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Madness and Medicine: The Graphomaniac's Cure

Pamela White Hadas

I. Superfluous Angels and Necessary Theaters: Is There a Doctor in the Text?

It still strikes me as strange that the case histories I write should read like novelettes and that . . . they lack the serious stamp of science.

—Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*

Freud himself asserts the kinship between his psychoanalytic techniques in the development of "case histories" and the novelist's craft. This kinship, along with the antagonism naturally felt between competitive approaches toward a common end, not only underlies the dramatic tension of numerous literary works, but appears in some instances to have provoked the act of writing in the first place. Two such works, notable for their protagonists' passionate grapplings with this subject of medical versus literary "treatment," are *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899), by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (1957), by Evelyn Waugh.¹

Charlotte Gilman wrote her chilling account of a woman's mental breakdown some five years after she herself, following the birth of her first child, became "a mental wreck" in need of a "rest cure." She was sent to "the greatest nerve specialist in the country," Dr. S. W. Mitchell, and, as she reports in her autobiography, treated thus:

I was put to bed and kept there. I was fed, bathed, rubbed. . . . As far as he could see there was nothing the matter with me, so after a month of this agreeable treatment he sent me home, with this prescription:

"Live as domestic a life as possible. Have your child with you all the time." . . . "Lie down an hour after each meal. Have but two hours' intellectual life a day. And never touch pen, brush or pencil as long as you live."²

Obviously, Gilman did not follow her doctor's orders; *The Yellow Wallpaper* was only the beginning of her long and prolific career as a writer.³

Gilman imposes several dramatic revisions on her own history in order to turn it into *The Yellow Wallpaper*. For one, she collapses the figures of doctor and husband into a single "John," upon whom her heroine can focus all her ambivalence regarding her treatment as wife and patient. For another, Gilman's use of an exclusive narrative "I" excuses her heroine from dealing with the possible complexity of John's character, presenting only those aspects of his role that exacerbate her own internal predicament. This "I" also manages to elude any use of the heroine's Christian name, a passive and frustrating assertion to the reader of what underlies this woman's illness (yet impossible for her to say): "*I am anonymous.*" For the purpose of this essay, to avoid the awkwardness of our heroine's namelessness, I shall call her *Mary*.

Mary's narrative of captivity in her temporary sickroom and her fantasies of escape hinge most crucially on her "analysis" of the room's decrepit furnishings and decor, particularly her minute, imaginative, and finally hallucinatory descriptions of its offensive wallpaper. This paper entirely surrounds her; it is the "writing on the wall" that becomes, through her uncanny reflections upon it, the forbidden and secret writing in her journal, the writing that has always been on her mind. Mary's "diagnosis" of her room's longstanding damages—through time, the accidents of infant occupancy, and general neglect—will be seen, in the end, to describe her condition more eloquently than any medical analysis at the time could possibly have done.

The title character of *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is hardly similar, on the surface, to Gilman's hysterical would-be writer. Mr. Pinfold is unthwarted, to all appearances, by his family doctor, his gender, or the plague of social anonymity; he is a man of the world, in the enlightened twentieth century, a recognized novelist, and a country gentleman with access to London. Waugh subtitles his book *A Conversation Piece*, as if to make light of its harrowing subjects. In a prefatory "Note," Mr. Waugh admits that he

suffered a brief bout of hallucination closely resembling what is here described. . . .

[And] since his disconcerting voyage he has learned that a great number of sane people suffer in this way from time to time. He believes this record may amuse them.

"Boredom alone and some stiffness in the joints disturbed that sunny autumn. Despite his age [of fifty years] and dangerous trade [of novelist]

Mr. Pinfold seemed to himself and to others unusually free of the fashionable agonies of *angst*" (p. 23). Yet Mr. Pinfold, unusually anxious and sleeping badly, feeling "decidedly seedy" and "disagreeably flushed," consults his neighbor, Dr. Drake of Lychpole, who demonstrates his diagnostic powers by suggesting it is an "'allergy,'" and that, "'the only cure really is a change'" (p. 26). A sea-voyage is thought to be just the thing for Mr. Pinfold. It is upon this supposedly curative voyage that the "ordeal" reported in Waugh's novel takes place.

