin" of relations that directed normal conscious life.⁴⁴ In James's model, therefore, consciousness did not end at the margins; it expanded outward (as though in space) and beyond the known and the present.⁴⁵ This second consciousness was referred to by James alternately as the

subconscious or the subliminal, and it serves as the core of his belief that altered mental states were nothing more (nor less) than the intrusion of subliminal contents into ordinary consciousness.⁴⁶

Many of James's ideas on this theme were drawn from the work of Frederick W. H. Myers of England, a man whose interest in psychical phenomena carried him to the forefront of the field of psychical research. According to Myers the subliminal is "the enveloping mother-consciousness" from which our normal consciousnesses evolve. From its intercourse with the spiritual world the subliminal consciousness draws energy and makes contact with ideas and impressions that can not be acquired through the usual channels.⁴⁷ There is, as well, a less ethereal aspect to the concept of a secondary consciousness: Not only can the subliminal make contact with other minds (and presumably other worlds⁴⁸) but it also serves as a holding place for all manner of archaic and rudimentary memories of automatic processes (such as walking), all impressions passing through consciousness to which we do not attend, and "buried feelings" which are kept out of conscious awareness.⁴⁹

The two forms of consciousness--the normal and the subliminal--flow like parallel streams within the psyche, merging occasionally (as in instances of great insight): the subliminal remaining out of contact with the external world; the normal waking consciousness pursuing its worldly task. In theory, all cases of mental disease, whether of hysteria or the popular 'neurasthenia', or cases of altered conscious states--of mediumship, spiritualism, hypnotic trance, or

sleep--represented an unexpected eruption of the subliminal, "like a wave that rises to the surface, swamps the other waves, overflows the banks, [and] deflects for a while the course of the current."⁵⁰ Under these conditions, the entire broad field of normal consciousness would contract to a single idea, upon which "the whole of knowledge is brought to bear."⁵¹ Instead of the controlled associative stream of waking consciousness, the single idea with its random association of feeling-toned ideas and sensory images would dominate thought and behavior. All that which did not in some manner accrue to the single idea (either by chance or affective association) would not, indeed could not, be recognized by the beleaguered subject.⁵² This explanation, according to James, fit the facts as well as any other, and better than most:

(O)ne cannot help admiring the great originality with which Myers wove such an extraordinarily detached and discontinuous series of phenomena together. Unconscious cerebration, dreams, hypnotism, hysteria, inspirations of genius, the willing game, planchette, crystal-gazing, hallucinatory voices, apparitions of the dying, medium-trances, demoniacal possession, clairvoyance, thought-transference--even ghosts and other facts more doubtful--these things form a chaos at first sight most discouraging...Yet Myers has actually made a system of them, stringing them continuously upon a perfectly legitimate objective hypothesis, verified in some cases and extended to others by analogy.⁵³

Certainly among the prominent psychologists of the late nineteenth-century, William James was unique in his readiness to accept the notion of a subliminal that had the powers and capacities that Myers gave to it. It is interesting that before Freud's ideas became well known, few American psychologists were willing to recognize an "unconscious" of

the sort Freud proposed, though they were ready to accede that certain activities of the mind might become unconscious in the sense that they had become "automatic."⁵⁴ Perhaps the concept of a subliminal consciousness set the stage for a general acceptance of Freud's ideas.

In the following section, we will examine consciousness from a developmental perspective. By the late nineteenth century, the core themes of evolutionary theory had become part of every developmental theory proposed, and the theory proposed by James Mark Baldwin proved no exception. In contrast to Thomas Reid, whose ideas of mental development were confined to the attainment of reason and judgment and moral responsibility,⁵⁵ Baldwin was concerned with maturational issues and the differences between healthy and diseased minds, children and adult, animal and human; this is "genetic" psychology, as Baldwin explains in the following quote:

The new and important question about the mind which is...recognised is this: How did it grow? What light upon its activity and nature can we get from a positive knowledge of its early stages and processes of growth?...How is the growth of the child related to that of animals?--how, through heredity and social influences, to the growth of the race and of the family and society in which he is brought up? All this can be comprehended only in the light of the doctrine of evolution, which has rejuvenated the sciences of life; and we are now beginning to see a rejuvenation of the sciences of the mind from the same point of view.⁵⁶

James Mark Baldwin (1861-1934)

James Mark Baldwin is considered one of the founding fathers of American psychology: Along with James McKeen Cattell, he founded the Psychological Review in 1894, the Psychological Index (forerunner to Psychological Abstracts)

and Psychological Monographs. In 1904 he founded the Psychological Bulletin. His Handbook of Psychology (1889 and 1891) was a small review of major theories in psychology of the period; his Mental Development in the Child and the Race (1895) was a landmark text in the application of evolutionary theory to the development of the mind.

Throughout the nineteenth century (and including, to some extent, the theories of Ladd and James), consciousness was defined largely by its content. Consciousness "contained" ideas, thoughts, sensations, memories; forms or levels of consciousness were distinguished by the kind of operations performed or the kinds of ideas to which one might attend: revelations and insights were products of the subliminal; plans, purposes, actions proposed, were products of normal consciousness. The apparent difficulty of talking about the mind and consciousness without also speaking in terms of discrete units was no easier in the late nineteenth century than it had been a century earlier.

Baldwin, however, confronts this problem squarely; that he does so in the context of a long-held tradition in psychological thought is testimony to the flexibility of psychological concepts. The core of Baldwin's developmental theory rests on the distinction between two stages of consciousness we have encountered before: the distinction between simple and reflective consciousness.

The reader will recall that the distinction between simple and reflective consciousness proposed by Reid was founded on this one crucial difference: simple consciousness was immediate, involuntary, and unfocused; reflective

consciousness included both present and past events, was voluntary, and focused. Baldwin makes a somewhat different claim: simple consciousness is present when the conscious subject makes no distinction between herself and other thinking subjects; reflective consciousness is present when such a distinction is made. (The reader will remember that Asa Mahan defined simple consciousness as the ability to distinguish between the me and not me; while reflective consciousness consisted of the ability to synthesize higher-order ideas.) According to Baldwin, however, development from simple to reflective consciousness occurs at that point when the experiencing subject "embraces simply the circumscribed area of [her] own experience considered in reference to [herself]."⁵⁷

This is an oversimplification of Baldwin's ideas, though the general point of his theory is not thereby lost. The question of interest to Baldwin is, At what point does the child acquire the capacity to embrace her experience as her experience and what are the conditions under which she does so?⁵⁸ The answer, according to Baldwin, is that the "me/not-me" distinction occurs as soon as the child becomes sensitive to particular forms of sensation, especially as she is able to distinguish between sensations of touch and the muscular sense. This process gives the child a sense of the form of her own body, as well as the location and relative function of its various parts. From this bodily sense, the child develops an awareness of things external and a sense of the bodily movements that are necessary to make contact with them. "This fact of control of the body," writes Baldwin,

"seems to be the first beginning of the exercise of the will. It involves a subjective reference more distinct and peculiar to itself than any of the purely affective sensations, and leads to the notion of the I and so to self-consciousness."⁵⁹

Consciousness, according to Baldwin, precedes hand-in-hand with physical development; is, in fact, dependent on maturational processes for its emergence as reflective consciousness. In reflection, the notion of a self has distinct form:

In reflection...the self is discovered through the act of attentive inspection, as having and exercising the characteristics of mind....The...ego...is defined and enriched by added marks, such as efficiency, identity, and permanence....Through reflection, therefore, the idea of self is attained and assumes its important place in the mental world....It brings coherence into the circuit of consciousness, by giving it a centre of reference and a circumference of limitation to the individual.⁶⁰

The words are familiar: "Reflection," "self," "identity," "coherence," are all words we have encountered before in early theories of consciousness. Locke's consciousness was the embodiment of the self, as was Reid's. The reader will remember that Asa Mahan's theory of consciousness was the first to embrace a developmental pattern of the sort that Baldwin describes in these paragraphs (see Chapter 3).⁶¹ "Reflection," for Locke and Reid, however, was the source of all higher knowledge, not merely confined to knowledge of the self. Finally, the use of term "coherence" is consistent with all the models of mind and consciousness we have examined: Like Baldwin, each model gave to consciousness the singular role of providing unity to the psychic system. In one way or another, the concept of a psychological "self" has endured.

This very brief summary of Baldwin's theory of the development of consciousness does not do justice to the importance of his work. Nonetheless, a few interesting points may be made. Baldwin's theory of conscious development is, at base, a theory of personality because it is explicitly concerned with the development of a sense of self-identity. Early theories (epistemological systems), as we have seen, conceived identity as coexistent with consciousness itself. The fact that these early theories were wholly and entirely concerned with the adult mind is true enough, but neglects the more compelling issue: By the end of the nineteenth century, evolutionary theory had taken hold of American psychology and laid the path it was to follow for the next one hundred years. There is no more convincing evidence of the influence of evolutionism than Baldwin's theory of the development of consciousness.⁶²

Conclusion

By the late nineteenth century, consciousness had usurped mind as the focus of interest of psychologists. Indeed, this is precisely what Kearns means to suggest in his use of the phrase "mind-as-sentient stream" to characterize this period. Though possible reasons for this shift were given at the beginning of this chapter, a brief summary is in order. Admittedly, these ideas are conjectures, and post hoc ones at that. However, I have yet to find a source that details this shift in any substantive way; it seems to have occurred without comment. I submit these ideas, therefore, only as possibilities.

First. Consciousness was a more flexible and enveloping

construct than mind.

Psychologists of this later period were intent upon developing theories not (merely) of knowledge but of the physiological and psychological nature of humankind. They were looking for general laws that would encompass a variety of issues with which earlier theorists had only been marginally concerned: the relation between mind and body; the origin of mental disorder; and the differences between children and adults, animals and humans. Any theory capable of addressing these issues need have as its terms such constructs as were connotatively flexible enough to encompass both physiological and psychological meaning, both reason and affect. In nineteenth-century discourse, "consciousness" was such a term.

Second. "Consciousness," as a theoretical construct, also had the appeal of neutrality.

Unlike mind, the relationship of consciousness to somatic processes did not seem to carry with it the metaphysical implications that were part of the mind/brain debate. Consequently, consciousness was more amenable to the objectives of a scientific psychology that sought to encompass both the physical and mental aspects of the human condition.

Third. Consciousness provided the foundation for a theory that would encompass mental pathology. "Consciousness," so long as it was conceived as a succession of affect-laden sensations and ideas, served a theory-constitutive function. Because mental disorders were understood as disorders of affect as well as reason, the concept of consciousness served

an explanatory function.

One of the consequences of the shift from "mind" to "consciousness" was a more finely-tuned, textured, multi-layered conception of consciousness itself. One might envision the whole as a series of parallel adaptive processes: normal consciousness, with its affective, sensory, and ideational content; a subliminal consciousness, extending outward and beyond the sensory instant; and the physiological substratum, the molecular movements and neural processes of the brain.

Chapter Notes

- ¹ George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology. A Treatise of the Activities and Nature of the Mind from the Physical and Experimental Point of View (New York: Scribner's, 1900), pp. 2-3.
- ² James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology, vol. 1: Senses and Intellect (1889) (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1972), p. 8.
- ³ William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 (1890) (New York: Dover, 1950), p. 1. For evidence of James's belief that consciousness was the source of mental life see Chapter IX (pp. 224-290), pp. 185-193.
- ⁴ One need only scan the tables of contents of any of the texts of the period, including: William James, The Principles of Psychology; George Trumbull Ladd, Psychology. Descriptive and Explanatory. A Treatise of the Phenomena, Laws, and Development of Human Mental Life (New York: Scribner's, 1894); James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology, vols. 1 and 2.
- ⁵ See Robert M. Young, Mind, Brain and Adaptation in the Nineteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) for an authoritative account.
- ⁶ This is precisely the issue William James addresses in what has become known as the James-Lange theory of emotion. In his 1884 article, "What Is an Emotion," (Mind, 9, 188-205), James states that the emotion is the physiological response--we are afraid because we run, we feel sorry because we cry. Though James's ideas did not meet with whole-hearted agreement, the issue he is addressing is clearly that of the relationship between conscious processes and somatic processes, not that between mind and brain.
- ⁷ James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology, p. 6; George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, pp. 637-687. Ladd writes:
 No information derived from the study of Physiological Psychology warrants us in affirming that a highly developed self-conscious existence must, from the universal necessities of the case, be united with a vastly complex material structure like the human brain (p. 684).
 William James, however, had another view. For James,

consciousness, because purposeful, was also causal. See William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 Chapter V, pp. 128-144.

⁸ See also William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1, pp. 65.

⁹ Thomas Reid, Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man (1814-1815) (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969) (hereafter referred to as Essays I), pp. 710-702, 757-761; Thomas Reid, Essays on the Active Powers of Man (1815) (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T. Press, 1969) (hereafter referred to as Essays II), pp. 175-186.

