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## Shame's Pallor and the Paranoia Imperative in *The Wings of the Dove*

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“Do you love me, love me, love me?” is the question Merton Densher, back from his journalistic mission to America in *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), hurls at his fiancée Kate Croy, when he comes to pay a formal visit at Lancaster Gate. The intensity of the moment unleashes itself in an anticlimactic “long embrace” that signifies for Densher an ultimate and irrefutable sign of Kate’s avowal—her sincerity. What gets overlooked in this lover’s spat is the ways in which a vast array of feelings have gone in and out of, behind and beside, the vocal and gestural significations. The prodigious Kate Croy, who has romanticized her first encounter with Densher in the gallery party, attests that “other conscious organs, faculties, feelers” (49) must have found their way into a predominantly visual interaction. Without making categorical claims that this episode encapsulates the central drama that will be carried to its fullest scale in the events to come this paper turns, with feelers fully forward, to the richness around this scene of shame.

Before putting the idiosyncratic question so bluntly to Kate, Densher conveys all his passion and tenderness into a simple request, “Will you take me just as I am?” to which Kate responds with a “strain” that is particularly disturbing for him.

She turned a little pale for the tone of truth in it—which qualified to his sense delightfully the strength of her will; and the pleasure he found in this was not the less for her breaking out after an instant into a strain that stirred him more than any she had ever used with him. “Ah do let me try myself! I assure you I see my way—so don’t spoil it: wait for me and give me time. Dear man,” Kate said, “only believe in me, and it will be beautiful.” (*Wings* 198)

What stands out most conspicuously in the scene is the quantity of imperatives that Kate manages to squeeze into a relatively short sentence. If Densher instantly felt the sharpness of a strain, it is because almost

nowhere has Kate uttered a variety of commands so closely strewn together. The only temptation she still remembers to dangle in front of her dear young man is a vague promise in the form of an aesthetic abstraction, “beauty,” for which Densher is asked to perform a range of actions—let her try, do not spoil her vision, wait for her, and give her time. The stringency of her demand results in a most “violent” response in Densher. He resorts to his superior physical force and assaults her emotionally with an almost abusive question. Kate’s answer—“only believe in me”—takes the place of her unuttered vow, “Yes I do.” Mirroring Densher’s repetitive format, her commands indeed shout out, “believe in me, believe in me, believe in me!” Her assurance evades Densher’s question and hides behind elaborate abstraction.

Kate also impresses the reader with a particular hue in the scene. Kate Croy is not *pale*. Paleness is the attribute par excellence for Milly Theale, who strikes Susan Shepherd Stringham, her friend and companion,<sup>1</sup> upon their first meeting, as a singularly “striking apparition”—slim, constantly pale, delicately haggard, anomalously, but agreeably angular (*Wings* 77). Milly, the American heiress to an immense fortune, *she* is the pale one. The epithet follows her after she moves to Venice at Palazzo Leporelli for her health, where her paleness intensifies in contrast with the overflowing luxury of her surroundings. Kate, on the other hand, is always the handsome girl, the girl who blithely self-identifies as “a brute about illness” and whom Densher finds as “strong as the sea” (218). Precisely because her health is such a well-established fact in the novel, the rare bouts of her paleness might come across as an insignificant irregularity. But her paleness is not accidental; it takes a peculiar pattern, and often appears on confrontational occasions that bear an emotional intensity.

Kate Croy has been *pale* before; in fact, she *is* pale the first time she arrives on the scene. While she is waiting for her father to come down at his shabby lodging, *before* the acknowledgement of her stature and grace, the face with which she greets the readers is a “posi-

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<sup>1</sup>Though Susan Stringham had repeatedly referred to herself as a confidante to Milly Theale, the latter had seldom voluntarily confided in her, which Susan was either oblivious of or chose to overlook by will in the course of the novel. Sharon Cameron goes further to claim that “Milly has nothing to confide. Milly doesn’t tell Susan Stringham anything, and Milly doesn’t need to.” More discussions of Susan’s style and habit of thinking and their significance to the novel in general and impact upon other characters in particular, see *Thinking in Henry James*, pp. 131–6.

tively pale” one (*Wings* 21). Kate has been pale *before* anything else,<sup>2</sup> but her paleness is often eclipsed by the rosy brilliance of her beauty, and buried under the blessings of her health and spirit. This paper traces the appearances of the affect of shame in the novel, and compares and contrasts it with the paranoid mindset, which is a particular conditioning of the mind that becomes hyper-sensitive to and over-cautious of shame. Access to shame, it argues, is productive in ways that the adoption of paranoia is largely antithetical towards. The paper will first track the spells of Kate Croy’s pallor, and, referencing Darwin and Tomkins’s works on shame, interpret Kate’s paleness in light of shame. It argues that in *The Wings of the Dove*, attachment to the pursuit of pleasure is singularly generative, not only of a variety of bonds between characters, but of *other* differences as well. It then goes on to present a (mimetic) reading of the paranoid relationship to knowledge in the book, paying particular attention to moments of *different* manifestations. Henry James with his literary explorations of shame precedes and exceeds Tomkins’s schemata of the affect, which underplays its potentially positive effects. Rather than casting paranoia in an overwhelmingly negative light as Tomkins and perhaps even Sedgwick might have done, the paper reads James as gesturing towards its productivity in *Wings*. Not dissimilar to shame, paranoia could also reverse and traverse boundaries.

In the course of Charles Darwin’s contemplation on the various human emotions and their nuanced physical expressions in *The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872), he gives an etiological account of paleness, and identifies, to the best of his knowledge, five occasions in which such a complexion would occur: rage, terror, grief, envy, and shame. Paleness, Darwin informs us, is occasioned normally with the “contraction of the small arteries of the skin” (307). But individual differences should always be taken into account since for each of those internal conditions, usually more than one outward expression is available. While it’s easy to understand the pallor brought out by fear, the pale face in shame is almost counterintuitive, and Darwin references Dr. Burgess in establishing this particular point, attributing the paleness to either a natural capillary adjustment or a rarity in physiological constitution. He even allows a personal anecdote the role of scientific evidence in which the lady who made a social faux pas at a party was surprised to find herself “extremely pale” against her own judgment that she must have “blushed crimson” (330).

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<sup>2</sup>Mitchell (1987) reads her pallor in the light of the Jamesian “play of the portentous”—a stylistic principle that puts demands on symmetry and reciprocity in literary imagination (188).

This peculiar instance of paleness as opposed to blushing when ashamed becomes overlooked as soon as it has been registered, admitted as only one curious incident in the book.

Whereas an alarming sense of duty toward scientific rigor might have held Darwin back, the “feelers of our sensibility,” a la Kate Croy, beckon us to linger at this shameful pallor.<sup>3</sup> Henry James, contemporary to Charles Darwin, might have not translated Darwin’s insight on the shameful pallor in literature, but his depiction of the pale Kate suggests the extent to which his personal understanding of shame agrees with Darwin’s. With Kate, James can be seen as proposing other manifestations of the shame sensation that are not fully verified by the social scientific researches of his time. He has put to concrete literary creation what science could only vaguely suggest. While the shameful pallor exists only in the anecdotal realm in Darwin, it has become fully realized in the figure of Kate Croy in James. Besides her inaugural pale irritation and the pallor following Densher’s shaming of her lack of devotion, three other occasions witness this peculiar facial manifestation. When the group rejoins in Venice for a party at the spectacular Palazzo in the honor of the great physician Sir Luke Strett, Densher has an epiphanic moment with Kate regarding the nature of his mission. He learns, to his disbelief, that there is “all along” a hidden layer of injunction in Kate’s suggestion for him to “Go to see Milly” (203), which he is able to understand now as, “Since she’s to die I’m to marry...so that when her death has taken place I shall in the natural course have money” (311). The thump of this revelation, forceful as it must have been upon his conscience, produces none but a “soft murmur” which hardly interrupts the flow of their conversation. A pal-ing spell, nevertheless, takes over Kate, when

[s]he turned her head to where their friend was again in range, and it made him turn his, so that they watched a minute in concert. Milly, from the other side, happened at the moment to notice them, and she sent across toward them in response all the candour of her smile, the lustre of her pearls, the value of her life, the essence of her wealth. It brought them together again

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<sup>3</sup>Paleness might also ensue a spell of vomiting, voluntary or involuntary. Jacques Derrida, in his paper “Economimesis” identifies a tautological relation between disgust and vomit, arguing that the disgusting is what is excluded and irrepresentable in the logocentric system except through vomit. In vomit, Derrida locates the foreclosed failure of any mourning work. In regard to such claims, the paleness of Kate might signify an unwillingness or incapacity to process and successfully mourn the shame towards her father.

with faces made fairly grave by the reality she put into their plan. (*Wings* 313)

Her paleness ensues, then and there, accompanied by a deadly silence that is only broken up by the music at the party. If the pallor at her father's living room is caused partly by her grief and terror at her father's decrepit circumstance, according to Darwin, her facial reaction now could hardly be anything else than shame. She is put to shame by the horrid contrast between the admirable trust of Milly and the ruthless pragmatism of their scheme to procure her fortune. As much as they cherish her generous simplicity, they can't help but look beyond her innocent presence at the monetary core, and for their purpose, the promise of her upcoming demise. It is at this critical juncture, when incongruity proves almost unbearable, and shame too acute to dismiss, that Kate Croy grows pale again. Another occasion, when she is "paler than she had been," occurs when her father, Lionel Croy, comes back to his elder daughter, Marian, for protection from his "terror" (395). Having deflected Densher's first attempt at knowing what Lionel has done, Kate resorts to another emotional plea, making a direct reference to his profession of love the time when she was shamed to pallor, "If you love me—now—don't ask me about father." The effect is instantaneous, for not only does their conversation change course immediately, the silent ban on the topic of Lionel is kept till the end.