Despite the relative freedom of his world tourism, the internal and exceedingly private arena of Mr. Pinfold's ordeal is brought home by many references and permutations of one sinister "contraption" of diagnosis and cure first introduced as a "Life-Waves Box" belonging to a Lychpole neighbor. In its centrality as a source of Pinfold's deepest fears and most revealing self-imagery, this magical "box" is structurally comparable to the title figure of *The Yellow Wallpaper*.

Some part of a sick man or animal—a hair, a drop of blood preferably—was brought to The Box, whose guardian would then "tune in" to the "Life-Waves" of the patient, discern the origin of the malady and prescribe treatment. (P. 8)

As Pinfold's voyage unfolds the real extent of his derangement, The Box continues to be spectrally present, serially epitomized, in Mr. Pinfold's fantasies, by various malicious and Arielesque "communications systems" that circumscribe his private cabin on the ship *Caliban*. These, he surmises, are under the operative control of a fantasy figure called "Angel." The name *Angel* is first attached merely to a "man from the BBC" who interviews Pinfold just before his departure. The expanded versions of the Life-Waves Box, so Mr. Pinfold comes to believe, are all ultimately under the guardianship of the enlarged and pervasive presence of Angel. Thus Angel may come to be seen as a composite of all the sinister "doctors" in Waugh's text, all those emanations who seem (in the hallucinatorium of the ship) to have an interest in meddling with the sick novelist's state of mind.

After Mr. Pinfold debarks from the good ship *Caliban*, near the end of his ordeal, but still metaphorically at sea, he expects to be rid of this Angel, as well as the thoroughly "wired" environment of his cabin, but no such luck:

He lay down expecting little rest. Angel had in his headquarters an electric instrument which showed Mr. Pinfold's precise state of consciousness. . . .

. . . And when he awoke after his brief spells of insensibility, his first sensation was always the voice of the observer: "Gilbert's awake again. Fifty-one minutes."

"That's better than the time before."

"But it isn't enough." (Pp. 195-96)

It seems unlikely that the "fifty-one minutes" is arbitrary here, given the proverbial fifty-minute hour prescribed by Freud for the "talking cure."

Freud has asserted that, among the symptoms definitive of "neurotic" behavior is the compulsion seen in certain patients to give "an account of what they suffer and what they enjoy . . . to confess their phantasies to the physician."⁴ That such "accounts" may be seen as symptomatic of mental aberration naturally leads to an insidious authorization of medical condescension toward any personally experienced descriptions of illness, not only those of recognized "artists," but those of people like Mary who would like to be recognized. This attitude seems geared not only to incite self-blame and the painful discouragement of imaginal symptoms, but is more than likely to encourage such patient-writers to evade at all costs such a "diagnosis" as fatally diminishing, both of their personal aspirations and of their secret, agonizing but nevertheless fertile "life-waves."

The stage is set, by both Gilman and Waugh, for their characters to act within the limits not only of diagnosed "neurosis," but of insanity. Theirs are theaters of bare boards, defective props, bad wiring, and hopelessly crowded wings. Literally, the "theater" of *The Yellow Wallpaper* is contracted: to such scenes as are possible in a rented attic, to the chronological frame of no more than a month, and to a single voice and character. The theater in which *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* is produced, on the other hand, allows for numerous changes of scene, a huge cast of characters, a variety of costumes, voices, and special effects; Waugh's novel, moreover, encompasses the events of half a century, though Pinfold's literal voyage may take place in no more time than that of the incarceration of Gilman's heroine.

The style of Waugh's "play" of words and "overheard" scripts filters through an elegantly managed past tense and the distance of the third person; we receive an ordeal well ordered with wit and with the self-conscious craft of a professional writer in possession of himself, returned to business of typing as usual. This is as unlike the "creeping" script of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, its "flamboyant patterns . . . committing every artistic sin" (p. 13), as it can be. Yet both works dramatize on their deepest levels an author's "regression" in progress, and in the service of progress; the

similarities of the found theaters on this level is, upon reflection, and in distinction from the medical theater each has abandoned, uncanny.