¹⁰ These symptoms affected the lives of many of those considered society's most highly-placed and influential members, men and women like William James and his sister, Alice James, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (late nineteenth-century writer), Herbert Spencer, and Charles Darwin (see F.G. Gosling, Before Freud. Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community, 1870-1910 (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1987), pp. 9, 15.

¹¹ F.G. Gosling, Before Freud, p. 9.

¹² See, for example, the introductory chapters of James Mark Baldwin's Handbook of Psychology, pp. 1-42; George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology; and William James, The Principles of Psychology, vols. 1 and 2.

¹³ Of the many whose work deserves to be included, I might mention G. Stanley Hall, E. B. Titchener, and James McKeen Cattell. Hall, founder of the American Journal of Psychology (1887) and the American Psychological Association (1892), and author of several well reviewed textbooks on adolescence, was less a philosopher than an organizer; he wrote little on consciousness. Titchener, student of Wundt and the self-proclaimed authority of consciousness, is not representative of the American tradition. And Cattell, also a Wundt student, was more interested in mental testing than consciousness. None of these men were philosophers in the sense that Ladd, James, and Baldwin were.

¹⁴ Graham Richards, Mental Machinery, p. 47.

¹⁵ Most of the biographical information for this section is drawn from Eugene S. Mills, George Trumbull Ladd. Pioneer American Psychologist (Cleveland, Ohio: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1969). References to specific pages will be omitted, unless the information is of a unusual or specific character.

16 Eugene S. Mills, George Trumbull Ladd, p. 7.

17 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 632.

18 G. Stanley Hall, American Journal of Psychology, November 1887.

19 Eugene S. Mills, George Trumbull Ladd, p. 7.

20 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, pp. iii-iv.

21 It seems appropriate here to say a word or two about terms. I have said that the subject-matter of the new psychology was consciousness (in contrast to mind) and I have suggested that the terms "consciousness" and "mind" had very different connotations in late nineteenth-century discourse. Ladd's use of these terms throughout his seminal work seems to belie the distinction I have made. Though he seems to use the terms indiscriminately, careful examination reveals one notable difference in meaning: The use of the term "consciousness" refers to the sentient life of humankind (ideas and affect, concepts and desires) of which "mind" is considered its subject:

The subject of all the states of consciousness is a real unit-being, called Mind; which is of non-material nature, and acts and develops according to laws of its own, but is specially correlated with certain material molecules and masses forming the substance of the Brain. (George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 613.)

22 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 598.

23 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 599.

24 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 600.

25 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 601.

26 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p.605. 27 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, pp. 601-603.

28 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, pp. 642-645.

29 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 656.

30 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 607.

31 George Trumbull Ladd, Elements of Physiological Psychology, p. 589.

32 William James, Principles, vol. 1, p. 184.

The whole distinction of real and unreal, the psychology of belief, disbelief, and doubt, is thus grounded on two mental facts - first, that we are liable to think different of the same; and second, that when we have done so, we can choose which way of thinking to adhere to and which to disregard.

33 William James, Principles, vol. 1, pp. 288-289.

34 William James, Principles, vol. 1, pp. 258-259.

35 William James, Principles, vol. 1, pp. 255-258. James's description of the stream of consciousness from the perspective of traditional psychology resonates with metaphorical imagery:

What must be admitted is that the definite images of traditional psychology form but the very smallest part of our minds as they actually live. The traditional psychology talks like one who should say a river consists of nothing but pailsful, spoonsful, quarpotsful, barrelsful, and other moulded forms of water. Even were the pails and the pots all actually standing in the stream, the water would continue to flow. It is just this free water of consciousness that psychologists resolutely overlook. Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. (p. 255)

36 William James, Principles, vol. 1, p. 255.

37 William James, Principles, vol. 1, p. 259. "Relation, then, to our topic or interest is constantly felt in the fringe, and particularly the relation of harmony and discord, of furtherance or hinderance of the topic" (p. 259). We have all had the experience, when working hard at a task, our

attention focused, of having our flow of thoughts interrupted by a sound, an idea, a memory. Sometimes the interruption is a welcome addition to the task at hand; it may lead to a creative insight, a "breakthrough;" it may, however, stop the flow entirely, our attention disengaged.

One further note: There is no question that Henry and William James held similar views of consciousness: Relations within consciousness were as important to Henry as they were to William. The following quote from Henry James's preface to the New York edition of Roderick Hudson is reproduced here from Chapter 4, page 106:

[Relations] are if the very essence of the novelist's process, and it is by their aid, fundamentally, that his idea takes form and lives; but they impose on him, through the principle of continuity that rides them, a proportionate anxiety. They are the very condition of interest, which languishes without them; the painter's subject consisting ever, obviously, of the related state, to each other, of certain figures and things. To exhibit these relations, once they have all been recognised, is to "treat" his idea, which involves neglecting none of those that directly minister to interest....

Really, universally, relations stop nowhere, and the exquisite problem of the artist is eternally but to draw, by a geometry of his own, the circle within which they shall happily appear to do so. (Henry James, "Preface," in Roderick Hudson [New York: Scribner's, 1907], pp. vi-vii.)

38 William James, Principles, vol. 1, pp. 229-264.

39 William James, Principles, vol. 1, p. 243.

40 Henri F. Ellenberger, The Discovery of the Unconscious. The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry (New York: Basic Books:1970), pp. 89-101, 143-174, 331-417.

41 Jeffrey Mishlove, The Roots of Consciousness. Psychic Liberation through History, Science and Experience (New York: Random House, 1975), pp. 64-106.

42 F.G. Gosling, Before Freud, p. 10.

43 William James, "The Hidden Self," Scribner's Magazine 1 (Fall 1890): 361.

44 "We are by this time familiar with the notion," James writes, "that a man's consciousness need not be a fully integrated thing. From the ordinary focus and margin, from the ordinary abstraction, we shade off into phenomena that

look like consciousness beyond the margin." (William James, "Notes for the Lowell Institute Lectures on Exceptional Mental States" [1896], reprinted in William James, Manuscript Lectures [vol. 19 of The Works of William James] [Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1988], p. 70.

45 William James, Principles, vol. 1, pp. 222-290. We have met this same idea in the work of Henry James (Chapter 4, pp. 102-103); the following quote by the novelist, here reprinted, expresses the essence of the Jamesian consciousness:

Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative--much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius--it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations. Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative--much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius--it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations. (Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," (1884-1888), reprinted in Henry James, Literary Criticism, Essays on Literature, American Writers, and English Writers, Leon Edel and Mark Widon, eds. [New York: Literary Classics, 1984], p. 52.)

46 Eugene Taylor, William James on Exceptional Mental States. The 1896 Lowell Lectures (Amherst, Massachusetts: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1894), p. 27.

47 William James, "Review of 'Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death (by Frederick W. H. Meyers)," Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research XVIII (London, 1903). Reprinted in Gardner Murphy and Robert O. Ballou, eds., William James on Psychical Research (New York: Viking, 1960), pp. 225-239.

48 William James, "Review of 'Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death," p. 233.

49 Frederick W. H. Myers, "The Subliminal Consciousness," Proceedings of the English Society for Psychical Research 7 (1891-1892): 310. A complete list of the contents of the subliminal may be drawn from a variety of

James's published works: buried feelings, momentarily inactive memories, the passions, impulses, likes/dislikes/prejudices, intuitions/hypotheses, fancies/superstitions, convictions, all non-rational operations, fixed ideas, supra-normal cognitions, and religious convictions.

⁵⁰ Eugene Taylor, William James on Exceptional Mental States, p. 27 (adapted from Boris Sidis, The Psychology of Suggestion [New York: Appleton, 1898], p. 15.

⁵¹ Eugene Taylor, William James on Exceptional Mental States, p. 16. See also William James, "The Hidden Self," pp. 363-364.

⁵² "Hysterics" were particularly susceptible to such intrusions. The fault lie in the weakness of their ego: The attention has not sufficient strength [writes James] to take in the normal number of sensations or ideas at once. If an ordinary person can feel ten things at a time, an hysteric can feel but five, Our minds are all of them like vessels full of water, and taking in a new drop makes another drop fall out; only the hysteric mental vessel is preternaturally small. The unifying or synthesizing power with which the Ego exerts over the manifold facts which are offered to it is insufficient to do its full amount of work, and an ingrained habit is formed of neglecting or overlooking certain determinate portions of the mass. (William James, "The Hidden Self," pp. 363-364.)

⁵³ William James, "Frederick Myers's Service to Psychology," Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research XVII (May 1901). Reprinted in Gardner Murphy and Robert O. Ballou, eds., William James on Psychical Research (New York: Viking, 1960), pp. 219-220. In the twentieth century, pervaded as it is by the Freudian idea that all behavior is motivated by unconscious impulses, the idea of a subliminal consciousness with connections to 'other worlds' seems as far-fetched and unlikely as the concept of an unconscious seemed to James. Indeed, one wonders which of these two explanatory mechanisms is the more parsimonious: the idea of an unconscious of seething impulses and unconscious desires; or the idea of a subliminal consciousness that makes contact with other minds and other worlds? In many ways, Myers's (and James's) formulation seems to encompass both.

⁵⁴ William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1, pp. 164-175.

⁵⁵ One of the least considered characteristics of the ideas of Carl Jung is that his theory is an amalgamation of James's and Freud's ideas.

⁵⁶ See, for example, James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology, vol 1, pp. 45-58.

⁵⁷ These themes were noticeably current with the issues in the realistic novels we examined in Chapter 4. In the works of Phelps and James in particular, the story depended on our recognition that people gain through resolution of their moral dilemma.

⁵⁸ James Mark Baldwin, The Story of the Mind (1898) (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1974), pp. 1-5, 53-61.

⁵⁹ James Mark Baldwin, Handbook of Psychology, p. 63.

⁶⁰ James Mark Baldwin, The Story of the Mind, p. 54-57.

⁶¹ James Mark Baldwin, The Story of the Mind, pp. 66-67.

⁶² James Mark Baldwin, The Story of the Mind, pp. 143-144.

⁶³ Baldwin, however, does not cite Mahan, who seems, by this time, to have vanished from the psychological literature (neither Ladd nor James make any reference to Mahan at all). There are (at least) two possible reasons for this neglect: Mahan was, after all, one of the transcendental psychologists (like Hickok), who held reason to be the pathway to knowledge. In rejecting his thesis, many psychologists may have rejected out-of-hand the particulars of his theory. Alternatively, as we have seen, many "psychological" ideas are absorbed into later theories which are developed in a context so different from the original as to render the source irrelevant. Certainly, Baldwin's ideas were developed within the context of evolutionism (Spencer and Darwin). Mahan's ideas (if known) might well have seemed to represent a mode of thinking that no longer seemed fitting.

⁶⁴ See, for example, the discussion in David J. Murray, The History of Western Psychology, pp. 267-268; John M. O'Donnell, The Origins of Modern Behaviorism. American Psychology, 1870-1920 [New York: New York University Press, 1985], p. 167-171.

In 1893, Baldwin prepared a paper for the Columbian Exposition at Chicago. In this paper, he refuted "ready-made views of consciousness (such as those of Locke, Reid, and

others). The old "faculties" of consciousness should be regarded as "growing" not "ready-made:"

The new functional conception asks how the mind as a whole acts, and how this one form of activity adapts itself to the different elements of material which it finds available....The particular way in which this one function shows itself is a matter of adaptation to the changing conditions under which the activity is brought about....The mind is looked upon as having grown to be what it is, both as respects the growth of man from the child, and as respects the place of man in the scale of conscious existence. (James Mark Baldwin, "Psychology Past and Present," Psychological Review, 1, pp. 367-368 [1894]; reproduced in John M. O'Donnell, The Origins of Modern Behaviorism, p. 168.)

CHAPTER 6

CONSCIOUSNESS UNDER SIEGE: THE NATURALIST RESPONSE, 1886-1910

In a recent book purporting to establish a connection between psychology and literature, Judith Ryan sets forth an interesting premise: From the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century until about 1940, she proclaims, American and British novelists, responding to the empiricist/materialist devaluation of a "self," gave form to characters whose self-identities appeared unusually fragmented and unstable.¹ Though her description of the naturalist literary genre is undoubtedly correct (as we will see in this chapter), her description of the psychology of the period rests on a traditional interpretation of psychology that is not supported by the facts.

It is not correct, as Ryan would have us believe, that the "new" psychology of the late nineteenth century, in its quest for scientific respectability, devalued the experiencing subject. Rather, the psychologists of the period made every attempt to incorporate a self-concept within their models of consciousness, even, as Mahan and Baldwin proposed, predicating the development of consciousness on the capacity to distinguish between a self and all that was not-self.² From a psychological point of view, the self was defined through this capacity, not devalued by it, though it is probably true, as Ryan asserts, that the philosophical problem of self and not self was not

so easily resolved.³

Nor is it accurate to suggest, as Ryan suggests, that by the nineteenth century "(t)he self was no longer firmly anchored in the body but in consciousness itself,"⁴ for, as we have seen, the psychologists of this survey, at least, held to the view that consciousness and somatic processes were linked, though the nature of the connection was certainly a matter of debate. Indeed, one might truthfully ask, At what point in the history of philosophical thought was the self ever conceived as purely (or even mostly) a somatic entity?