The five instances of Kate's mystifying pallor are divided in between the references to her father and to her plot against Milly's fortune. It is precisely the ones associated with Lionel that take on an intensity that the rest lack—Kate is only "a little" pale when Densher corners her in the boudoir and again when Milly's credulity puts their cunning to shame at the Palazzo, but she is "positively" pale waiting for her father to show up, and becomes "paler than ever" when pushed to answer about her father. Interestingly, Lionel makes a sole appearance at the beginning of the novel, and is only alluded to when absolutely necessary. It is the critical consensus now that the "silence that surrounds him" (58) is gesturing toward a crime whose nature is as much moral as sexual.<sup>4</sup> The bits of information we manage to piece

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<sup>4</sup>Eve Sedgwick (1995) identifies a "code" behind the homosexuality of Lionel Croy, *illum crimen horribile quod non nominandum est*, translated roughly into "the horrible crime which is not to be named." This "naming something 'unspeakable' as a way of denoting," Sedgwick claims, is among James's endeavor to explore "the limits of...rhetorical possibilities" (75). For a fuller discussion, see "Is the Rectum Straight? Identification and Identity in *The Wings of the Dove*." A variation of this principle is also alluded to in Cameron's analyses of the intricate interrelationship between thinking and speaking in *The Golden Bowl*, when she proposes to discover a "prohibition against meaning" in the communicative strategies among characters,

together from the text would get us no further than “he’s odious and vile” and “he’s done everything,” but Kate’s as well as other close family members’ reaction towards Lionel bespeaks of unequivocal shame. The “faint flat emanation of things” that shrouds her father’s living room, it becomes increasingly clear, bears an overwhelming sense of shame. And the pale Kate, persuading herself to battle “the shame of fear, of individual, of personal collapse [among] all the other shames,” is then as much irritated by Lionel’s delay as by her own insupportable sense of shame toward her father. She braves herself to drown her shame with an overflow of sensory stimulations. With each intake of “the street...the room...the table-cloth and the centre-piece and the lamp” (21), there is a renewed resolution to overtake shame, a bravado not unlike self-immolation in taking in sensory assaults repetitively. The emotional and physical adjacency between Kate’s pallor and the presence of her irrepresentable father offers a key insight to her paleness through the lens of the shame response. The shamed nuance enriches the complexity of the emotional tenor in James’s characters, and provides an example for deriving local and contingent manifestations of affects from their universalizing theoretizations. Kate’s pallor arises as her sense of shame intensifies, when she is confronted with her deception of the unsuspectingly romantic Milly, and more intensely so, when she comes in close contact with her father.

American psychologist Silvan Tomkins has put forth a unique formula of the shame response. Shame, he argues, is “innately activated,” when there is an “incomplete reduction of interest or joy” (*Affect Imagery Consciousness* 353). Tomkins’s understanding of shame is particularly useful in explaining Kate’s shame. Her pallor during the lovers’ spat in the beginning of this paper in response to Densher’s query highlights the *difference* between Densher’s demand and the reality of her situation. Just as her color is to change, when Milly’s unbounded trust in her two marvelous English friends provides too shocking a contrast to the truth of their relationship, Kate falls short of Densher’s expectation of how she *should* take him. The “tone of truth” is not so shocking in itself as when compared to the circumstances under which it is uttered. When and only when Kate *never* plans to “take Densher as he was” could she become ashamed into pallor by such a supplication. And if shame is indeed a result to the aroused joy and interest as Tomkins avows, what, we are tempted to ask, triggers the

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that meaning is to be “proposed” rather than “experienced” (104). See *Thinking in Henry James*, pp. 83–121. Kumkum Sangari, on the other hand, allows “crime” to be embedded in a context that “constitute[s] a generative matrix for plural meaning or reading” (299) that in a Jamesian text centers upon the principle of uncertainty.

decrease of excitement or enjoyment<sup>5</sup> for Kate on the present occasion? And more challengingly perhaps, if such “incompleteness” bespeaks both a *reduction* and a *continuation* of the “investment of excitement or enjoyment” (361), what protects the remainder of her interest from being sipped dry? It is the pursuit for joy that underlies Kate and Densher’s mutual attachment and nourishes the relationship through the most trying times. Not only has this positivity been written into one of the most significant relationships in the novel, it affects other major characterizations as well. James’s portrayal of shame retains a peculiar *positive* component that offers interesting complements to Tomkins’s theoretical probing of the affect.

Attempts have been made to account for “the nature of the tie”<sup>6</sup> between Kate and Densher, and to wonder at the ardor, vouched for by the author, of a “worried and baffled, yet clinging and confident” peculiarity, through the “mere force of the terms of their superior passion combined with their superior diplomacy” (‘Preface’ 14). If passion stands behind her attachment to Densher, and if it provides incentives for turning to her notorious father for shelter, then her disavowal of such a connection is particularly mind-boggling. Kate proceeds with deadpan matter-of-fact-ness, with a “I don’t,” to assure Densher the

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<sup>5</sup>Silvan Tomkins differentiates between the interest-excitement and the enjoyment-joy affects, the only two positive among the nine primary human affects; the former he claims follows one simple rule—“a range of optimal rates of increase of stimulation density” (187). The smile of joy, on the other hand, doesn’t necessarily indicate a joyful mood; it is “innately activated...by any relatively steep reduction of the density of stimulation and neural firing” (204), which makes it possible to appear with the reduction of pain, fear, distress, aggression, anger, pleasure, and excitement. The key to the activation of smile, Tomkins points out, is the “steepness of the gradient of stimulation reduction,” not the nature of stimulation itself. See *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, pp. 185–218.

<sup>6</sup>The critical stances vary as to the exact nature of the bond between the two lovers; the budding and consolidation of their romance are as ineffable as mystical. Elissa Greenwald in her “Transcendental Romance” (1986) maps the mystery onto a Hawthornian mode of romance, interpreting their connection in the light of a “temporary relief from social bonds” and an “access to the uplifted state of romance” that is otherwise denied the two (180). Kumkum Sangari adopts a much more sobering view in blasting apart the density of their tie and replacing it with a money-oriented realistic Kate and a “plastic” Densher adept at “speak[ing] the language of hard cash transactions” with Kate (294). Positioned in between and prior to them both, Rowe romanticizes their love as born from the “timeless space” of the “temple” and the “garden wall” while acknowledging its eventual return to the “material and physical” (137). For Van Slyck (2005), the nature of their bond takes on a powerful Lacanian overtone, making his desired object Kate ultimately “inaccessible,” the symbol of his “lack,” “incompletion,” and “emptiness” (308). He contrasts this pre-*jouissance* desire with love, an admirable transformation gained only with the final sacrifice of Milly.