Nor is it accurate to suggest, as Ryan does, that, by the nineteenth century, consciousness "was no longer a discrete unit but included everything that was within the individual field of perception."⁵ As we have seen, consciousness was no more defined by the perceptual field than it was defined by any single sensory or affective strain. Even should one take as the defining conditions of the "perceptual field" an unusually broad spectrum of sensory input (which it is clear Ryan does not), there is no logical connection between "discreteness" as a description of the limits or unity of consciousness and the perceptual panorama.

The connection between psychology and literature is by no means as direct as Ryan's analysis would suggest. Though there were clear echoes of an empiricist strain in the new psychology, it was certainly not as pervasive and all-encompassing as Ryan would have it. Nor can it be said that "empiricism" automatically confines itself to the reductionist mode of thought that is generally understood to

characterize British Associationism.⁶ We have seen, for example, that William James rejected a reductionist approach to consciousness, though an empiricist he certainly remained. Although Ryan has failed to establish a connection between nineteenth-century psychology and modern literature, she is correct in recognizing that a new literary genre emerged in the period following the realist literature of Phelps, Howells, and Henry James; and she is correct in recognizing that that literature seemed (at least on the surface) to entail a devaluation of the self.

Traditionally, literary naturalism has been defined as realism "infused with a pessimistic determinism," a depiction of everyday life at the mercy of causal forces which none could control, but which man or woman could hope, on occasion to defeat (see Chapter 1).⁷ Donald Pizer, however, suggests that literary naturalism, far from being the reductive, pessimistic genre it seems to be, actually portrays human beings in their most self-affirming, even transcendent character:

[Naturalism] suggests that even the least significant human being can feel and strive powerfully....Naturalism reflects an affirmative ethical conception of life, for it asserts the value of all life by endowing the lowest character with emotion and defeat and with moral ambiguity, no matter how poor or ignoble he may seem. [The naturalistic novel] involves us in the experience of a life both commonplace and extraordinary, both familiar and strange, both simple and complex.⁸

Pizer would characterize the naturalist literature as a struggle for self-affirmation. The naturalist writer comes to his work in search of the noble challenge, the extraordinary courage, though he knows or she knows that the

odds are great and the victories few.

These issues define the ethical dilemma posed by naturalist writers. Unquestionably, there is an undertow of pessimism and defeatism running through these novels: A man or woman confronts a society that seems to have changed too quickly, that has become too loud, too fast and too alien; a man or woman is driven or opposed by forces beyond the control of either, be they forces of society or forces of nature. The self of the distant past (the coherent self assumed by Reid, Mahan, Hickok), seems lost indeed to these turn-of-the-century writers who confront the changes of late nineteenth-century life with something like a wail of despair.

A quote from a later Elizabeth Stuart Phelps is indicative of the general case:

We are taught that the law leans over, far beyond the scope of physics; that the human, like the ultimate atom, serves the large decree; and that human experience itself is a slave to the eternal rhythm. We are reminded that grief and joy and hope and anguish alternate as much as the budding and the fading of a wind-flower. We are asked to observe that misery has paroxysms as well as neuralgia; and that mourners smile because they have wept, and weep again, since they did smile. We are reminded that crime and pestilence pulsate in epidemics across the globe. We are called upon to record the throbs of the pendulum of history, whose swing sweeps from civilization to ruin, from the people to the throne, from tyranny to riot, from confusion to order, from morality to madness, from atheism to bigotry, from despair to faith.'

There is nothing stable or certain about life; the "pendulum of history" swings from chaos to order, "despair to faith," without end and seemingly without concern for the individuals who are caught in its path. In the face of such

powerlessness, how is it possible for any one human being to retain a sense of personal identity? How can a self cohere in an unstable world?

The pessimistic/optimistic tensions in American naturalism can be traced to two sources: Herbert Spencer's evolutionism and Auguste Comte's positivism. In the late nineteenth century, Herbert Spencer was the leading evolutionist; periodicals of the time were crammed with criticisms, interpretations, and defenses of Spencer's theories. Though his ideas certainly fueled the literary imagination, the reason for Spencer's popularity cannot be attributed to the depth of his understanding or the profundity of his ideas. What Spencer provided the late nineteenth century reading public was an essentially optimistic, all-encompassing universal principle of progress that satisfactorily accounted for the physical evolution of the universe, of organic life, of human knowledge, and social organization. The whole of Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy" could be reduced to the movement from "coherent homogeneity to incoherent (but integrated) heterogeneity," as mind, nature, individuals, and societies adjusted to environmental conditions. The ultimate goal was always human perfection; the process was inevitable and incontrovertible. The source of this change, according to Spencer, remained the "Unknowable," the principle behind the principle, variously interpreted as God or Force, according to individual predilections.¹⁰

It is easy to appreciate the appeal of Spencer's ideas in the chaotic atmosphere of the late nineteenth century.

They promised that present conditions would improve, that humankind would again rule the universe. The same sort of hopeful optimism was expressed in the Comtean idea that humankind, armed with the methods of science, would give up the Unknowable to the observation, description, prediction, and control of nineteenth-century science.¹¹ Though natural law doomed humankind to insignificance, the condition was not permanent; ultimately, science would bring nature to its knees.

Spencer's evolutionism and Comtean positivism represented a synthesis of ideological oppositions: determinism and free-will, realism and idealism, pessimism and optimism, catching the individual self in a cross-fire. These are the themes of naturalist literature with which this chapter will be concerned. Granted, there are other themes: social protest, regionalism, war;¹² but even in these works, the issue of humankind against natural forces is paramount; only the context of confrontation changes.

The difference between realism and naturalism can be understood as the difference between the assumption that one's place in the world is fixed according to moral law and the assumption that moral law no longer holds. Realism assumes that self-identity is constant; naturalism assumes that life is a process of self-definition. This was not, as Ryan suggests, a consequence of an "empiricist" psychology; rather it was a consequence of sweeping cultural changes (industrialization and the rise of capitalism), advances in the physical sciences, a cyclical conception of humankind's cultural history, and most important, a consequence of the

evolutionary theories of Darwin and Spencer. As Ruth Brandon states it in describing the strong appeal of spiritualism to the people of the late nineteenth century:

It was not that they wanted to adhere to the fundamentalist view that the Bible was the literal truth, but the notion of randomness which was so essential a part of the theory of natural selection seemed to preclude any possibility of there being a God. Darwinism meant that there was no grand plan, no pattern, no thought behind the universe.¹³

In effect, God had been lost to humankind, and men and women no longer felt a personal connection to their world. It is that personal connection that naturalist literature attempts to establish.

In this chapter, I will examine the works of three naturalist writers, focusing only, however, on single works: Henry Adams's The Education of Henry Adams (written in 1905), Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1891) and Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie (1907).¹⁴ I do not claim that these particular works are representative of these authors (though they are well known). They are, however, salient examples of the themes of naturalism I have discussed above, and it is for this reason I have chosen them over others.

As we will see, the theme of a search for personal identity is an important one in this literature. It is, for example, the central issue Henry Adams addresses in his Education:

Of all studies, the one he would rather have avoided was that of his own mind. He knew no tragedy so heart-rending as introspection, and the more, because...he was not the first. Nearly all the highest intelligence known to history had drowned itself in the reflection of its own thought, and the bovine survivors had rudely told the truth about it, without affecting the

intelligent.¹⁵

Adams refers, in this passage to the introspective methods used by psychologists of the time. Indeed, this passage fairly thunders as an indictment of that method and its results. Of what practical use is philosophical inquiry into the faculties of the mind? Neither psychology nor philosophy had managed to bridge the gap between the internal world and the experience of everyday life. Even so, such an indictment would not have occurred had there not existed a loss of a grander sort; had there, for example, been a sense of societal confirmation of the individual or a sense of personal communion with a force greater than oneself.¹⁶ By the late nineteenth century, the laws of "science" had made God superfluous; yet science had not proved capable of filling the gap. Indeed, the passage reflects the profound disappointment of one who, having believed that a science of the mind would re-establish the sovereignty of man, was confronted with the possibility that humankind was of no particular significance in the world. "Education" for Adams was nothing less than the search for meaning within a world doomed to the swing of the pendulum. As we will see, this same issue is confronted by Gilman and Dreiser's Sister Carrie.

Henry Adams (1838-1918)

Henry Adams was born into the Quincy Adamases, grandson of the sixth president of the United States and great grandson of the second. Of his birth into this famous family Adams writes: "Probably no child, born in the year, held better cards than he."¹⁷ The Adams tradition promised status

and security, "safeguards" against an unknown world, though even in that tradition "as elsewhere a cruel universe combined to crush a child."¹⁸ His education was that of a typical late-nineteenth-century male child of privilege: a smattering of mathematics, training in the classics and languages, history, religion, the arts, and moral philosophy. "At any other moment in history," he writes, "this education, including its political and literary bias, would have been not only good, but quite the best. Society had always welcomed and flattered men so endowed."¹⁹ Looking back from the vantage of fifty years, however, Adams believed the boy of 1854 was no more prepared for the twentieth century than if he had been educated in the year 1; he had had as yet no education at all.²⁰

The question presents itself: What was it that Adams needed to understand which his classical training could not provide? What, indeed, was Adams in search of? John Carlos Rowe defines the search in both the Education and Adams's Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres (1913) as a quest for "order, origin, and unity,"²¹ a pursuit generated by the profound changes that had occurred in the nineteenth century.²² According to Rowe, Adams's search for unity and origin was a search for a fundamental principle or law that, in accounting for the apparent discontinuities in man's cultural development, would give meaning to man's existence.²³

Adams views the world from the perspective of one who observes, rather than participates, who reflects, rather than acts.²⁴ Education is thus embodied in a series of impressions and reflections--in, that is, experience. Though

the series as a whole appears fragmented, in the final analysis, the fragmentation dissolves in the author's attempt to impose order on these disparate elements. Consciousness, far from being a mere particle in a sea of supersensual chaos, is that which establishes each individual's existence.

John Rowe explains:

Cutting and piecing together the history of his education, Adams constitutes meaning in the very struggle to find a place in a bewildering modern world. The constant imperative that one must choose in order to be remains amidst the fragmentary narrative of a life....Only the function of consciousness itself enables man to react successively to a constantly changing universe of force.²⁵

If a unifying principle be found, human consciousness (in the widest possible sense) would surely be confirmed as the interpreter, indeed the only interpreter, of historical change.²⁶ It is as interpreter, Adams believes, that man's life acquires meaning, though meaning of a very different sort than Reid or early psychologists would acknowledge as valid. As John Rowe states the matter:

Knowledge becomes a means of survival rather than a desire for final definition or identity. The process of inquiry itself reveals how meaning and understanding depend upon the activity of making problematic choices between conflicting evidence. Such choice and selection make the game possible and "amusing," turning education into a vital experience.²⁷

The role of mind/consciousness for Adams was conceived as just that process of choosing, selecting, and interpreting that we have seen before in William James's description of consciousness: "The mind," James writes, "works on the data it receives very much as a sculptor works on his block of stone," carving out a unique statue, when it might have carved

out any other.²⁸ The statue, of course, is a singular interpretation of the world. By a similar act, according to Adams, did humankind ensure its survival; by a series of such acts, history is made.

Humankind continually attempts to impose order on the world, Adams believed,²⁹ to "bring nature to task;" the historical record is a record of such interpretations, which nature, obstinately, resists.³⁰ Historically, there is only the fact of action and reaction, force and resistance, out of which emerges new complexities of thought.³¹ How else to explain variation and change? In that context, the mind itself becomes a force with which nature must contend.

Nothing forbids one to assume that the man-meteorite might grow, as an acorn does, absorbing light, heat, electricity--or thought; for, in recent times, such transference of energy has become a familiar idea; but the simplest figure, at first, is that of a perfect comet...which drops from space, in a straight line, at the regular acceleration of speed, directly into the sun, and after wheeling sharply about it, in heat that ought to dissipate any known substance, turns back unharmed, in defiance of law, by the path on which it came. The mind, by analogy, may figure as such a comet, the better because it also defies law.³²

The mind defies law because it does not succumb to the forces of nature, though it is itself nature. The chronological history of the series of confrontations between the human mind and natural force suggests to Adams that, comet-like, the mind-force has accelerated: "Complexity had extended itself on immense horizons....The force evolved seemed more like explosion than gravitation."³³ By 1900, it was clear to Adams that the human mind had succeeded in building up untold complexities: the science that produced the compass and the typewriter also produced weapons and war.³⁴ "At the rate of

progress since 1800," Adams writes, "every American who lived into the year 2000 would know how to control unlimited power."³⁵

Adams's analysis leads to a single conclusion: Mind is motion; consciousness is interpretation, adaptation. Both mind and consciousness are driven by a desire for unity and order. There is no unifying principle, however; there exist only the laws defining the interaction of forces. There is no order; there is only complexity, multiplicity. Humankind is defined by its interpretive acts, its confrontations with natural forces. In Adams's analysis, it is defined by little else. "Knowledge becomes a means of survival rather than a desire for final definition or identity."³⁶ If there is only motion and confrontation, there can be no stable centering self. The Henry Adams of the Education is little more than a "manikin" on which...education is to be draped in order to show the fit or misfit of the clothes."³⁷

Adams's conclusion is as much an emotional response to the changes wrought by nineteenth-century technology as it was a response to the devaluation of humankind which Darwin's theory of evolution suggested. He takes his cue from the physical and biological sciences--the laws of mechanics and evolutionary theory--not from the new psychology.³⁸ Yet, there are parallels between Ladd's physiological thesis and Adams's dynamic theory of historical change: Each appealed to laws of mechanics to explain change in state and each appealed to evolutionary theory to explain change in time (see Chapter 5). The parallels are intriguing in that they suggest that the psychology-literature connection was

mediated by discoveries in the natural sciences. To draw this conclusion on the basis of one correspondence is to make an unsupported leap. Such a possibility, however, is suggested by Stephen Brush in the following quote:

[At times] scientific facts and theories may have a direct influence on those who construct philosophical systems, write novels, or criticize society. Thus the mechanistic materialism of mid-nineteenth century physics and biology was reflected by "naturalism" in philosophy and literature, and by "positivism" in the social sciences.³⁹

Such "borrowing" of concepts seems most often to flow from established disciplines in the direction of the less established or "softer" disciplines. Certainly, both psychology and literature were "soft" disciplines in the late nineteenth century. As we saw in Part I, however, the connection between the philosophical models of mind/consciousness and the literary models developed by Phelps, Howells, and James was tenuous at best; indeed, the two disciplines employed different languages (a dynamic language for novelists; the objective language of "science" for philosophy). At least regarding Adams and Ladd, both use the language of science, and the connection seems stronger for that.

In the next section, the language of science is replaced by the language of medicine. In the late nineteenth century mental disorder was a medical problem, not a psychological one, even though most psychologists of the time had come to believe that psychology ought to address disorders of the mind as well as normal conscious states. As we will see, there are clear parallels between the model of consciousness

developed by William James and the model that describes the gradual deterioration of mental function described by the following author.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman was well known in her time as author and lecturer on what today would be called "feminist" issues. She was never a member of established intellectual circles, academic or otherwise, however, but made her living giving voice to her belief that society as a whole would profit from the emancipation of women from the narrow confines of domesticity.⁴⁰ Her published works include Women and Economics (1898), in which she discusses the value of earned income to self-respect and the good of society as a whole from a Darwinian perspective; Human Work (1904), in which she describes the discrepancy between "the collective social relations that shape our economic life" and the "individualistic way we think about the social and economic order;" and Herland (1915), a Utopian novel about an insulated country inhabited only by women.⁴¹ Gilman, according to Ann Lane, made "gender the center of her analysis," calling attention to women's rights, not to secure women's economic independence, but because she believed that the good of society countermanded that any one class of people should serve another.⁴² Gilman wanted a much a different world for the women of nineteenth-century America.

The core of Gilman's humanism was her belief that the power of ideas was the primary tool for changing behavior: To change the world, one must first change consciousness; false ideas (incorporated in theology, medicine) must be replaced

with truth. The relation between conscious thoughts and action was accepted as incontrovertible, fundamental. We modify our behavior, she asserted, to fit our ideas. If we see ourselves as wicked or subservient, we will behave so, and become so (a Jamesian notion). Her ideas are couched in the language of late-nineteenth-century rationalism, partly because of her belief in the relation of ideas and behavior, but also because she was convinced that emotionalism (with which women were often associated) often led to women's subservience.⁴³ These ideas are present in "The Yellow Wallpaper," for which Gilman draws on personal experience.

"The Yellow Wallpaper" is the story of a young mother's descent into madness, caused by a well-meaning but insidious husband-doctor who follows S. Weir Mitchell's Rest Cure. In the story, John, the husband, takes his ailing wife, who is suffering from a nervous disease (neurasthenia), to the country for the summer. He insists that she needs perfect rest, and prescribes tonics, air, exercise, and absolutely forbids her to leave the room or to work at her writing until she is completely well again.

He insisted that she remain in a former nursery on the top floor of the house, away from the bustle of daily life. The room contains a barred window and dirty yellow wallpaper of an unusual wavy pattern. She spends most of her time in this room alone, "recovering" and, forbidden to work or to read, becomes obsessed and increasingly disgusted with that yellow wallpaper. Increasingly, as she tries to follow the pattern in the wallpaper, the "lame, uncertain curves... suddenly commit suicide." Within the wallpaper there appears

a "strange, provoking, formless sort of figure that seems to skulk about," an ambiguous form that threatens, frightens by its skulking. As the days pass, the shape gets clearer. "And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind the pattern." At night the pattern in the paper seems like the bars on the windows, and the woman in the wallpaper becomes plainly visible, creeping around behind the patterned bars, looking for a way to escape. Later, as she peels off the wallpaper "to let the woman escape" (to escape?), there are many creeping women; she is surrounded by them, and becomes one of them, crawling around the walls of the room.

Charlotte Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" was published in 1891 in the May issue of New England Magazine to mixed reviews. Though a record of her own experience, the story was originally seen as a horror story: One unnamed doctor published a letter suggesting that, since it gave no pleasure "to any reader," and "must bring the keenest pain" to those "whose lives have become a struggle against a heredity of mental derangement," it ought not "be allowed to pass without severest censure." Another physician, however, sent her a note of congratulations, saying that there had yet been "no detailed account of incipient insanity."⁴⁴

There are two diagnoses presented in the narrative. The first diagnosis (claimed by the medical profession and the husband) was predicated on the assumption that the changes that had taken place in late-nineteenth-century life (industrialization, urbanization, etc.) had a deleterious effect on the human constitution, which was more suited to the slow pace and relaxed atmosphere of an earlier time.⁴⁵

According to this model, women, because of their frailty, were particularly vulnerable. The medical model was based on the idea that each person possessed a certain amount of nervous energy, which was transmitted to different parts of the body. "Neurasthenia" was thus a result of a breakdown in the system, of the demand exceeding the supply.⁴⁶ Once diagnosed, treatment consisted of isolation, enforced rest, nutritious meals, and the like, all intended to permit the restoration of depleted energy and return to normal life tasks.⁴⁷

A second diagnosis is founded on what is best referred to as the "mental therapeutics model." This model (claimed by Gilman and the woman in the narrative) was based on the idea that the subconscious was the source of unpleasant thoughts and irrational ideas that intruded occasionally into consciousness, especially under conditions of great stress or anxiety, overwork or trauma. At such times, the individual's weakened will was unable to resist the irrational thoughts, which tended to revolve around a single idea. F. G. Gosling quotes from a nineteenth-century neurologist:

Probably in all of us impulses, fears, or doubts arise suddenly in consciousness as isolated thoughts or emotions, and which may be apparently totally disconnected with the mental state immediately preceding their appearance. For instance, many of us, I presume, have been seized with the desire to count the windows or doors in passing along a street, or in walking to avoid carefully the cracks in a pavement or to touch fenceposts....Certain words or phrases, lines of poetry or bars of music, may thrust themselves into consciousness at odd times.⁴⁸

The difference between normal and abnormal was founded on the ability to resist committing acts contrary to volition. The

completely normal man or woman committed no such acts; the neurasthenic committed some; the insane committed many more. Mental therapy consisted of the rest cure in addition to firm assurances that the ideas themselves were not unusual, although the patient was encouraged to banish such thoughts from consciousness. The physician who took this approach attempted to convince the patient that, while the ideas were troubling, the physician had full confidence that the patient would be able to control them. A strict regimen of diet and exercise were also prescribed.⁴⁹

"Personally, I disagree with their ideas," writes the women in the narrative of her husband's treatment plans. "Personally I believe that congenial work, with excitement and change, would do me good." And further, "I think sometimes that if I were only well enough to write a little it would relieve the press of ideas and rest me."⁵⁰ A better treatment, given the relation between ideas and behavior according to Gilman, would be to erase the false, oppressive ideas with "congenial work...and change;" to strengthen the will; to turn out "useless and debilitating thoughts." The medical model dominates, however (as the husband dominates) and the reader is witness to the consequences: To the obsession with the wallpaper accrues a series of images and irrational thoughts, and insanity.

We have seen evidence of this second model in the psychological theory of William James (see Chapter 5). In James's model, the subliminal consciousness was the repository of buried feelings, fixed ideas, traumatic experiences, "forgotten" memories, religious convictions--a

random collection of associated thoughts and sensations.⁵¹ Under normal conditions there is reciprocity between the levels of consciousness; under certain conditions, however, an upsurge from the subliminal takes over waking consciousness entirely. Consciousness contracts, James asserts, to a fixed idea that dominates all thought and action.⁵² To Gilman no less than to James, the relation between thought and action was incontrovertible.

Charlotte Gilman was not an introspective woman, according to Lane, and her ideas, although reflecting a Darwinian perspective, did not include an active interest in psychological or philosophical issues.⁵³ It would be overstating the case to suggest that Gilman's ideas about the relation between conscious thought and behavior were drawn from James's ideas. Indeed, the source of the thought/behavior relation can be traced to Darwin, to Scottish moral principles, and to Calvinist theology.

We have seen that the exchange between psychology and literature is mediated by ideas that had become part of late nineteenth-century culture: evolutionary theory, physical science, and medicine influenced both psychology and literary naturalism to a greater degree than each influenced the other. However, where the psychologists drew primarily on Darwin's ideas, many novelists found Spencer's ideas more appealing.⁵⁴ Aligned with Comtean positivism, Spencerian evolutionism seemed to promise hope: though natural law prevailed, the end-result was human perfection. As we will see, Theodore Dreiser drew heavily on these ideas.

In the final section of this chapter, we will examine

Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie. The novel, written in 1900, was Dreiser's first, and, though it was published over the objections of Frank Doubleday (of the Doubleday publishing company), it was commended by writers Frank Norris and William Dean Howells as "a breakthrough in American realism."⁵⁵

Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945)

Like many of his contemporaries, Theodore Dreiser was a Spencerian first, a positivist second. Dreiser, for example, believed Spencer's "Unknowable" (the source of evolutionary change) could be found in the composition of "chemisms" within the blood that determined temperament, attitude, personality traits.⁵⁶ In addition, he believed Spencer's law of inevitable progress ought to serve as a guiding principle for alleviating social injustices and social inequities; for then, he writes, "all mankind will conform to laws which he has written down, as they were given to him by the One whose work is creation, and whose all-covering generosity has given the world a mind so philosophic as that of Herbert Spencer."⁵⁷ Comte, however, provided another perspective: the idea that nineteenth-century culture marked a passage to the stage when science would control the world.

The principal themes of Dreiser's work have been stated succinctly by John Rathbun and Harry Clark: "Life was flux; stratification and stasis were bad; man was a complex of chemical compounds sympathetically reacting to variations in the physical environment...Free will was a superstition."⁵⁸ The mind of humankind was either mechanistic or organic. Spencer's theories seemed to suggest both. Either mind

operated according to the mechanics of force and motion (and thus determinism prevailed) or mind operated as one with the great organism of life, wherein all life processes were interconnected pulsations of the living whole (and thus determinism prevailed).⁵⁹

The theme of *Sister Carrie* is brought out in the context of a battle between instinctual desires and free-will. Free-will, rationality, knowledge, judgment are all of piece, Dreiser would assert; evil, instinct, passion, ignorance compromise human existence: We are never wholly free; we are ever beset. Resolution is not granted the reflective consciousness any more than knowledge guarantees success. These themes are central to Sister Carrie.