absence of any such romantic considerations behind her action. Densher covers up his disappointment with a gentlemanly irony, “Heaven be praised” (59). He wishfully mistakes Kate’s “being turned back” by her chastening father and disapproving sister in light of her relation to *him* while *her* prior concern is simply to “escape Aunt Maud” (59). Kate is not afraid of making herself clear to the degree of being almost ruthless in confessing her willingness to “give [him] up” as well. Her possible desertion is aborted only through an adamant refusal to cooperate by Lionel Croy, who “declin[es] [Kate] on any terms” (59). What then underwrites the proclamation with an “extraordinary beauty” with which Kate promises to engage herself forever to Densher, to pledge “every spark of [her] faith,” and to dedicate “every drop of [her] life” (73), is perhaps her unreserved emotional investment in Densher, which starts to deplete with the latter’s unapologetic stance “as he is.” Densher, the way he genuinely is, is not what she has stamped faith and life for. What she originally saw in him, with a consensus of her organs, faculties and feelers, was an “*arrange-ability*,” a mixture of his density and intelligence that would *fit* perfectly into her scheme, the singular feat of achievement that could magically deflect her from running away from Aunt Maud, and turn her mystically around to wanting to “keep her” instead (61). The secret that sustains their attachment is gestured at in Kate’s comments on their mutual habit of mind as being “...hideously intelligent. But there’s *fun* in it too. We must get our *fun* where we can. I think...our relation’s quite beautiful. It’s not a bit vulgar. I cling to some saving romance in things” (60 emphases mine). The secret constituent of their bond, the salvaging ingredient in Kate’s lingering attachment is indeed the pursuit of fun, which overrides any other aesthetic, moral, spiritual, or materialistic concerns. Pleasure, before anything and anyone else, preserves their attraction to one another.<sup>7</sup> As Densher proves himself less and less “enjoyable,” Kate’s interest dwindles. Such a reduction engenders spells of paling shame, the effects of which Densher (chooses to) misread(s). It finds adequate expression in the playful account of their first meeting—both perched on a ladder, gazing at one another, exchanging via a multitude of feelers. It comes up again here as Kate spells out the fundamental law of their attraction; the sensation of pleasure is crucial

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<sup>7</sup>Their shared sense of perchedness in their first meeting is a confirmation of their mutual investment in pleasure. The metaphoric encounter on the top of a ladder in a formal party suggests a shared taste for pleasure and play between the two. Performance, with its allusions to entertainment and pleasure, also dictates their chance encounter on the train that results in the “real beginning” (51) of their attachment, when Densher moves all over the scene around Kate, and when the two engage one another in a series of verbal and nonverbal communications. (*The Wings of the Dove*, pp. 49–51).



to her understanding of romantic love. Their mutual enjoyment and enjoyability set their romance on course from the very beginning. The concern for pleasure is significant for *The Wings of the Dove* not only because it undergirds one of the most important relationships in the novel, but it casts shadows over Kate Croy's ideo-affective<sup>8</sup> organization as well.

The dimension of joy in the shame sensation is too often overlooked. For Tomkins, it is a prerequisite; it is indeed through a later alteration of an initial level of interest and joy that shame could be activated. Significant for Tomkins and for many psychologists, shame exists in a spectrum<sup>9</sup> of affects alongside humility, embarrassment, humiliation, etc. This dynamic applies to the family<sup>10</sup> of shame affects

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<sup>8</sup>Tomkins uses the term "ideo-affective" to encompass the whole range of human experiences in his *Affect Imagery Consciousness*. He doesn't offer a clear definition on what he means by "ideology," "ideological," or "ideo-affective," but he tends to associate ideology with the socialization process, in a much less repressive manner than Althusser's classical understanding, with a descriptive emphasis on the internalized ideas (*AIC* 75, 245, 406). A few modifiers he uses together with *ideology* are "normative," "religious," "utopian," "anti-shame," "disgust," and "Freudian" (430, 451, 477, 502). Tomkins understands "ideo-affective organization" as responsible for "determin[ing] the future role" of certain affective experience (450). Basically, it has two components—the "examination of information for relevance to particular affect," and the "strategies for coping with contingencies to avoid or attenuate impact" of that affect (458). Different expressions of ideo-affective organization could lead to weak or strong theory for the individual, guiding them to respond in restricted ways to different affects. Tomkins uses shame as an example to explain his concept of an affect theory. The shame theory deals with the generality in the activation of shame; it alerts the individual to the possibility and imminence of shame, and provides standardized strategies to minimize shame (411). A weak theory is applicable for a very selective range of circumstances; it is effective in predicting and controlling certain emotions, which makes these related affective experiences either *infrequent* or frequent but *restricted*, thus *weak* in their forces over the individual's life, their personalities and actions (451–461). In comparison, a strong theory is *ineffective*; it gains strength by "failures of its strategies to afford protection" (460). For more discussions on affective binds and difference types of affective socialization, including the Tomkins-Horn Picture Arrangement Test (PAT), see *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, pp. 409–597.

<sup>9</sup>Tomkins uses a joint name of affects with a dash differentiating the low and high intensity. For the affect of shame, he designates it as shame-humiliation, with shame being a lower degree of emotional experience and humiliation as a severe case. He states confidently that "[s]hyness, shame and guilt are not distinguished from each other at the level of affect...They are one and the same affect" (351). The difference between the affects grouped under "shame-humiliation" lies in the "conscious awareness of [different] experiences"; but these "other components which accompany shame in the central assembly" should not make them distinct at the level of affect. See *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, chapters 10 & 16.

<sup>10</sup>In the following discussion, the term "shame" is often used to refer to a wide range of affects closely related to shame, including but not restricted to shame, humiliation,

equally well. As one of the fundamental aspects of a human-object relationship, pleasure is closely associated with shame in David Hume's understanding of the affective double-sidedness of things "everything related to us, which produces pleasure or pain, produces likewise pride or humility" (Hume 209). Even though his categorical statement might have reduced the extreme complexity of human emotions to only a dichotomized duo, it highlights the role joy plays in the individual relations to objects and human beings. It also reveals an almost primeval proximity between shame and pleasure. The power of joy is not unrelated to the centrality of affects in human life, to the extent that it sanctions our every attachment to the immediate and broader environments. Nietzsche, in his denunciation of slave morality, claims Ellen Feder, has regarded the central goal of the "life-negating" morality as particularly "destructive of pleasure," perverting the noble human traits of "confidence and openness" into sick "obliquities," rife with both "fear and shame" (Feder 641). Pleasure, argues Jemima Repo, is what by Foucault's evaluation falls outside the overarching discursive totality of power, only to be "sexualised as desire when exposed to biopower" within the discourse of sexuality (Repo 81). To the extent

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and guilt. It is recognized that the emotional experiences for individuals vary across these different states, but at the level of affect, they differ only in the strength of sensation. Depending on their research interests, scholars have approached this issue differently. Tomkins, Wurmser, and Nathanson do not theorize between the cognates of shame, while other researchers, from a wide range of disciplines, maintain a more or less strict distinction between the shameful emotions, especially between shame and guilt. For Tomkins, shyness, shame, guilt, and discouragement are identical affects, albeit with different "objects" of interest, which might "produce such qualitatively distinct experience" (AIC 159). They are not experienced as "identical" because of the "differential coassembly of perceived causes and consequences" (630). Shyness, for instance, is about the "strangeness of the other," whereas guilt is about "moral transgression," shame about "inferiority," and discouragement about "temporary defeat" (630). Wurmser characterizes this set of closely related affects as the shame family of emotions. Nathanson adds a few more terms to the list of shame family, which "impl[ies] the acute lowering of self esteem," including bashfulness, modesty, the "experiences of being put down, slighted, and thought of as contemptible," disgrace, dishonor, degradation, and debasement ("Timetable" 3). Other scholars and practitioners, within and beyond the profession of psychotherapy, find such a lack of distinction unproductive, or even dangerous. Ruth Benedict has drawn one of the most well-known distinctions between shame and guilt in her comparative studies between Western and non-Western cultures in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*. Psychoanalysts who propose a turn from guilt to shame also find it useful to distinguish between shame and guilt. Helen Block Lewis and Andrew Morrison have maintained such a distinction in most of their works. Ruth Leys is a representative figure for those researchers who react negatively to the "turn to shame." For Leys, the difference between shame and guilt is indicative of the mimesis-related paradigms, and serves a significant role in scholarships on trauma and beyond.

that the hermaphroditic body of the legendary Herculine Barbin might have defied such a transcription, Repo understands Foucault as identifying a “*capacity* for love and pleasure” in Barbin’s corporeal anomaly, exceeding the “orders” and disciplines of power (81–2). The *excessive* power that pleasure wields is important in reading *The Wings of the Dove* as well, particularly in light of the shame response. As my later discussions yield, this hedonic concern is empowering for several key characters in their respective individual trajectory. It allows Milly Theale and Merton Densher to depart from norms, and to experience moments of affective and epistemological excess. And though pleasure has lost its prominence in recent queer studies with its “turn to suffering,” critics such as Heather Love and Elizabeth Freeman recontextualize this focus on “loss...failure, shame, negativity, grief” with “...a premature turn away from a seemingly obsolete politics of pleasure” (Love 160). The centrality of pleasure and its power of transcendence persevere in James’s work, and take on fresh characteristics that gesture towards a *different* organization and reading of the individual and social surfaces in *The Wings of the Dove*.