The novel begins with Carrie's trip to Chicago to live with her sister and her sister's husband. On the train, Carrie meets a salesman who promises to introduce her to the city. Always wanting more from life than she has at any moment, Carrie eventually leaves her sister to live with the salesman; leaves the salesman to live with a man who represents wealth and status; leaves him to become a successful actress. The novel ends as she waits for the fulfillment of her dream. And Dreiser, ever the moralist, comments:

Oh, the tangle of human life! How dimly as yet we see. Here was Carrie, in the beginning poor, unsophisticated, emotional; responding with desire to everything most lovely in life, yet finding herself turned as by a wall...Not evil, but longing for that which is better, more often directs the steps of the erring. Not evil, but goodness more often allures the feeling mind unused to reason.⁶⁰

Like Henry Adams, Dreiser imagines the world comprised

of forces in perpetual opposition, neutral as to the destiny of humankind. There might be God, but God does not control absolutely. The very randomness of the forces, their base neutrality, ensures that success is but a chance event. As Henry Adams's identity was solely taken up with his search for "education," the heroine of Dreiser's story is solely taken in by desire. The following passage is the clearest example of Dreiser's ideas and thus it is the only one I will quote from his work. This passage occurs as Carrie prepares to leave her sister's house; Dreiser intends that the reader understand that her action follows desire, rather than reason:

Among the forces which sweep and play throughout the universe, untutored man is but a wisp in the wind. Our civilization is still in the middle stage, scarcely beast, in that it is no longer wholly guided by instinct; scarcely human, in that it is not yet wholly guided by reason. On the tiger no responsibility rests. We see him aligned by nature with the forces of life--he is born into their keeping and without thought he is protected. We see man far removed from the lairs of the jungles, his innate instincts dulled by too near an approach to free-will, his free-will not sufficiently developed to replace his instincts and afford him perfect guidance. He is becoming too wise to hearken always to instincts and desires; he is still too weak to always prevail against them. As a beast, the forces of life aligned him with them; as a man; he has not yet wholly learned to align himself with the forces. In this intermediate stage he wavers--neither drawn in harmony with nature by his instincts nor yet wisely putting himself into harmony by his own free-will. He is even as a wisp in the wind, moved by every breath of passion, acting now by his will and now by his instincts, erring with one, only to retrieve by the other, falling by one, only to rise by the other--a creature of incalculable variability. We have the consolation of knowing that evolution is ever in action, that the ideal is a light that cannot fail. He will not forever balance thus between good and evil. Where this jangle of free-will and instinct shall have been adjusted, when perfect understanding has given the former the power to replace the latter entirely, man

will no longer vary. The needle of understanding will yet point steadfast and unwavering to the distant pole of truth.⁶¹

The conscious mind is presented as a battleground of competing forces: free-will and reason oppose instinct and desire. Desire will out in those in whom free-will is not "sufficiently developed to...afford him perfect guidance." But time promises success; "[humankind] will not forever balance thus between good and evil. Where this jangle of free-will and instinct shall have been adjusted, when perfect understanding has given the former the power to replace the latter entirely," there will be no indecision and no conflict.

Like Howells, Dreiser gives us little insight into Carrie's conscious thoughts. Like Howells, Dreiser expects us to infer Carrie's thoughts from her behavior and from the narrator's interpretive presence. Unlike Howells, Dreiser presents a character who is beset by forces beyond her control, by instinctual desires operating in accord with natural law. This, of course, is a central theme of naturalist literature. Howells's character was lost because he would not engage in the kind of reflection that would yield information about the world; Dreiser's character was lost because instinct overpowered reason.

Discussion: Part II

It is correct to assert, as Ryan has, that there is an absence of a centering, coherent self in naturalist literature: Henry Adams searches for meaning to replace his sense of alienation; he finds it in the conscious act of interpretation. Charlotte Gilman finds her sense of self

restored in conscious acts of affirming work. "Carrie," caught between a rational will and instinctive desire, affirms a "self" (even if temporarily) in every desire. In the works I have discussed, Adams, Gilman, and Dreiser appeal to a consciousness that has neither defined boundaries nor a central core. Henry James, William Dean Howells, and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, in contrast, consistently appeal to a consciousness whose boundaries are the physical being and whose core is the self; all thought streams outward from that core. A brief comparison will reveal the difference. From Chapter 4, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps describes a wakeful night:

Visions which he would just then have gone blind to forget electrotyped themselves upon the half-lit room. Long odorous country twilights, the scent of honeysuckle about a farm-house door, the pressure of confiding fingers on his arm, the uplifting of a young face, the touch of trustful life, pursued him rather with the force of sensations than reflections. With these came other ghosts, incoherent fancies, aimless fevers, nameless dreams.⁶²

Contrast this with a passage from Henry Adams:

Nothing forbids one to assume that the man-meteorite might grow, as an acorn does, absorbing light, heat, electricity--or thought; for, in recent times, such transference of energy has become a familiar idea; but the simplest figure, at first, is that of a perfect comet...which drops from space, in a straight line, at the regular acceleration of speed, directly into the sun, and after wheeling sharply about it, in heat that ought to dissipate any known substance, turns back unharmed, in defiance of law, by the path on which it came. The mind, by analogy, may figure as such a comet, the better because it also defies law.⁶³

Though both passages consist of a series of visual images, the quality of those images differ. For all its melancholic sentimentality (though, perhaps, because of that), Phelps's passage conveys passivity: the conscious self falls victim

to the remembered past. Adams's passage, in contrast, conveys motion, change, action: the consciousness is portrayed as a force to be reckoned with, equal to the forces of Nature, and no less powerful. In literary naturalism we see revealed what John Rowe refers to as "an incomplete self repeatedly transformed by the effort of consciousness to know itself," a self that can only be known through a series of conscious acts perpetuated upon the world.⁶⁴ Indeed, this conception of consciousness is fundamentally akin to that of the late-nineteenth-century psychologists, who, following William James, concluded that consciousness had a crucial role in ensuring survival. It is consciousness, asserted James, that selects out of a "theatre of possibilities" those ends that are favorable to the organism and consciousness it is that represses those ends that are not. "Every actually existing consciousness seems to itself at any rate to be a fighter for ends, of which many, but for its presence, would not be ends at all."⁶⁵

By the turn of the twentieth century, the idea that consciousness acted upon the world to achieve certain ends would become the focus of experimental research. For example, in 1901 Joseph Jastrow, following James, would declare in his presidential speech before the American Psychological Association that psychology was a "science of mental function," not content. Later, in 1903, James Rowland Angell declared that "(c)onsciousness is not merely epiphenomenal, but is really an efficient agent in the furtherance of the life activities of the organism."⁶⁶ As we have seen, the literary naturalists had already taken up this

view.

Though these conceptual similarities suggest cross-disciplinary influence, there is little evidence that turn-of-the-century psychologists drew their ideas from naturalist literature. For example, William James did not reference any of the works we have discussed in his Principles of Psychology (1890)⁶⁷: a survey of the index and footnotes reveal instead a wide-ranging knowledge of philosophical and psychological work of the period, as well as several references to Romantic literature, including the works of Jane Austen, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and John Makepeace Thackeray. James's work published after the Principles shows a similar pattern: In the edited volume William James. Writings 1878-1899, amid the usual references to philosophers and psychologists, the explanatory Notes reveal once again James's preference for Romantic literature; citations to Tennyson, Emerson, Longfellow, Laurence Sterne (Tristram Shandy), and Walt Whitman abound.⁶⁸ Though this brief survey does not rule out the possibility that literary naturalism exerted an indirect influence on James's thought, the possibility is unlikely. All that is known about James's work and style strongly support his extraordinary sensitivity to the interplay of ideas and his scrupulousness in the matter of citations. It would be out of character (and, from his perspective, unnecessary) to overlook (deliberately or accidentally) any connections to the wider cultural arena in which he worked. Moreover, a brief survey of the indexes and footnotes of the works of James Mark Baldwin and George Trumbull Ladd fail to reveal references to any literary

tradition, suggesting that that influence, if it existed at all, was of little importance in their work.

Similarly, there does not seem to be any direct link between the work of the late-nineteenth century psychologists we have examined and the works of the literary naturalists we surveyed in this chapter. Though Henry Adams's Education, does suggest familiarity with the philosophical and historical traditions, no references, however indirect, suggest that his ideas were based upon psychological works of the time. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, as we have noted, was all too well acquainted with the popular notion of "neurasthenia" and the accepted medical treatment; there is, however, nothing in her work to suggest an acquaintance with the ideas perpetuated by Ladd, Baldwin, and James, despite her belief in active employment as an antidote for mental anguish. And Theodore Dreiser's tale of Carrie's battle between desire and free-will is more closely aligned with a Spencerian consciousness (see Appendix) than a Jamesian one.

All this is to suggest that cross-disciplinary influence in this latter period (1885-1910) is an unlikely and unsupported assumption. It seems more reasonable to assume that these two disciplines, engaged at this time in forging their own traditions, drew on ideas that had become common currency in the latter part of the nineteenth century, specifically, the evolutionism of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer (see Appendix). Perhaps it is even more to the point that these novelists and psychologists show at this time a pronounced differential preference for these ideas: though acquainted with the work of Spencer, most psychologists (not

acquainted with the work of Spencer, most psychologists (not least the psychologists we have examined) took up Darwin's concept of evolutionary adaptation as an overriding theme. The novelists, in contrast, though acquainted with Darwin's work, were more inclined to the Spencerian concept of psychic and cultural competition. We saw this theme in Adams's concept of the mind/consciousness as a force in competition with other natural forces; in Gilman's belief in competing conscious acts; and in Dreiser's concept of the competition between free-will and instinctual desire. In the next chapter, these differences will be treated in some depth.

Chapter Notes

¹ Judith Ryan, The Vanishing Subject. Early Psychology and Literary Modernism (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 1-5.

² James Mark Baldwin, The Story of the Mind (1898) (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1974), pp. 66-67.

³ Ryan, assuming at the start that late nineteenth-century psychology and philosophy were "closely affiliated," neglects many of the issues that were of more interest to psychologists as psychologists than they were of interest to philosophers. For example, the "mind/body problem" was not simply a philosophical or religious issue (though it was certainly both of those), it was also a methodological issue, which directly impacted on the kinds of experiments that were considered relevant to the discipline. Moreover, the idea that "empiricists," because they were empiricists, "rejected the dualism of subject and object," believing that "everything that was, subsisted in consciousness" is clearly misguided (See Judith Ryan, The Vanishing Subject, p. 2). As a philosophical problem, however, the subject/object distinction was indeed a source of debate, just as it had always been. We have seen, for example, that this issue was addressed by Reid (in his response to Locke and Hume); and it was concern for William James, George Trumbull Ladd, and James Mark Baldwin. That issue does not, however, directly impact on the psychology/literature connection.

⁴ Judith Ryan, The Vanishing Subject, p. 9.

⁵ Judith Ryan, The Vanishing Subject, p. 9.

⁶ See Judith Ryan, The Vanishing Subject, pp. 2, 10.

⁷ Donald Pizer, Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-century American Literature, rev. ed. (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), pp. 9-11.

⁸ Donald Pizer, Realism and Naturalism, p. 12.

⁹ Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, "The Psychological Wave," The Forum, 1 (1886), p. 379.

¹⁰ Herbert Spencer, A System of Synthetic Philosophy, 3rd ed. (1899) (Osnabruck: Proff & Co., 1966).

¹¹ Auguste Comte, founder of positivism, proposed a three-stage progression of human culture: theological, metaphysical, and scientific. In the theological stage, humankind swore allegiance to a God or Gods from whom all benefits flowed, from whom retribution was expected. In the metaphysical stage, the Gods or spirits become abstractions, the unknowable causes of natural events. The last stage is scientific. See the brief discussion in Thomas H. Leahey, A History of Psychology. Main Currents in Psychological Thought (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 146-148.

¹² Examples of social protest literature are Frank Norris's The Octopus (1901) and The Pit (1903); Upton Sinclair's The Jungle (1906); Booker T. Washington's Up from Slavery (1901); Frederick Douglass's The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (1845). Examples of regional color literature include: Kate Chopin's short stories of Louisiana Creole/Cajun life; Hamlin Garland's Rose of Dutcher's Coolly (1895) and Prairie Folks (1893). Examples of war literature include Stephen Crane's The Red Badge of Courage (1896) (Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism to Postmodernism. A History of American Literature [New York: Viking, 1991], pp. 223-235.)

¹³ Ruth Brandon, The Spiritualists. The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (New York: Knopf, 1983), p. 89.

¹⁴ See, for example, Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury, From Puritanism to Postmodernism, pp. 223-268; Daniel H. Borus, Writing Realism. Howells, James, and Norris in the Mass Market (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1989), pp. 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 49, 55, 114, 124, 132, 159.

¹⁵ Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams. An Autobiography (1907). (Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin, 1946), p. 432.

¹⁶ Henry Adams, Education, pp. 34-36.

¹⁷ Henry Adams, Education, p. 4.

¹⁸ Henry Adams, Education, p. 12.

¹⁹ Henry Adams, Education, p. 53.

²⁰ Henry Adams, Education, p. 53.

21 John Carlos Rowe, Henry Adams and Henry James. The Emergence of a Modern Consciousness (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1976), p. 48.

22 It must have seemed, then, that all that had been certain had been eclipsed by the rush of time propelling small cities into large ones and an agrarian economy into an industrial one. Indeed, apart from the scientific ethic that spawned the new technology even as it began to de-mystify the human mind, there was a sense that the forces of "progress" had acquired a life of their own, effacing all that was uniquely human in the process. See, for example, Richard Tarnas, The Passion of the Western Mind. Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), pp. 318-332, 355-365.

23 See Henry Adams, Education, pp. 284-298, 449-461; and also John Rowe's discussion in Henry Adams and Henry James, pp. 93-131.

24 Henry Adams, Education, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

25 John Carlos Rowe, Henry Adams and Henry James, p. 129.

26 Henry Adams, Education, p. 89.

27 John Carlos Rowe, Henry Adams and Henry James, p. 118.

28 William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 (1890) (New York: Dover, 1950), pp. 288-289.

29 Henry Adams, Education, pp. 431-435.

30 Henry Adams, Education, pp. 484, 493.

31 Henry Adams, Education, pp. 474-488.

32 Henry Adams, Education, p. 489.

33 Henry Adams, Education, pp. 490-491.

34 Henry Adams, Education, pp. 495.

35 Henry Adams, Education, p. 496.

36 John Carlos Rowe, Henry Adams and Henry James, p.

118.

37 Henry Adams, Education, p. xxiv.

38 The only psychology to which Adams refers is that of William James. And of that, he refers only to James's failure to establish mind as a unity.

He gathered from the books that the psychologists had, in a few cases, distinguished several personalities in the same mind, each conscious and constant, individual and exclusive....Dualism seemed to have become as common as binary stars. (Henry Adams, Education, p. 433)

39 Stephen G. Brush, The Temperature of History (New York: Burt Franklin & Company, 1978), pp. 1-2.

40 Ann J. Lane, To Herland and Beyond. The Life and Work of Charlotte Perkins Gilman (New York: Median, 1991), pp. 3-19.

41 Ann J. Lane, To Herland and Beyond, pp. 233-254, 274-278, 292-294.

42 Ann J. Lane, To Herland and Beyond, p. 302.

43 Ann J. Lane, To Herland and Beyond, pp. 302-305.

44 Cited in Ann J. Lane, To Herland and Beyond, pp. 130-131. Original letter in the Charlotte Perkins Gilman collection at the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

45 F. G. Gosling, Before Freud. Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community, 1870-1910 (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1987), pp. 10-15.

46 F. G. Gosling, Before Freud, p. 10.

47 F. G. Gosling, Before Freud, pp. 108-142.

48 Theodore Diller, "Imperative Conceptions as a Symptom of Neurasthenia," Medical News, 68 (1896): 38. Cited in F. G. Gosling, Before Freud, p. 70.

49 F. G. Gosling, Before Freud, pp. 69-75. Henri F. Ellenberger, The Discovery of the Unconscious. The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry (New York: Basic Books, 1970), pp. 141-174.

- 50 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper." Reprinted in Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Isabelle D. Waugh, & Charles D. Waugh (eds.), Wife or Spinster. Stories by Nineteenth-Century Women (Camden, Maine: Yankee Books, 1991; pp. 69-84), pp. 70, 73.
- 51 Eugene Taylor, William James on Exceptional Mental States (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), pp. 42-43.
- 52 William James, "The Hidden Self," Scribner's Magazine 1 (Fall 1890): 361.
- 53 Ann J. Lane, To Herland and Beyond, pp. 123, 233.
- 54 John W. Rathbun and Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905 (American Literary Series, vol. II) (Boston, Massachusetts: Twayne, 1979), pp. 78-90.
- 55 E. L. Doctorow, "Introduction," Sister Carrie (New York: Bantam, 1992), p. vii.)"Naturalism" was not defined as a separate genre until long after its emergence in the late-nineteenth century, whereas "realism" was known as realism and defined as such by the 1870s. Accordingly, writers of the period, such as Frank Norris and William Dean Howells would not be expected to make the distinction [which even today is ignored by some writers and critics] which I have applied in this work. Clearly, however, they recognized that there were differences between the early and later literary periods, as indicated, for example, by the use of the term "breakthrough.")
- 56 John W. Rathbun and Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, p. 87.
- 57 John W. Rathbun and Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, p. 90.
- 58 John W. Rathbun and Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, p. 150.
- 59 Theodore Dreiser, Notes on Life, Marguerite Tjader and John J. McAleer, eds. (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1974), pp. 112-113, 177-178.
- 60 Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie (1900) (New York: Bantam, 1992), pp. 398-399.

- 61 Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie, pp. 60-61.
- 62 Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, The Story of Avis (1879) (New York: Arno Press, 1977), p. 169.
- 63 Henry Adams, Education, p. 489.
- 64 John Carlos Rowe, Henry Adams and Henry James, p. 36.
- 65 William James, The Principles of Psychology, vol. 1 (1890) (New York: Dover, 1950), pp. 141-142.
- 66 James Rowland Angell, "The Relations of Structural and Functional Psychology to Philosophy," Philosophical Review 12 (1903): 203.
- 67 Though published in 1890, James's Principles of Psychology was contracted for in 1878. Many section of this work appeared in journals of the period, including Mind, The Journal of Speculative Philosophy, and others. Accordingly, this work would be expected to reflect conceptual perspective common to the earlier, Romantic, literary period, as, at least in regard to the indexed references, it does.
- 68 Gerald E. Myers (ed.), William James. Writings. 1878-1899 (New York: Literary Classics of the United States[Viking], 1992). See "Notes," pp. 1178-1212.

CHAPTER 7

THE EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

"Never Know When It Might Come in Useful"

There is a story about a man named Nasrudin, who sometimes took people for trips in his boat. One day a fussy pedagogue hired him to ferry him across a very wide river. As soon as they were afloat, the scholar asked whether it was going to be rough.

"Don't ask me nothing about it," said Nasrudin.

"Have you never studied grammar?"

"No," said the boatman.

"In that case, half your life has been wasted."

The boatman said nothing.

Soon a terrible storm blew up. The boatman's ferry was filling with water. He leaned over toward his companion.

"Have you ever learned to swim?"

"No," said the pedant.

"In that case, schoolmaster, all your life is lost, for we are sinking."¹

As Robert Ornstein points out, the two characters in this story represent two different ways of understanding consciousness. The scholar, ever rational, concerned with logical form and insistent on perfection in language use (though, perhaps, not in the social realm), represents the analytical, scientific approach. The boatman, aware that form is of little concern when survival is concerned,

represents the creative and pragmatic view. These two perspectives are paralleled in the psychological and literary approaches to consciousness with which this study has been concerned. The psychologists and philosophers, rationalists all, approached mind and consciousness in terms of specific operations that could be introspectively observed, described, and classified, often in minute detail. Objectively, consciousness takes the form of an entity with independent existence composed of identifiable parts. The novelists, realists and naturalists, approached consciousness as that aspect of human function responsible for the relation of individual to the conditions of life. Consciousness, subjectively perceived, assumes the form of a vital, active life-force, capable of movement in time and capable of generating movement in space.

It is the nature of science and literature, broadly conceived and commonly apprehended, that they pursue independent courses. Ideally, science opts for explanation, description, prediction, and control. Literature, in contrast, seeks to impress, and (occasionally) to instruct. The crucial difference is not the source of ideas, but its textual representation, the rhetorical "trappings." The novelist contextualizes experience, enriches it, through a powerful interplay of metaphor and emotion-laden analogy. The scientist, as we will see, begins with metaphor, a theoretical context that envelopes and, thus, explains the phenomena of experience.

Recent scholarship has questioned the claims of complete objectivity in scientific description and fact-gathering.

For example, Thomas Kuhn and Karl Popper have stated that all scientific practice begins with an imaginative construction of the to-be-observed events. Pointedly, these philosophers suggest that scientific observation is colored by this imaginative construction--the theoretical context--that allows the scientist to "select out" relevant observations. Kuhn, in particular, has suggested that scientific research programs are based on acts of faith which their adherents go to great lengths to protect.² Michel Foucault goes further in suggesting that all thought (scientific and literary) is enveloped within a conceptual system defined and maintained by a culture; accordingly, Foucault would expect similarities between disciplines scientific and literary so different in intended outcomes.³

We have found similarities. In the first period of this study (1865-1885), we discovered that both psychological and literary models of consciousness drew on ideas that had been set forth by the Scottish philosophers of the early eighteenth century, represented in this review by Thomas Reid. Specifically, both models included the idea that consciousness consists of both immediate, sensory experience and the capacity to reflect on that experience, as memory and the present sensory experience coalesced. Both models incorporated the idea that consciousness is the source of a unified self-concept, whether given in the moment, or given in reflection. And both models of consciousness were grounded in the belief that consciousness is the means by which humankind is made aware of the operations of the mind and the eternal presence of Higher Power. From both the

literary and psychological perspective, we are presented with a consciousness that has the capacity to transcend the present moment.

Perhaps the most fundamental similarity in the literary and psychological models of this early period is that both traditions approached consciousness as though it was entirely contained within the physical body and limited to acts within that body. There was little concern in either discipline that consciousness would act upon the external world in particular ways that would, in turn, fundamentally alter the nature of consciousness itself. In the post-Civil War period, for all the talk of consciousness as a "perceiver" of mental acts; for all its representation as an affectively-toned sensory series; for all that, consciousness was conceived as a stable, constant, whole, a mere responder. It was this view of consciousness that would change dramatically in both disciplines just before the turn of the century.

There were differences as well. From this same world-view (which corresponded with what was understood as "reality"), the novelists developed a consciousness that was to foreshadow the "stream of consciousness" perspective of the next generation of psychologists. Granted that the idea of a conscious stream had been already expressed by Reid (see Figure 1). It is clear, however, that that stream is not what Reid meant when he referred to consciousness. In Reid's formulation, consciousness is a separate power of the Understanding, endowed with the capacity to observe the mind. By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, however, that "stream" would be become the focal point of the development

of the new psychology.

Indeed, given the intuitive "rightness" of the idea that consciousness appears to us as an on-going series of mental events, it is all the more surprising that the philosopher/psychologists of the early period were so apparently certain that their classificatory schema accurately reflected the way the mind-system worked. The most likely reason for this is that these men, most of whom were writing in response to Locke and Hume, were so intent upon dividing the mind into mental "powers" rather than "sensations," that they were apt to consider every mental aspect they could discover as a power of one sort or another; accordingly, consciousness was the power of internal observation. A "power," if we consider the term in its most literal sense, could not also be a stream.

My point is that the model of mind and consciousness advanced by the Scottish philosophers (and those who followed their example) emerged out of a set of ideas that had less to do with mind/consciousness as experienced and much more to do with the rhetoric of refutation.⁴ In order to oppose Locke's sensationalism and Hume's skepticism, Scottish philosophy re-establish certainty and God within the human mind. As John O'Donnell explains it:

Mental science...constituted the psychological linchpin that made plausible arguments from analogy that joined the natural and moral universes. It endeavored to prove that man's non-material mind was capable of comprehending natural and moral laws both intuitively and inductively...Protestant Scholasticism therefore depended ultimately upon a fundamentally conservative psychology.⁵

Indeed, because they were vitally interested in specifying

the means for solving epistemological problems (within the Scottish moral tradition), they were less inclined to to take notice of, and to describe, the consciousness of their experience.

The novelists, in contrast, unencumbered by these particular motives, described a consciousness of conflicting aims and emotive significance. As we have seen, however, the literary works we have examined in this study, were the product of motives no less powerful. Elizabeth Phelps and William Dean Howells, for example, intended that their work should make a statement about what they perceived as the dangerous and unjust conditions of post-Civil War society: the role of women in American culture; the perceived excesses of a capitalist economy. The difference is that these conditions were grounded in a realistic appraisal of American society as much as they reflected any personal bias. Even so, we have seen that a moral conservatism prevailed in the literary realm as well. This conservatism is revealed in the dominant characteristic of American realism: the internalization of action with a central reflective consciousness and the presence of a moral dilemma that would be resolved by story's end. In Henry James's work, this method would be sufficient unto itself.

In the second period of this study (1886-1910) (the period in which consciousness, rather than mind, was considered the "proper" subject-matter of a new American psychology), psychologists were less concerned with the moral question and more concerned with establishing a science of the mind that paid heed to recent advances in knowledge of

brain structure and function. Evolutionary theories (Darwin and, to some extent, Spencer) provided a context in which questions that had not been asked before effectively re-focused the nature of the investigation.⁶ No longer constrained by the necessity of devising an account of mind in accord with Protestant theology, psychologists now confronted the possibility that mind and consciousness were little more than supernumerary additions to a physiological process. The new psychology was thus a concerted response to the challenge to traditional assumptions about freedom and the will posed by evolutionists and physiologists alike. The models of mind/consciousness of this later period reflect the tension between the desire to incorporate the latest scientific advances and the desire to provide a firm foundation for belief in individual freedom and the individual will. As O'Donnell states the matter:

By defining the science of psychology as the study of consciousness, by insisting that the principle method of psychology was introspection...and by adopting the axiom of psychophysical parallelism, the new psychologists had assumed in principle what they feared more radical reductionists would deny in fact.⁷

The problem facing psychologists became one of reconciling evolutionary biology to traditional conceptions of humankind's moral freedom. It is for this reason, O'Donnell asserts, that the focus of inquiry shifted from intrapsychic mechanisms (classification and analysis of the structure of mind and consciousness) to psychic-environmental interactions (classification and analysis of the function of mind and consciousness).⁸ The shift from structure to function enabled psychologists to establish a conceptual link between

mind and consciousness as the subject of psychological inquiry and mind and consciousness as grounded in anatomical structures. As a theoretical construct, consciousness--as an on-going stream of sensory and conceptual acts--more easily accorded with the physiological facts.