From time to time, an overt concern over personal happiness breaks out from under James’s intricate textuality, and sheds light on the exquisitely vague intentions of the characters. This affective undertone, eclipsed by more pressing issue of intrigue and betrayal begs critical attention. Together with instances of temporal disturbances, moments of joyful intensity signal productive tension between the affective and the epistemological organizations. These instances of affective and temporal disruptions signal underlying ideo-affective arrangements whose resistance to interpretation makes them decidedly “queer.” On her seminal visit to Matcham, sipping iced coffee on the sward, Milly yields to one of the few spells of happiness in the book, much to her own amazement: “She was *somehow* at this hour a very *happy* woman, and a part of her *happiness* might precisely have been that her affections and her views were moving as never before in *concert*” (136 emphasizes mine). Milly seems to have been swept away by an all-enveloping gush of exhilaration, the underlying source of which is as of yet unknown to her. But she is somehow not oblivious to the immediate cause of her happy development, which she ascribes to a certain accord between affect and epistemology. The unanimity she confesses to have discovered is further explained in an effusive proclamation of love:

Unquestionably she *loved* Susie; but she also *loved* Kate and *loved* Lord Mark, loved their funny old host and hostess, *loved* every one within range, down to the very servant who came to

receive Milly's empty ice-plate—down, for that matter, to Milly herself, who was, while she talked, really conscious of the enveloping flap of a protective mantle, a shelter with the weight of an Eastern carpet. (136 emphases mine)

Milly is undoubtedly happy and content, not only through her devotion to others, but for the treatment she receives. And her romantic habit of mind has sublimated Aunt Maud's meddlesome intrigue as a genuine and altruistic concern for her wellbeing, wilfully ignoring any side effects of this claustrophobic "enveloping mantle."<sup>11</sup> Milly's loving spirit, as the later arguments show, is central to her preference for affective vulnerability over a paranoid way of living. Paradoxically, it is her willingness to create positive affective investment in other people that makes her vulnerable. But her decision to remain prone to unpleasant surprises, such as pain and shame, speaks for the volumes of benefits that an affective openness yields.

For Milly, the "uplift" that Susan predicts also figures as a "weighing down." But the burden of knowledge hardly affects her access to an almost prelapsarian blissful conception of life. The dawn of reality two days later at Sir Luke Strett's does not at all have any effect on the ecstatic Milly; she welcomes the confirmation of her doom as a consolidation of her heretofore rickety identity. Her impending downfall, rather than being singularly discouraging and life-negating for her, is taken as "something firm to stand on," the likes of which she identifies as unprecedented and highly productive for her.<sup>12</sup> The mysterious sense of security Milly extracts from having been "held up," of being "put into the scales" obliterates all other considerations of danger and doom (148). And when Sir Luke commandeers her happiness

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<sup>11</sup>In a rather different line of argument, Scappettone touches upon similarly "enveloping" effects in her discussion of the impact Venice, "a city of water" with its gondola-centered transportation, has on its tourists. She argues that submission to this physical limitation "infantilizes and discomposes the tourist," who is almost "being returned to the womb" (104). See *Killing the Moonlight*, pp. 103–5. In contrast, Milly is purportedly not in the least bothered by such protective suffocation, rather, she welcomes Aunt Maud's envelopment with a sense of privilege.

<sup>12</sup>Fowler (1984) is critical of Milly's romanticizing acceptance of her disease, interpreting her strategy as seeking "refuge from active participation in the world" in her own bleak fate, molding a idiosyncratic *modus vivendi*. She reads her character as being shrouded under a blanket of "passivity [which] she displays from her first appearance in the novel," and all her decisions and viewpoints henceforth, Fowler contends, could be understood in light of her willful "nonparticipation" (97). Scappettone (2014) on the other hand fits Milly's fluid identity into a larger Jamesian modernist realism in the "extreme abstraction," with "its resistance...to the representation of distinct 'subjects' and 'settings'" (123)—a "referential flux" with "shifting contexts and morphing connotation" (122).

as a prerequisite for her health, stipulating that it's no longer a question of choice or will that she should be happy, her gaiety verges on levity, "Oh I'll accept any whatever!...I'm accepting a new one every day. Now *this!*" (151). It is no longer possible or necessary to distinguish between her resilience and buoyancy, and her almost inhumanly high spirits are clearly overflowed and drowned all ill omens. Milly is determined to cast her doom precisely in the light of *joy*, conflating cause and effect, posing disruptions to the finely policed lines between the affective and the epistemological, and the temporal and spatial dimensions.

The fluidity and openness of her logic, brought out in her conversation with Kate when the latter demands the latest news from her doctor's visit, defies Kate's faith in the causal rigor of knowledge. Pressing further the "kind of pleasure" that Milly is to undertake, Kate is assured simply "[t]he highest;" hardly satisfied, she ventures again, "Which *is* the highest?" only to be reassured that "it's just our chance to find out. You must help me" (161). Kate is incredulous and finds herself hardly ever convinced by the open-endedness of Milly's frail logic. Kate's notion of "fun," as previously noted, calls for an "intelligence" in what Densher perceives to be a "caution" (60) that takes things in in a certain manner, the stringency of which is in direct conflict with Milly's roundaboutness. The latter's openness might bespeak for Kate a high degree of vulnerability to chance, and a susceptibility to shameful shocks to which she would never expose herself. One of the only times in the novel she deigns to take such risks occurs when Densher, after weeks' sojourn to the US, comes back to England. Today and today only Kate reasons, could she sacrifice everything else—her precaution, her alarms, her security, her sense of propriety—for the complete appreciation and "profit[.]...for her joy" (189). On any other day, her fun would never forego its "intelligent" and "cautious" underpinnings. Compared to Milly Theale, Kate Croy's foreclosed mindset to surprise renders her subservient to a logic of maximizing certain positive affects, promoting access to joy while warding off the surprising element in the affect interest-excitement. James in his characterization of Kate gestures towards a close connection between the affect of joy and shame that precedes and exceeds Tomkins's schemata of the affect shame-humiliation.

Among the characters in *The Wings of the Dove*, Susan Stringham and Milly Theale figure at the opposite poles, in spite of their devout attachment to one another, in their attitudes towards knowledge. Susan delights in the possession of knowledge, whereas Milly shies away from the prospects of gaining certainty. Their contrasting views

regarding the value of epistemological pursuit, at times grounded by a disparity in material and physical conditions, gesture towards a deeper discrepancy between two casts of mind. This reading of their radically different approaches to knowledge supports a larger claim for an ideoaffective openness. In *The Wings of the Dove*, characters who retain a manifest aversion to uncertainty put up by default a defense of impatience and anxiety, which might be alleviated temporarily, but often aggravated in the long run, with an almost blind trust in knowledge and truth.

Susan's pursuit of knowledge follows a more "active" track, although her capacity falls short at other critical aspects when compared to Milly's more "passive" and receptive mindset. Milly's open-mindedness, susceptible to unpleasant surprises at times, does seem to relieve the mind of perennial burdens of impatience, anxiety, and suspicion, and primes it for more comprehensive experiences of pleasure than that of Kate's and Susan's. Clinging tight onto the certainty that a faith in knowledge and telos grants, the latter two characters evince a habit of mind that will be identified as "paranoid," the personal cost of which, is demonstrated by the readings of Milly Theale and Merton Densher, far outweighs the benefits it brings. For the individual, paranoia clouds over the positive affects and places limits on the amount of joy and interest they might generate. The paranoid bent of mind works against shocks and derives pleasure from the mimetic cycles of anticipation-confirmation. Kate Croy's sense of joy, it seems, shares some of its internal mechanisms with that of Susan Stringham's, who professes to have derived pleasure from obtaining knowledge through technical know-how. Immediately preceding her pursuit of Milly to the tip of the promontory, Susan strikes herself as being "secretively attentive" of her companion, reaping off "scientific observation" thereof, "hovering like a spy, applying tests, laying traps, concealing signs" (84). She performs as rigorously as she possibly could for a "culminating" scientific understanding of the "matter" of Milly. Her rationale behind such an almost pathological interest is, or so she confesses, the occupational necessity as Milly's paid companion. Translating a pathological mindset into a discourse of scientific discovery confirms Brian Massumi's understanding of scientific concern as "the institutionalized maintenance of sangfroid in the face of surprise" (*Parables* 233). Remaining "knowledgeable" is for Susan being invulnerable to news about Milly. Managing her composure diligently, Susan extracts a predominant amount of her joy from confirmed knowledge; even the "pleasure of watching... [Milly's] beauty" comes not so much from *discovering* Milly's graceful appearance as *knowing* Milly would always be beautiful (84). And for the reward of such a *reflexive* and *mi-*

*metic* joy, Susan is obviously relentless. Her project of “know[ing] everything” is thus a direct result of mimetic self-affirmation in which only *facts* that will confirm a *suspicion* will be considered, thereby leading to an *expected* confirmation of initial beliefs (366). The pleasure that paranoia produces is in this sense none other than the pleasure of being proved *right*. Investing in no entity other than the self, and since the self *will* always be *right*, paranoia could be a very effective mechanism against sensations of shame. Kate Croy, the unlikely *pale*-faced girl, remains almost always impervious to the shameful pallor. Rarely would she allow herself to be so *imprudent* as to incur risks of uncertainty by showing interest in *other* people. The always “pale” Milly, on the hand, with her open embrace of things, might as well have been under the constant attack of such a shame-induced pallor.