A similar shift occurred in the literary realm. Consciousness, no longer conceived as an internal response to environmental conditions, was portrayed as actively engaged in interpreting the world; indeed, it was conceived as a force no less powerful and effective than those forces which seemed to threaten human existence at every turn. The struggle played out in literary naturalism is thus grounded in a struggle for self-affirmation. The novelists, abandoning the moral conservatism that led the psychologists to assert the biological origin of the self-concept, established a context in which the "self" was continually re-interpreted in light of new evidence. Far from reflecting a disappearance of the self (as Ryan suggests), naturalist literature invoked the image of a self continually in-process. We have seen evidence of this in Henry Adams's search for "identity" within a world conceived as ruled by change and variation. We have seen this in Charlotte Gilman's assertion that consciousness and behavior were intimately linked (one is led to consider her breakdown as a particularly adaptive response to abnormal conditions). And we have seen the idea of self-in-process in Theodore Dreiser's portrayal of Carrie's successive attempts to find fulfillment of her desire.

It is this self-affirming quality of naturalist

literature that Donald Pizer recognizes as its central theme.⁹ It is, perhaps, one alternative to the position adopted by the psychologists of the same period: that is, the idea that the self was grounded in evolutionary and biological processes. Indeed, the evidence would suggest that there was a compelling need in the late nineteenth-century to affirm the self as a viable force in the universe, at least in the social science and literary traditions. The difference between them was not so fundamental as one might, perhaps, expect; a matter of degree, rather than of kind. The psychologists, always more conservative, hoped to sustain the image of a unified self; the novelists prepared to envision a self that evolves.

Two Sides of the Same Coin: The Psychology-Literature Debate

Despite recent attempts by literary historians to redress the traditional view that science (more generally) and literature are diametrically opposing modes of thought,¹⁰ there remains a reluctance on both sides of the debate to acknowledge the possibility that the traditions have much in common. Hayden White, for example, in assessing the tendency of literary criticism to invoke the methods of science to lend authority to scientific pronouncements, suggests that certain disciplines, particularly those most self-conscious about their scientific status, tend to be more exclusionary than others regarding inter-disciplinary "encroachments."

"The problem, " he writes,

has to do with the fragmenting of humanistic studies into discrete disciplines which must feign to aspire to the status of sciences without any hope of achieving the kind of procedures developed in the physical sciences for the resolution of conflicting interpretations of the specified objects of study. The result of this

circumstance is that, in order to enable research in any field of humanistic studies, investigators must presuppose that at least one other field of study or discipline is effectively secured, that is to say, is effectively free of the kind of epistemological and methodological disputes that agitate their own area of inquiry.¹¹

From this perspective, it is natural to expect that psychology would identify itself with the methods and even form of the physical sciences and in doing so, would disavow any connection to the literary tradition. This is not to suggest that psychologists of the late nineteenth century had no firm grounds for doing so. The purpose of science is to accumulate certain knowledge about a specified subject area; one expects that observation, classification, and analysis will culminate in a model that effectively takes into account all matter of topics and relation that comprise that domain. If this study is any indication of the general condition of psychology, it would suggest that psychologists have regularly "borrowed" models from other disciplines or domains of inquiry and then attempted to make the facts of their experience accord with the model.

This is not an indictment of either psychology or its method. (Similar methods have been used by biologists, physicians, and physicists.¹²) Rather, I am pointing out that psychology--as a science--is informed by extra-disciplinary concerns and that those concerns strongly influence and even limit the focus of inquiry. In the natural sciences, because of the nature of the phenomena with which they are concerned, Nature fairly shouts her agreement or disagreement with the scientist's model. In psychology, Nature's voice is much softer, at times, barely audible. The psychologist is more

easily led to overlook these small voices and there is every reason to expect that the facts of experience will take their place within the model with little more than a whimper.¹³

This anthropomorphic account is certain to elicit vigorous responses from the more methodologically-minded. And I grant that it is only partially true of psychology as a whole, and certainly more true of psychology in the nineteenth century than of twentieth-century psychology. However, my point is to establish a context in which psychology and literature will be seen as two sides of the same coin--as attempts to understand the human condition that are informed by and dependent on ideas drawn from the wider culture and which are brought into being by adherence to a prescribed set of conventions.

This "double-aspect" perspective is not without its own pitfalls: There is an opportunity for a too-easy neglect of important differences between the two traditions. For example, nowhere in this discussion have I attempted to account for the significant impact of statistical procedures on the analysis of psychological phenomena. And nowhere have I discussed changes in conceptions of "style" and "form" that marked the transition from literary realism to literary naturalism. Taking the double-aspect view as my central theme, I will focus on similarities, rather than differences, and attempt to provide a model in which correspondences can be understood.

The Rhetoric of Realism

In the introduction to his Cosmologies of Consciousness, E. C. Barksdale proposes that the history of human

consciousness involves attention to both the facts of science and the "facts" of experience:

A history of human consciousness which bases the development of life and awareness of self on biological facts alone would be incomplete. A series of evaluative statements on that most subjective and personal possession of every human being--his consciousness--without reference to facts would be inadequate.¹⁴

Similarly, the history of the concept of consciousness entails a history of its representation in scientific discourse as well as its representation in literary discourse.¹⁵ When considered as discourses, rather than as modes of apprehending the world (each more or less "correct"), the boundaries between science and literature become blurred and the simple oppositions of fact and value, objectivity and subjectivity, deduction and intuition no longer seem sufficient to sustain a distinction between the two.¹⁶ In this context, the double-aspect view, advocated also by Barksdale, becomes a singularly compelling way of making sense of both differences and similarities.

In Barksdale's account, it is clear that he envisions science and literature as existing on a continuum defined by the conceptual oppositions of objectivity on one end and subjectivity on the other.¹⁷ Science, in its purest form (if such pure form there be) would take its place on the objective end; literature (art, poetry, music), in its purest form, would take its place on the subjective end. The image he conveys is particularly useful when it is considered that there exist sciences (such as psychology?) that may contain more of the subjective than, say, physics; and forms of literature (documentary?) that contain more of the objective.

Placement on the continuum would, accordingly, represent the proportion of objective/subjective which comprised any one tradition or, in another sense, the proportion of the discourse common to a discipline that could be traced to subjective or objective sources.

With this concept of a continuum in mind, I submit that in the late nineteenth century, in both literary and psychological discourses on consciousness, the objective/subjective dimensions were represented almost equally, with the preponderance of objectivity associated somewhat more with the literary tradition than with the psychological tradition. My reason for this conclusion is straight-forward: American psychologists were intent upon fitting the facts of their experience to models that were informed by and limited to a prescribed agenda which entailed: adherence to "proper" (that is, traditional) scientific procedures and methods; and, the compelling need to ensure that the application of those procedures to the mind would not result in devaluation of mind, soul, God, the individual man or woman, free-will or moral responsibility. (This, of course, is the reason why Locke's and Hume's ideas failed to gain support in America until after the turn of the century.) Both these ideas influenced the development of the new psychology far more than the mental "facts" with which they were concerned.¹⁸

The novelists, in contrast, though equally concerned with moral issues, were much less concerned with the methods of science, classification and analysis. Their more profoundly social agenda were well served by representing

...

consciousness as, for example, a series of emotive events. In the latter period, toward the end of the nineteenth century, the second generation of novelists explored the feelings of alienation and fragmentation they experienced. The psychologists of that period, however, were still concerned with the tension between consciousness conceived as a biological process, and consciousness conceived as evidence of humankind's freedom to choose, though by that time the gap between literary representation and psychological representation had begun to close.¹⁹

As I have attempted to show, psychologists and novelists drew on a number of ideas common to nineteenth-century culture: the notion of free-will, moral responsibility, and duty to God; the evolutionary ideas of Herbert Spencer and the evolutionary theory of Darwin; the opposition of free-will and determinism; the idea that the individual self must be accounted for (and must count for something); the knowledge that advances in human physiological function encroached upon the vision of humankind as a free agent (the mind/body problem); feelings of alienation and fragmentation in the last quarter of the century; the possibility of a supernatural aspect to consciousness that suggested unknown capacities for human knowledge; the idea that consciousness served an adaptive function. These ideas were "realities" no less real than the measurable entities of the physical world, for they strongly influenced the problems with which the emerging disciplines of literature and psychology were concerned.

Kearns has suggested that the metaphors of mind and

consciousness in the nineteenth century evolved from mind-as-entity to mind-as-sentient-being. His analysis also suggests that novelists adopted the mind-as-sentient-being metaphor somewhat earlier than psychologists. The results of this study are in agreement. This study, however, because it is founded on a more detailed analysis of psychological and literary texts, suggests several reasons for Kearns's results.

Chapter Notes

- ¹ Adapted from Robert Ornstein, The Psychology of Consciousness, 3rd. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1986), p. 81.
- ² Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, rev. ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970); Karl R. Popper, The Logic of Scientific Discovery (New York: Basic Books, 1959).
- ³ Michel Foucault, The Order of Things. An Archeology of the Human Sciences (New York: Vintage, 1973).
- ⁴ That Locke and Hume had to be refuted is compellingly clear. The Scottish philosophers would save a place for God in their mental philosophy.
- ⁵ John M. O'Donnell, The Origins of Behaviorism. American Psychology, 1870-1920 (New York: New York University Press, 1985), p. 54.
- ⁶ John M. O'Donnell, The Origins of Behaviorism, pp. 57-65.
- ⁷ John M. O'Donnell, The Origins of Behaviorism, p. 62.
- ⁸ John M. O'Donnell, The Origins of Behaviorism, p. 64.
- ⁹ Donald Pizer, Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth-Century American Literature (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), pp. 9-29.
- ¹⁰ See, for example, the collection of essays in George Levine, ed., One Culture. Essays in Science and Literature (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).
- ¹¹ Hayden White, "Historical Pluralism," Critical Inquiry 12 (Spring 1986): 484.
- ¹² See, for example, Howard Gruber's interesting discussion of the metaphorical source of Darwin's thought in his Darwin on Man: A Psychological Study of Scientific Creativity (London: Wildwood House, 1974); Gerald R. Holton, The Thematic Origins of Scientific Thought: Kepler to Einstein (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1973).
- ¹³ It may be that the "true" history of psychology (if

there be such a history) is to be found less in the succession of events and discoveries, the efforts of "great" men and great women, than in the succession of changes wrought upon psychology by the adoption and rejection of the models that have framed inquiry.

¹⁴ E. C. Barksdale, Cosmologies of Consciousness. Science and Literary Myth in an Exploration of the Beginnings and Development of Mind (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Schenkman Publishing, 1980), p. 4.

¹⁵ As George Levine points out, however, the transformation of science into discourse seems to suggest that science can no longer be considered the repository of certain knowledge, but rather as one means by which knowledge is conveyed (see George Levine, ed., One Culture, p. 4).

¹⁶ Thomas Kuhn, "Comment on the Relations of Science and Art," The Essential Tension: Selected studies in Scientific Tradition and Change (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1977, p. 340. Cited in George Levine, ed., One Culture, p. 4.

¹⁷ E. C. Barksdale, Cosmologies of Consciousness, p. 47.

¹⁸ Given the state of psychological experimentation at the time, these "facts" spoke softly, indeed.

¹⁹ This conclusion is predicated on the assumption that there is a concrete and measurable reality "out there" that is the source of objectivity and an unmeasurable reality "within" that is the source of subjectivity. Such a model of consciousness was proposed by Barksdale in connection with the development of consciousness. The first level of consciousness consists of sensations and impressions that enter consciousness from the external world. Barksdale refers to this level as the primary world. "The adult world of early days or that of the modern infant, the person waking up...or the fanatic in a mob all share a tendency toward unity," he writes, "toward non-differentiation of thought, toward non-reflection, toward the immediacy of gut-level experience." Modern humans spend much of their waking days in reflective thought, according to Barksdale, and the capacity to realize it is the "I" who sees and hears is the core of self-awareness. The distinction between simple and reflective consciousness is retained even in this twentieth-century work.

Beyond this, according to Barksdale, there are three more levels: the world of secondary imagination, "the realm of subjective thought, the interior private world of the emotions," the source of creativity; a tertiary level "which

involves the higher brain functions...the power to formulate hypotheses." And, finally, the quaternary level, the channel of consciousness used to view the other conscious levels...the congruities and the incongruities, the pauses, and the onrushing sequences...rationalization, goals, purposes. (E. C. Barksdale, Cosmologies of Consciousness, pp. 36-38.)

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APPENDIX

Appendix

The Literary Heritage:Transcendentalism, Spencer and Taine

The Transcendentalists of early nineteenth-century New England were less concerned with epistemological issues than with establishing the presence of God - the Over-Soul - within human experience. Under the influence of Hegel and German idealist thought, they reaffirmed the idea, which Reid had proposed, that mature reflection (in their words, "intuition") would lead the human spirit beyond the confines of earthly existence to the perception of "infinite nature, and infinite futurity, to that infinite God in whom we, and all things, live, move, and have our being."¹

Richard Hildreth, although well known among nineteenth-century Americans for his commitment to Unitarianism, offers a succinct account of the Transcendental point of view:

The knowledge, however, to which Religious feelings lead, is not according to the new theology, a knowledge in any respect like that which we obtain through the medium of the understanding, by employing the sense, in the observation of outward nature, or the faculty of reflection in observing mental operations. That kind of knowledge which goes to make up the physical and moral sciences...is confined to our relations to outward material objects, to the operations of the intellect itself, and to our social relations.... [The knowledge of religious feeling] is above the understanding; it is transcendental. It is perceived by a faculty which has been given the name of self-consciousness, or the transcendental reason, a sort of intuition, a faculty of which Locke and his followers have denied the existence, and which they have explained away as an operation of memory repeating the lessons of childhood, or as mere play of the imagination.²

The Transcendentalists were not much impressed with Reid's

moral philosophy; although they believed he had corrected some of the errors of Locke and Hume, they did not believe he went far enough in describing the power of consciousness to transcend experience.

In the Transcendentalist vision, consciousness was that which contained Sensibility, Activity, and Reason and in Reason was contained all the ideas of the Absolute as well as all the purely intellectual facts. It was through Intuition, rather than Reason alone, however, that the transcendent experience was made possible, as this journal entry from Emerson shows: "We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles," he writes:

Meantime within man is the soul of the whole; the wise silence, the universal beauty, to which every part and particle is equally related; the eternal One....We see the world piece by piece, as the sun, the moon, the animal, the tree; but the whole, of which these are the shining parts, is the soul....And so always, the soul's scale is one; the scale of the senses and understanding is another.³

Following in the German/Kantian tradition, Emerson distinguished between Reason (which underlies the transcendent experience) and Understanding (which was bound to sensory experience and the external world). This passage affirms the idea that knowledge of God and God's work was beyond the reach of sensory functions and the understanding. True knowledge, or knowledge beyond appearance, could be had only by those who learned "to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within."⁴ The metaphor is tellingly similar to the one adopted by Hickok in his description of consciousness as the illuminating "revealer" of the contents of mind, but, for the

Transcendentalists, that "gleam of light" was Reason.

There is some of the Transcendental spirit in literary realism--the sense, for example, that reason offers a clear path toward resolution of the difficulties of daily life. The consciousness portrayed in literary realism is wholly contained within the experiencing subject (the reader will recall, for example, Masie's experience of "knowing most"). Though the power of "reflection" defined by Reid does capture the internalized action characteristic of realist fiction, so too, does the Transcendental "intuition." What is transcended in realist literature, however, rarely leads to the timeless form of the Over-Soul.

Evolutionary Positivism

Both Herbert Spencer and Hippolyte Taine may well be considered two of the most important influences on late nineteenth-century literature. There is some evidence that each of the authors whose work is the subject of this study were acquainted with the ideas of these men, in general, if not in specifics. Both Spencer and Taine promoted a positivistic ideal: the belief that social progress was linked to the growth in scientific knowledge, exclusive of metaphysics and religious overtones.⁵

Herbert Spencer (1820-1903)

One of the most influential systems of thought in mid-nineteenth-century America was that of Herbert Spencer, whose pre-Darwin evolutionary ideas were widely disseminated in the popular press around mid-century both under his own name and by such popularizers as John Fiske and Edward Youmans, who served as editor of the Popular Science Monthly for many

years, William Graham Sumner, and Andrew Carnegie. Although Spencer's work was regarded in the post-Darwin years (approximately 1865-1900) with more derision than respect, in the period before Darwin published his Origin of Species (1859), his Synthetic Philosophy caught the imagination of scientists, theologians, writers, psychologists. Even William James used Spencer's Principles of Psychology as a textbook for his course on Physiological Psychology during 1876-1877, though James was prone to regard Spencer's concept of development--"from incoherent heterogeneity to coherent homogeneity"--as an oversimplification.⁶ Spencer's description of consciousness as an internal sequence of states--feelings, sensations and their relations⁷--is a clear postscript to Reid's description of the "train of thought." For this reason, Spencer's model of consciousness is included in this study.

In a chapter titled "The Dynamics of Consciousness" from the second volume of his Principles of Psychology, Spencer defines consciousness as an internal sequence of states consisting (primarily) of feelings (including pleasure and unpleasure) and both visual and auditory sensations and their relations.⁸ These states of consciousness are continually changing, continually in flux. "Thus," writes Spencer, "a discussion in consciousness proves to be simply a trial of strength between different connexions...- a systematized struggle serving to determine which are the least coherent states of consciousness." The fundamental law of consciousness, according to Spencer, is that "the least coherent states of consciousness separate while the most

coherent remain together.”⁹ (This illustration represents a direct application of a “survival of the fittest” metaphor.) The basis of the sense of personal identity, argues Spencer, is an extraordinarily “coherent” cohesion of conscious states.

Figure 4 is a representation of Spencer’s concept of consciousness. The horizontal dashed line represents the “train of thought” (consciousness). The horizontal solid line represents the movement in time: consciousness is on-going. The symbols (*, ~, +, !) represent feelings, memories, visual sensations, and auditory sensations, respectively. Symbol combinations are explained in the diagram. Vivid states, those that compel our attention, are enclosed in circles; faint states are unenclosed. The diagram is intended to depict the Spencerian notion of competing ideas within consciousness.

The Spencerian consciousness bears only a faint resemblance to Reid’s “perceptual act” or Hickok’s “inner light.” Rather, Spencer describes a consciousness that appears as a microcosm of the social world--a world in which “discussion” identifies cohering elements; in which there is a continual struggle (“a trial of strength”) between different relational aggregates. Spencer repeatedly refers to the “broad procession” of conscious states, which “slide by restlessly,” “moving in parallel,” as pedestrians on a crowded city street.

The Spencerian consciousness was neutral as to God, or mankind’s spirituality, or the prioritizing of faculties. Spencer does not suggest that consciousness should serve

Figure 4

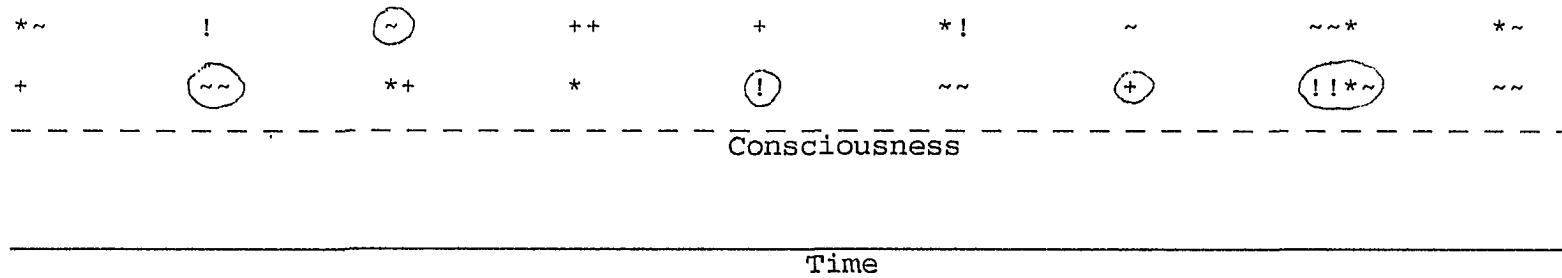


Figure 4.
 Representation of Herbert Spencer's concept of consciousness (adapted from Herbert Spencer, Principles of Psychology [2 vols.] [1899], from Herbert Spencer, A System of Synthetic Philosophy [Osnabruck: Proff & Co., 1966], pp. 157, 447-453, 461, 494. * = feelings (pleasure/unpleasure); + = visual sensations; ! = auditory sensations; ~ = memories; the combination *~ = sense of self. Vivid states are enclosed within circles; faint states appear unenclosed.

morality or the state or even that it should (necessarily) reflect actual conditions of the real world. That it does, in fact reflect those conditions is no more than what must occur given the assumption Spencer makes that inner and outer must correspond: "(E)ach change in the objective reality," he writes, "causes in the subjective state a change exactly answering to it."¹⁰ We have seen this idea before, in Thomas Reid's assertion that our perceptions correspond exactly to the "nature and conditions" of real-world objects. "The Realism we are committed to," Spencer asserts,

is one which simply asserts objective existence as separate from, and independent of, subjective existence. But it affirms neither that any one mode of this objective existence is in reality that which it seems, nor that connexions among its modes are objectively what they seem. Thus it stands widely distinguished from Crude Realism; and to mark the distinction it may properly be called Transfigured Realism.¹¹

As we will see, the idea that neither the external world nor the inner world had any prior claim to the "real" is a prominent theme in late nineteenth-century literature--both the new realism and the later naturalism.

Spencer's influence on late nineteenth-century literature is profound.¹² There are likely many reasons for this, but the most obvious one is that Spencer's psychology was popularly known (at least in its superficial aspects) and thus served well those writers who wished to establish a particular psychological context for their work. Moreover, his psychology was decidedly a social psychology, his evolutionary consciousness was a social consciousness, and this extension of traditional psychological theorizing to a wider context was particularly useful for the early realist

novels of experience.

Yet, it is rash to assume that Spencer's detailed analysis of consciousness was the source of the new realist model: Popular culture (then, as now) drew on generalities from such work as Spencer's work, not specifics. Spencer's work may simply have served to reinforce the idea that consciousness itself may develop over time, in Spencer's words, from an "indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity."¹³ Nonetheless, his "survival of the fittest metaphor" is an apt metaphor for a consciousness often portrayed as engaged in the working through of a moral dilemma. As we have seen, these ideas were also foreshadowed by Reid, though not under the banner of consciousness.

Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893)

Spencer's Transfigured Realism is well within the positivist tradition. He rejects metaphysical assumptions in principle, maintains a respectable 'scientific' neutrality, and presents an account of consciousness that is more descriptive than explanatory. Hippolyte Taine, noted nineteenth-century historian, literary critic, and philosopher-psychologist, explicitly and unreservedly applied positivist principles to the analysis of consciousness. His analysis of consciousness deserves to be quoted in full because it serves as a fitting review of the present study:

(W)e picture consciousness as the glance of an internal eye, directed to a present internal event, just as we picture memory as the glance of an internal eye directed to a past event. Metaphors lend their aid; in fact, psychologists continually speak of consciousness as of a spectator or internal witness which observes, compares, takes notes on the various conceptions, imaginations, and representations passing in review

before it. The truth is that in such a case there are not two events in my mind, my conception on the one hand, and, on the other, an act by which I am acquainted with it, but one single event, my conception itself. We split it in two because it has two phases, the first, in which it appears an external object or past event...the second, in which, being rectified, it appears an internal and present event, an optical phantom, then included in ourselves.¹⁴

Taine's account of consciousness parallels Spencer's account in the main (though not, perhaps, in specifics). Both these men argue for a dual-level consciousness, whether of a "faint or vivid" series or of a first (externalized) or second (internalized) phase. (We have seen this idea of "faint and "vivid" expressed by William James.) Indeed, Taine (and Spencer) argue for a single stratum of consciousness which contains both strong and weak sensory elements, a model of consciousness that is more conversant with Kearns's "mind-as-sentient-being" metaphor than with that of "mind-as-entity" which informed the work of the Scottish philosophers and their followers.

Appendix Notes

¹ Richard Hildreth, "A letter to Andrews Norton," reprinted in Perry Miller, The Transcendentalists. An Anthology (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950), pp. 222-223.

² Richard Hildreth, "A letter to Andrews Norton."

³ Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays, First Series (1841), from Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, ed., William H. Gilman (New York, Signet; 1965) pp. 257-280, 281, 283 (my italics).

⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays, First Series, p. 258.

⁵ Auguste Comte named this movement positivism in the early nineteenth century, though many of his ideas had been expressed centuries earlier by Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and David Hume. The basic tenets of Comtean positivism included rejection of hypotheses, unobservable entities, and metaphysical explanations. There are many descriptions of Comtean positivism. A very brief review is given by Thomas Leahey, A History of Psychology. Main Currents of Psychological Thought (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1980), pp. 146-148.

⁶ William James, Manuscript Lectures (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. xxxi. The edition of Herbert Spencer's Principles of Psychology (2 vols.) to which I shall refer throughout this text is a reprint of the 1899 (3rd) edition published in Osnabruck by Proff & Co., 1966 as part of A System of Synthetic Philosophy.

⁷ Spencer's dynamic consciousness contains two such autonomous but somewhat interdependent states. In the vivid series, relations are absolute and uniform, either when they predicate relations of a general nature or when they predicate relations among particulars. In the vivid states, an identifiable antecedent cannot always be determined or observed. In the faint series, relations among the elements are easily disrupted, either by will or through the intrusion of other impressions. There are always identifiable antecedents in consciousness for the consequent emergence of the faint series. (Herbert Spencer, System, vol. 1, p. 461).

⁸ Herbert Spencer, System, vol. 1, pp. 447-453.

⁹ Herbert Spencer, System, vol. 1, p. 450.

¹⁰ Herbert Spencer, System, vol. 1, p. 494.

¹¹ Herbert Spencer, System, vol. 1, p. 494.

¹² John W. Rathbun and Harry H. Clark, American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905, pp. 86-90.

¹³ Cited in Paul F. Boller, Jr., American Thought in Transition, pp. 50-51.

¹⁴ Hippolyte Taine, On Intelligence (London: L. Reeve, 1871), p. 262.