Milly’s indifference to knowledge, it seems, assumes a particular temporal relation. She welcomes knowledge when it comes of its own accord. She *shall* know, or so she claims, in due time; and it is the mediated form of knowing—through Susan in this instance—to which she objects. Milly demands to be informed, however unpleasantly, directly, and in the course of her own treatment, not to be rushed in any untimely fashion. The bravery embedded in her defiant stance might also be spelled out, echoing Scappettone’s formulation on sentimental tourism, as a resistance to “the mortifying effect of information” through an “imbrication of knowledge and somatic experience” (105). Asking for direct and mannerly contacts with knowledge, Milly emphatically asks for no corporeal or temporal (pre-)mediation; she only takes pains to stress that, for all her seemingly deprecation of Susan as the *channel*, her gratitude towards the latter is unbounded and unequivocal. She assures Susan that *other* things, *other* possibilities might then appear, when one agrees that “The best is not to know—that includes them all. I don’t—I don’t know. Nothing about anything—except that you’re *with* me” (244–5). Her caution against knowledge takes a turn to the worse, and vows to take on an overwhelming scale here. The pause between the two “I don’t” signals a near nervous breakdown when one approaches the limits of signification. The repetition, sanctioned by a wandering and searching consciousness, is followed by the word “know”—a fallback when more complex and descriptive phrases become not readily available. To *know* is at once the most natural collocation to come after “don’t,” and the most comprehensive—it encompasses a wide range of possibilities and enables Milly to glide through her temporary failure of signification to arrive at meaning again. This episode is suggestive of the power of knowledge—a totalizing term that could block out all other more specific experiences in life. For Milly, contra Susan, it is the spe-

cifics, the various embodied experiences that fulfill a life-engendering role. Shame and other unpleasant sensations are but necessary prices to pay in order to experience to the fullest extent the pleasant experiences in life.

Milly's preference for practice-based knowledge, in the course of the story, results in a spectrum of responses between shameless elation and shame-laden despondency. Milly vows to stay "shamelessly" ignorant particularly regarding Merton Densher and her illness. Her selective non-knowledge, for the most part, guards Milly against any untimely *reduction* of interest in Densher and his life, and keeps her buoyant and happy until things *actually* happen. Embracing the unknown with open arms, Milly objects to unverified knowledge and insists on embodied knowledge. Before her consultation with Sir Luke, she has, in response to Susan's concern over her health, returned cheerfully, "it might be well to find out" (91). Her receptivity towards lived experience and her disregard for knowledge in advance play out in the response she gives to Kate on the nature of her illness, "I *shall* know, and whatever it is it will be enough" (145). To questions regarding the relationship between Densher and Kate, Milly remains "proudly" dense. When Susan complains about the pang of "mov[ing] in a labyrinth" on such matters, Milly's "gaiety" is almost shameless: "Of course we do. That's just the fun of it! [...] Don't tell me that—in this for instance—there are not abysses. I want abysses" (121). The unknown, instead of evoking terror, suggests for Milly an irresistible appeal of pleasure. Her affective openness also incurs, in due time, an "abysmal quantity" of gloom. Distressed by Kate's "*other* identity, the identity she would have for Mr. Densher," Milly's *enjoyment* of Densher and Kate suffers an acute reduction (146). The unease with which the access to lived experience degenerates appears the first time she visited Lancaster Gate which culminates in her "turn[ing] her face to the wall" (334). At times resulting in minor discomfort of shame, the reduction of her enjoyment in life also takes the form of life-threatening agony. What was early on "too sharp" a strain on her "sensitivity" in response to the "very air of the place, the pitch of the occasion" (100) ends with a determined refusal of life.

Milly's refusal of certain knowledge and her rejection of certain manners of knowing, it becomes clear, have laid the groundwork for her final collapse.<sup>13</sup> It isn't simply an outright denunciation of

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<sup>13</sup>Fowler (1984) argues that Milly "fatally lacks important knowledge and abilities" (89) despite her attempts to obtain them by her European sojourn. Milly's habitual nonparticipation from life and her comfortable refuge in her illness, according to



knowledge, for which she has been at times rather receptive; her insistence that knowing *shall* come in a natural order-*less* fashion, without unnecessary intervention, sets her decidedly apart from several of the more calculating characters. Susan Stringham is always passionate in setting up “tests” and traps; Kate Croy is forever avid in pursuing and perfecting her “arrangements”; and Lord Mark, after Milly’s indifference to his proposal, lingers at her *sala* only to *know* the name of her guest after seeing “one of the gondoliers...obsequiously held out to her...a visiting-card” (280). Lord Mark, as do Susan and Kate, chases after knowledge with a cunning determination that vows to “leave nothing unlearned” (107). They detest uncertainty almost as passionately as they prepare against shame. Sir Luke Strett too, is enabled by his unparalleled medical expertise to look “in advance...all one’s possibilities” so much so that he might be deprived of exploring *other* possibilities (256). The elimination of ambiguity, then, comes at a price, for Sir Luke as well, as a loss in possibility and joy. Lord Mark, in a like manner, is burdened with “too much knowledge” (101) to ever entertain the idea of a *different* future. His conviction—the “working view” that “nothing to make a deadly difference for him...*could* happen” (275)—comes at the time of Milly’s refusal to his proposal to salvage his self-esteem. But total relinquishment of all aspirations is nonetheless lamentable, and not simply for the fact pointed out by Milly that he has “no imagination”—Lord Mark rarely experiences any *joy* (108). The deep-set aversion to uncertainty manifests itself in the characters as a general impatience and a default anxiety, a trust in knowledge, and an ardent and persistent pursuit for the hidden truth.

Interested in the unknown, Merton Densher remains unaffected by “shocking” news that would have put the likes of Susan and Kate to shame. In contrast to Kate’s almost blind faith in the vindication of knowledge, Densher, like Milly, favors the mysterious and the unknown. Densher, who at times professes that he is “...to understand and understand without detriment to the feeblest...of his passions” (64). Even the intimidating Maud Manningham who confesses to Susan Stringham that “one must understand” (339), seems at critical junctures to have stopped pursuing knowledge altogether. In response to Kate’s skepticism towards his inclination to forgo Milly’s bequeathal, Densher avers, almost insolently, that “[m]y sense is sufficient without being definite” (406). In the plainest words to character-

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Fowler, are underlined with a preference for “objectification,” for “detachment,” and a “denial” of the remedial power of love, which together results in her untimely death even *before* Lord Mark’s delivery of the blow (103).

ize his beloved, Densher understands Kate as “a whole library of the unknown, the uncut” (222). His complicity in Kate’s plan is suggestive of an abiding taste for mystery and secrecy. Interestingly, it is the depletion of mystery that results in a reduction of his sense of enjoyment and hence his shame. The certainty that comes with knowledge ushers in a lucid outlook on life that is not in the least palatable to Densher. After Kate’s monumental visit to his room at Venice, even when his memories are fresh and the taste of victory still sharp, he succumbs to a “slightly awful” spell: “[T]his was by the loss of the warmth of the element of mystery. The lucid reigned instead of it, and it was into the lucid that he sat and stared. He shook himself out of it a dozen times a day, tried to break by his own act his constant still communion” (316). The “loss of the warmth of the element of mystery” conditions a “lucidity” that allows him to access the guilt and shame in being a coniving scoundrel. Chastened by the “awful” spell of his conscience, Densher emerges from his access to shame less centered on his own desire for Kate. The shameful bouts of “sitting and staring” with his guilty lucidity provide a heightened experience of the “tyranny and prison of the self,” which Ewan Fernie takes as an existential condition of being human; shame, in his opinion, is both “a painful rehearsal for” a more dreadful confinement and the gateway to the “world beyond egoism” (8). Led by his feelings of shame and guilt, Densher is forced to confront the “tyranny” of his desires and limited perspective, and eventually comes out of the confines of this room and Kate’s commands.

Kate’s appeal of mystery further diminishes when she, apropos his request not to open Milly’s posthumous letter, destroys it by throwing it in the fireplace. Her action, so definitive and forceful, destroys Densher’s conception for her as the “unknown” and “uncut.” On the other hand, the dimension of the unknown increases for Milly, as Densher shall *never* know her last confession. It is his mourning over the perpetually “unknown” that most probably sparks his romantic feelings for Milly, who figures *as* the unopened letter that forever tempts his interest. Densher’s propensity for the unknown and the unknowable culminates in his falling in love with a dead person, when death revokes all means of knowing and sanctions an ultimate ignorance. It comes as one of the most poignant moments in the course of the story when, pining after the violent dispossession of “possibilities,” Densher likens the smarting pang he feels to

...the sight of a priceless pearl cast before his eyes...into the fathomless sea, or rather even it was like the sacrifice of something sentient and throbbing, something that, for the spiritual

ear, might have been audible as a faint far wail. This was the sound he cherished when alone in the stillness of his rooms. He sought and guarded the stillness so that it might prevail there till the inevitable sounds of life, once more, comparatively coarse and harsh, should smother and deaden it. (402)

If he ever relishes the solitary “stillness” in the wake of Kate’s visit, and fights to keep it fresh, he struggles desperately to guard the “stillness” now against the overflow of knowledge. The advent of knowledge is shameful for Densher because it most violently depletes his enjoyment of the unknown. With all her “pure talent for life” (284), Kate, as she becomes increasingly *legible* to Densher, has ruthlessly murdered his aesthetic ideal of an *illegible* book.<sup>14</sup>

Susan Stringham’s reading of Milly Theale is quintessentially paranoid. In light of Eve Sedgwick’s composite sketch of paranoia, Susan’s scientific undertaking, the espionage she is secretly so proud of and derives immense pleasure from sets the tone for her inevitable and tautological discovery. It is inevitable because such a result has been preconditioned by her initial conception of the experiment itself, by her methodology, by the very mode of conduction and her interpretation; and paranoia has been written all across the space like an overarching guiding spirit. Paranoia, regarded by Leo Bersani as “an inescapable interpretive doubling of presence” (188), is hailed as “hortative” among a set of must-have skills for an ideally sensitized reader, “vigilant” with the kind of “trickery and cunning” necessary for *Ulysses* (156). Sedgwick, building upon his insight, arrives at paranoia’s mimetic nature. A paranoid reading, she allows, is quizzically imitative, for it “require[s] being imitated to be understood,” and one could “understand only by imitation” (131). Thus Kate’s vision that “poor Milly had a treasure to hide” (264)—a treasure in the least sense pecuniary in this instance—with her “general armoury,” is but a reflection of and condition for her own guarded existence. Similar to Susan’s suspicious intuition, Kate’s “habit of anticipation”—her precocious aversions to things—saves her from unnecessary contact with bad surprises. But as the discussion below will show, such a strategy to adopt

<sup>14</sup>In contrast to Kate’s talent for life, Habegger (1971) argues that, Densher’s is a “talent for thought” that puts him “outside English society” and its “workings”—his density in grasping Kate’s plan, he points out, results from an innate unfamiliarity with the “brutal and self-seeking society” (460). Suggesting an innate psychological deficiency—American girls’ sub-humanization or full subjectivation due to an “inability or fear” (103)—that is partially, if not wholly responsible for her early demise, Fowler (1984) compares Kate’s “talent for life” with Milly’s competitive edge of her impending doom, extrapolating that the former might have “drive[n] Milly self-destructively to seek refuge in a fatal illness” (96).

a paranoid stance to close off paranoid invasions is counterproductive, and conducive to an optimization for total control of paranoia. Their concern for joy and pleasure, on the other hand, makes them *uniquely* paranoiac in a way that both Tomkins and Sedgwick have not fully accounted for. Kate Croy in *The Wings of the Dove* is a key figure for a refreshed understanding of paranoia. Her case furnishes me with the critical evidence to demonstrate the discrepancy between theory and (literary) reality alerting both theorists and literary critics to the limits of their vision and the constraints of their methodology.

Paranoia, Sedgwick claims, observes a “unidirectionally future-oriented vigilance” through which “badness [is] always already known (130). And it is through such prescient vigilance that knowledge, especially foreknowledge of bad news, is secured. Paranoia thus grants its proponents an immense range of “vision.” By virtue of its adequate explanatory power, it makes Lord Mark prescient, knowing *beforehand*, even *before* Milly’s refusal, that nothing that would make any difference could ever happen to him. Susan too, clings to her precious precaution or a ready “prepar[ation] for the worst” as firmly as her fur boa (79, 121). And it is only right that Maud Manningham is simultaneously “afraid of nothing” by Kate’s estimation, and of “everything” by Susan’s account (38, 248)—it is by her defense against everything that she could become impervious to any incoming attacks. To experience everything as “of a natural” (290) is to find one prepared for every possibility, particularly the bad ones.

The access to paranoid knowledge, however reassuring at times, also closes off *other* possibilities that could be pleasurable as well. Sir Luke laments his loss of pleasure when his medical expertise allows so few surprises about the fate of his patients. Under the spell of paranoia, the future, Matthew Helmers envisions, is reduced to “a discrete system of buried knowledge that, once uncovered, can be exhausted” (109), which is confirmed by Lord Mark’s assertion that he has by that time left *nothing* unlearned. Knowledge becomes complete when it takes on a paranoid dimension, empowering it to furrow backward and forward across the linear progression of events. Shocks, which could easily lead to shamed responses, are abundant in those who are unsubscribed to a paranoid worldview. Milly, with her face turned to the wall, never fully recovers from her shame of being deceived. Densher too, though from time to time seized with an “unrest” that might have progressed, if not regressed, into paranoia, couldn’t foresee the course of things, and is prone to be left “shaking forever” (371). Amazed at Densher’s always “seeing his way so little” (309), Kate prepares herself in every regard, even meeting Densher’s “vul-

gar” request for sex with shameless composure (297). Nor does she “wince and mince” upon Densher’s blunt candor regarding the sordidness of their plan (311). Densher, on the other hand, like Milly, takes a romantically finite view of life, staying vulnerable to the ebb and flow of his interests. Their loss of “knowledge,” it seems, finds compensation in the *good* surprises that make up the core of the “event” itself. Only through a temporary withholding of paranoid vigilance, according to Brian Massumi, could one access the real “event” penetrating its stultifying structure with “self-consistent set of invariant generative rules” that guarantees that “nothing ever happens” (“Autonomy” 87). While holding off negative affects such as shame and fear, a paranoid stance also wards off the reality of life itself.

Densher is always seeing things afresh and anew, struck time and again by their immensity and abruptness, as well as his invariable lack of preparation. He shares thus a susceptibility to the world, with Milly, which opens him up for bad news sometimes, but for wonders too, the extraordinary “handsomeness” of his fiancée being one example (356, 375). And just when the strain of temporal and epistemic unidirectionality from a paranoid worldview threatens to break them, the queer moments burst out again. Milly’s letter, arrives *after* her death and *timed* precisely for Christmas, the season of gifts, comes to signify for Densher later on as the “only proof and symbol of the sacred” in his life, and contributes to the feat of his finally falling in love with the “poor rich American girl.” All those surprises prove that after all the stringent vigilance against surprise, emotional disturbances do and need to occur. Kate and Susan’s occasional admission of pleasure and joy was perhaps, inadvertently, the most persuasive evidence, given all their proclivity to “paranoia.” And if we were to take their personal confessions of an inclination for “fun” and “pleasure” seriously, according to Tomkins’s explications of the internal mechanisms of interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy, abrupt fluctuations of feelings are part and parcel of any genuine experience of joy. Thus psychologically speaking, Kate and Susan’s reluctance or refusal to be shocked is paradoxical to their professed access to pleasure. Such odd moments, as those “waste products and blind spots” in Adorno’s criticism of the dialectic, could equally “transcend” and “outwit” the immaculate linearity of knowledge and life, with their very own “impotence, irrelevant[ce], eccentric[ity]” and “incomparability” (151). It’s only through such moments of temporal, emotional, and epistemological incongruence—which for Milly and Densher often take the form of excess and waste—that the validity and the value of such paranoid reading of life is called into question.

For Sedgwick, paranoid reading renders the individual attached to the more negative and destructive aspects of things while disregarding the positive and the reparative.<sup>15</sup> A paranoid way of reading,<sup>16</sup> by the very nature of its fervent prediction of bad news, hunts for and forestalls the emergence of negative affects. Among the four “general images” of the ideo-affective organization of human beings, Silvan Tomkins maintains, the maximization of positive affects, desirable as it is, should be kept in moderation since an overt and passionate pursuit of such affects could be “self-defeating,” and result in “failure and misery” (*AIC* 181). Any affect theory, according to Tomkins, yields, after “a simplified and powerful summary of a larger set of affect experiences” (411), a generalized scheme of filtering incoming information and generating customized behavior in response to a particular affect. The strength of any negative theory derives, Tomkins alerts us, not from its efficacy but from its failure, the repetition of which expands the breadth of its operative domain, and consolidates its power in the ideo-affective organization of an individual. Thus when a theory is increasingly ineffective in preventing intrusive negative affects from occurring in an increasing number of situations, its growing strength might assume a monopolistic scale, so that one affect becomes dominant in an individual’s affective life.

With the assistance of over-interpretation and over-organization, the paranoid, maintains Tomkins, processes every bit of

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<sup>15</sup>Adorno’s critique of dialectic could be likened to Sedgwick’s objection to an uncritical embrace of paranoia. His denunciation of dialectical positivism that derives its power in the “absolute rule of negation” (150) echoes Sedgwick’s arguments that paranoia denies accidents and rejoices in the triumphalism of knowledge and certainty.

<sup>16</sup>In their brilliant introductory essay, “Surface Reading,” Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus conduct a brief survey of what they call “symptomatic reading,” which is to some extent synonymous to Sedgwick’s “paranoid reading.” They refer to Umberto Eco who dates the practice back to the Second Century with the Gnostic tradition. Later revivals with the Marxist readings of ideology and commodity, the Freudian interpretations of dreams and the unconscious, and the Althusserian symptomatic reading, they argue, tend to presume and foreground the shaping forces of the “phantom questions” in the texts. They hope to resituate the surface as “an affective and ethical stance” that counters the “depth model of truth” (10), and call for more immediate “immersion” that would “free us from the apathy and instrumentality of capitalism” (14). Their central claim can be concurred as an affective call for “a true openness to all the potentials,” without reducing the richness of a text by accentuating one particular understanding and discounting all others. While it might be ultimately beneficial to remain utterly disinterested in literary criticism, the paper, for the purpose of contributing to such a disinterest, leans more heavily on some standpoints and is distanced from others. The “fertile paths of inquiry” demand while discount such interests.

incoming information by its connection to one single “affect and its avoidance,” and launches the “entire cognitive apparatus in a constant state of alert” in forecasting and inhibiting such an affect (519). Under the paranoid posture, the general image of positive affect has to be sacrificed when the individual becomes obsessed with over-avoidance of and over-escape from the negative affects, to the degree that, in the case of a monopolistic humiliation theory, the “strategy of maximizing positive affect has to be surrendered... [and the] only sense in which he may strive for positive affect at all is for the shield which it promises against humiliation” (532). It is proposed in this reading of *The Wings of the Dove*, with insights from Sedgwick and Tomkins, that a strong affect-shame bind takes over Kate Croy’s ideo-affective life to the extent that all her other affective experiences are clouded over by a hypersensitivity to shame. Overly cautious of shame experiences, Kate is enslaved by a “shameful” mindset that closes off other joyful possibilities for her while prompting her to find alternative pleasure in the proximity to shame. Not only does this paper hope to contribute to the already robust scholarship that interprets James’s oeuvre as prominently psychological, it aims to draw attention to his deployment of affects, in particular the affect shame, the engagement with which well precedes comprehensive theorizations of shame in the late 1950s.<sup>17</sup>

One explicit instance of affect-bind shaming unfolds in the course of Kate’s recollection of her father’s “original” downfall. Cautious as she always has been, Kate testifies, in a decidedly paranoid fashion to her mother’s paranoia, which gives credence to Sedgwick’s interpretation of the mimetic nature of paranoia: “She must have had some fear, some conviction that I had an idea, some idea of her own that it was the best thing to do. She came out as abruptly as Marian had done: “If you hear anything against your father—anything I mean except that he’s odious and vile—remember it’s perfectly false” (57). Here Kate recalls a time when she was put to shame by her mother’s veiled demand and subtle rebuke that she was not only not to believe any slur upon her father’s character, but she should be positively

<sup>17</sup>Helen Merrell Lynd’s *On Shame and the Search for Identity* (1958) marks the virtual beginning of contemporary interests in the theoretical explorations of shame. Speaking to previous works done by Ruth Benedict, Gerhart Piers, and Franz Alexander, Lynd’s monograph is concerned with aspects of personality development that are directly influenced by experiences of shame and its impact on the sense of identity. Léon Wurmser contributes to the scholarship on shame, with his *The Mask of Shame* (1981), a “systematic inquiry into shame with its manifold aspects and related attitudes and feelings” (16). He pours into its phenomenological constituents, and recognizes its protective capacities not only against exposure, but against other affects as well. He echoes Otto Fenichel in understanding shamelessness as a psychological reaction against previous experiences of intense shame.

ashamed if she were even to dignify such allegations by contemplating on their validity. And if Kate has at other times struck the reader as peculiarly calm and tranquil, it might be because in the disturbing and turbulent process of her upbringing, she has been well trained in fashioning her affective articulations, the process for which involves exhibiting appropriate behavior after explicit or implicit references to shame.

Tomkins gives a sketch in which a total affect-shame bind has worked an individual into believing “that affect per se is shameful, that shame itself is caught up in the same taboo and that even affectlessness may be shameful” (411). What Kate’s recollection also suggests, is an ideo-affective bond that wraps knowledge and shame irrevocably together—a *total* bind. To know is to know shame and to be shamed—by the shadows of her father. To know, moreover, is to know how best to stay alert to any shaming possibilities in order not to experience them. And to be ashamed was to have failed to anticipate knowledge, or knowledge of shame specifically. But even the shield, arguably one of her only positive affective gains, is a nominal and self-delusional one. However potent, or weak in Kate’s case, a theory of shame is, as an affective interpretation it assures “experience of shame...of a large number of situations” (411). It takes paranoia to understand paranoia, and it takes shame theory to experience shame, or vice versa, and a monopolistic shame theory the fullest experience of shame.

What Kate Croy’s total and monopolistic shame indicates, given her declaration of a dedicated pursuit of pleasure, is a veiled affinity that Tomkins has overlooked between paranoid shame and the general image of maximizing positive affects. Tomkins understands a paranoiac to be on constant guard against any possible intrusion of the shame sensation, pointing to suppression and inhibition of affects, mostly negative in this instance, as the predominant motivation. The case of Kate Croy, while meeting this description, also bears a dissonance: an excess that makes her somehow a misfit with Tomkins’s downcast monopolistically shamed figure. This excess is her overzealous investment in and access to *joy*. We have seen how her dedication to the pursuit of joy has written itself from the onset of her relationship with Merton Densher. Her change of mind towards the materiality of life’s offerings gives another credible glimpse into the significance of pleasure in Kate’s frame of mind. Plotting after Milly’s fortune promises Kate a constant access to fun secured through her intelligence, and a copious reward that would set her mind at ease forever by severing the collusion between shame and destitute. Wealth, as demonstrated by the success of Milly in London, confirms Kate’s belief in its powers of



affective optimization. But rather than letting the second general strategy of minimizing negative affects taking control over her affective life, Kate's pursuit of the first strategy of maximizing positive affect assumes dominance, reversing Tomkins's figuration by rendering the former a "by-product" and "derivative" (*AIC* 181).

Inasmuch as shame comes into being with a reduction of interest or joy, the particular case of Kate Croy offers a major modification. Her over-sensitivity to shame, which is not so dissimilar to an over-attachment to affective stability, begs a differentiation between interest and joy in accounting for shame. Kate Croy's aversion to surprise and faith in the comfort and defense of knowledge are akin to her pursuit of enjoyment-joy, which is activated, according to Tomkins,<sup>18</sup> by a decrease of neural firings. If revulsions for surprise undergird her subscription to a paranoid reading of life, then it is the reduction of joy, instead of interest-excitement, which depends on a sharp increase of neural firings, that triggers Kate's shame, and it is her concern for pleasure that motivates and maintains its bouts of attack. For Kate, shame or paranoid theory is taken up as a response to and strategy for the guaranteed access to joy and pleasure. A consideration for and from positive affects, the Jamesian portrait seems to propose, takes precedence over the more potent negative image in Tomkins's schema. Moreover, such a reading of James's characterization of Kate Croy seems to have accentuated an easily overlooked affective affinity between interest and surprise that Tomkins briefly touched upon, but hardly ever contemplates. In the latter's theoretical formulation of the innate activation of affects, interest and surprise differ only in the rates of neural firing increment. Thus a paranoid figure who recoils from the possibility of surprise would by default curb any foreseeable surges of interest or excitement. And Kate's self-chastening or reluctant self-indulgence for rushing to the train station to welcome Densher from America is a case in point for the general adoption of such an inhibition. Shame, with all its connection to paranoia,<sup>19</sup> might be unrelated,

<sup>18</sup>Silvan Tomkins puts forth a model of the innate activators of the primary affects, in which every possible major general neural contingency will innately activate different specific affects—"increased gradients of rising neural firing will activate interest, fear, or surprise, as the slope of increasing density of neural firing becomes steeper. Enjoyment is activated by a decreasing gradient of neural firing. Distress is activated by a sustained level of neural firing which exceeds an optimal level by an as yet undetermined magnitude, and anger is also activated by a non-optimal level of neural firing but one which is substantially higher than that which activates distress" (*AIC* 621).

<sup>19</sup>Tomkins hardly ever gives a clear and explicit definition of the term paranoia or paranoid in *Affect Imagery Consciousness*, but a majority of his discussions on paranoia are closely related to his postulations on the affect shame-humiliation. He con-

if not totally antithetical, contra Tomkins, to the affect interest-excitement. Considering Kate Croy's particularity in being not only totally shamed but quintessentially paranoid, it is at least safe to argue that one of the distinctions between shame and paranoia is the increasing distance to the affect interest-excitement. If, à la Tomkins, shame is an affective auxiliary to both interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy, then paranoia might be a sole collaborator to enjoyment-joy. It's only ironic how an overly passionate pursuit for happiness could blunt the heart and mind's affective sensibility to such an irrevocable degree.

The homosocial rapport Densher experiences in his social and personal relations with the group of men—Eugenio, Pasquale, and Sir Luke Strett—finds its support in his more generous affective stance than, for example, Lord Mark or Lionel Croy. Milly's attachment to Kate, which verges on proto-homosexual interests, would never have come into being with a foreclosed affective sensibility. Taken in this light, shame figures as a "uniting force" not because it encourages "conform[ity] to societal conventions and standards," as Fernie asserts, but precisely because it highlights differences and binds people together *by* their disparate reactions. Only with the willingness to withstand shame in the pursuit of one's interest can one establish genuine connections with others and emerge out of the sophistic, self-serving stronghold of paranoia. This connecting, socializing effect of shame is thus hinged upon the risky venture of investing interest and joy in another. Milly, despite all her physical frailty, exhibits such an openness to harm even as she recognizes the dangers of her "unbounded" interests: "Strange were the turns of life and the moods of weakness; strange the flickers of fancy and the cheats of hope; yet lawful, all the same—weren't they?—those experiments tied with the truth that consisted, at the worst, but in practising on one's self" (265). If the para-

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trasts paranoids with depressives in terms of their different shaming mechanisms. Unlike the depressives, paranoids have never "been loved (by their parents) but have been terrorized as well as humiliated" (240). Unable to find "...a way back from the despair of shame to communion with the loving parent who ultimately feels as distressed as does his child at the breach in their relationship," the paranoids could be likened to members of "a truly persecuted minority group," with their "shame...imposed with a reign of terror." Tomkins positions a "paranoid posture" in relation to the monopolistic humiliation theory, when the individual has yet to reach the terminal phases of being totally defeated. The paranoid posture arises when there is still an "...unrelenting warfare in which the individual generates and tests every conceivable strategy to avoid and escape total defeat at the hand of the humiliating bad object" (531). Paranoid schizophrenia is a special case of the paranoid posture in which "the individual is both terrorized and humiliated at the same time," and in which the only level on which the individual can respond is in his beliefs and fantasies, delusions of persecution and grandeur.

noid positions were adopted to generate, as Stef Aupers identifies in contemporary conspiracy culture, “the construction of ultimate meaning that is resistant to the meaning-eroding forces of modernity” (Aupers 30), then reparative practices choose to stay and live with such existential insecurity, rather than seeking any metaphysical transcendence.

What the Jamesian allegory of Milly’s fatal diathesis demonstrates, alongside other possibilities is the dire consequences for closing off affective receptibility. Tomkins understands such an affective openness as intrinsic to an individual’s “essential freedom” (*AIC* 68). To be paranoid and perennially guarded against the tendency to “feel strongly or weakly, for a moment, or for all his life” (*ibid*), is then tandem to forsaking the basic capacity to be humanly free. What Fernie vouches for as the “transcendence” and “freedom” from the self that shame engenders, begins with a willingness to be tethered and interdependent. In the case of Milly Theale, while she is still *open* for “abysses,” whether the term stands for the fullness of life that her fortune guarantees or the bleakness of death<sup>20</sup> her unrevealed “condition” incurs, Milly still *lives*; but as soon as she voluntarily closes off that opening by “turning her face to the wall” she rapidly declines and dies. Affective openness underlines Sir Luke’s injunction for her to *live*. For Milly, to live is to be able to be affected. The “firm footing” of her illness that Milly finds so welcome and liberating keeps well in place the fact of her “affectedness.” And an adamant rejection of that footing, or a single-minded devotion to it, will have endangered the viability of that life-engendering affective openness.

What transpires in the scene at the beginning of this paper, when Kate, with her endearing pale face, entreating and enjoining Densher to “believe in [her], and it will be beautiful,” is a curious pedagogical event in which Kate, risking her total susceptibility to shame, vouches for the beautiful certainty of knowledge. And what Densher takes to be her own sincerity, with which he could forego the demand upon her vow, is the faith paranoia placed in the perfection and superiority of knowledge. In light of Sedgwick’s assurance that “it is not people but mutable positions, or...practices, that can be divided between the paranoid and the reparative” (150), it behooves us to duly recognize the range of positive affects and good surprises Kate and the

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<sup>20</sup>Andrew Cutting reads Sir Luke’s diagnosis as a “confirmation” and “enhancement” of Milly Theale’s recognition of her “unique capability of dying” (90). Such a capacity, Cutting argues, distinguishes Milly from the rest of the characters in *The Wings of the Dove*, and bespeaks a generally applicable stratagem to secure individuality in the homogenizing power-knowledge system. See *Death in Henry James*, pp. 88–90.

paranoid others might engender. The extent of trust and the depth of love that fuels it are both admirable and awe-inspiring in their own right regardless of their (mis)appropriations. James foreshadows Sedgwick's misgivings about paranoia, and precedes her caution against its total negation, since paranoid people are also "able to, and need to, develop and disseminate the richest reparative practices" (150). His depiction entertains the interpretive possibilities of the reparative work they might have left behind, before, beside, above, and around, and complicates even further the verdict on paranoia.

*The Wings of the Dove*, under this paranoid reading perhaps, might as well be considered as a sketch of paranoia by James—his very own mimetic performance. Paranoid reading, à la Sedgwick, is a quintessential performance of mimesis, an act of self-reproduction that, regrettably, yields nothing but monotonous self-sameness. Despite all the affiliations between paranoia and shame, the performance of the former, according to Sedgwick, is to be distinguished from the latter, which "involves a gestalt"—the capacity to reverse and traverse the individuating boundaries with a "precarious hyperreflexivity" ("Cybernetic" 520). And while one laments the tedious omniscience of the paranoid positionality of the characters, one takes delight, and comfort, in the productivity of James's mimetic paranoia, which lays at one's mercy the critical destinies of a group of more or less personable characters, with whom one empathize to a more or less cathartic extent.

Side by side with the moral disgust and indignation, there also exist joy, marvel, pity, concern, surprise, shame, anguish, fear, etc., the whole gamut of human emotions. Face to face with the *tableaux vivants* of paranoia, readers of James stand to benefit from the intricate nuances in his portrayal of a wide range of affective constraints and closures. And just as writers of paranoia and critics of such writers are necessarily paranoid, as readers, in our very own acts of reading—eyes down, head down, upper body down—we are on the way to perform, if not to be indeed paranoid, ourselves.



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