Whether our medical drama of choice is housebound and hysterical, or depressed and aimlessly, aggressively at sea, what is to be done? Is there some competent doctor in the text?

II. Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary: A Tempest in an Attic

The Yellow Wallpaper's directness of style, as alien to its period as a female body in a bikini would have been, introduces us to its narrator's husband-physician thus:

John laughs at me, of course, but one expects that in marriage.

John is practical in the extreme. He has no patience with faith, an intense horror of superstition, and he scoffs openly at any talk of things not to be felt and seen and put down in figures.

John is a physician, and *perhaps*—(I would not say it to a living soul, of course, but this is dead paper and a great relief to my mind)—*perhaps* that is one reason I do not get well faster. (Pp. 9–10)

Mary is, in more than one sense, *arrested* by her condition. She is literally under "house arrest," in an attic room she imagines was formerly used as a nursery; there, her progressive "breakdown," which includes the symptom of wanting to write about herself, is meant to be "arrested" by collusive medical and familial interventions. She is mentally "arrested," to the exclusion of any interest in her proper role of wife and mother, by her own gothic melancholia, its immediate history as well as its literary traditions.

At the outset, determined to seem perky and optimistic, she dwells on certain "interesting" associations suggested by her place of arrest: "A colonial mansion, a hereditary estate, I would say a haunted house, and reach the height of romantic felicity—but that would be asking too much of fate!" (p. 9). As to her bedroom, she would have preferred "one downstairs that opened on the piazza and had roses all over the window." Her husband vetoes this, in favor of the attic nursery, where she imagines "the windows are barred for little children," and notes the "rings and things in the walls" (p. 12).

She might well have imagined a different sort of occupant: herself. But who is she? Certainly she is familiar, through her reading of gothic novels, with the traditional "madwoman in the attic." Let her be imagined

this way by others; a grown woman! her life shut up! Never: she is simply "nervous," but . . . why all the suffering besides? "John does not know how much I really suffer," she says. "He knows there is no *reason* to suffer, and that satisfies him" (p. 14). Mary cannot begin to imagine, herself, what would "satisfy" her. She does not ask so much of fate; ergo, she will not name or choose, but rather involuntarily *enact* herself; despite repeated denials, she will become the unknown "other," a madwoman contained by attic bars and rings.

The nursery is the only theater available to those necessary operations of her psyche upon the monstrous creature she feels herself to be. That monstrous creature, moreover, is as helpless as a "baby." What is the baby to do? " 'Bless her little heart!' [says John] with a big hug, 'she shall be as sick as she pleases! . . . ' " (p. 24). But Mary is not satisfied to be "as sick as she pleases."

All of the physical ravages of her sickroom ("gnawed" bedpost [p. 34], "smooched" mopboard [p. 29], "scratched and gouged and splintered" floor [p. 17]) that consciously offend Mary's aesthetic sense, though mentioned only in a context of conscientious housewifely disgust, suggest infantile preoccupations as well as a deeply wounded sexuality.

The color is repellent, almost revolting; a smouldering unclean yellow. . . . (P. 13)

. . . the bloated curves and flourishes—a kind of "debased Romanesque" with *delirium tremens*—go waddling up and down in isolated columns of fatuity. (P. 20)

The outside pattern is a florid arabesque, reminding one of a fungus. If you can imagine a toadstool in joints, an interminable string of toadstools, budding and sprouting in endless convolutions—why, that is something like it. (P. 25)

Within these and other "pregnant" images is "something like" the ill-defined condition of any woman put in her "proper place"; not that she can properly admit as much. The design is "unclean," "bloated," "waddling," "wallowing," "florid," endlessly "budding and sprouting," like a monstrous, pale sub-vegetable, in the dark.

By analyzing the "sickening" images of "life" (plants, mushrooms, bulbous eyes, etc.) that seem to lurk behind the superfluously "barred" design of her paper, Mary begins to see through them to figures that seem to "creep" and "skulk" behind the "front design." One emblematic figure

of a woman appears in particular, "to shake the pattern, just as if she wanted to get out" (p. 23).

Mary increasingly comes under the hallucinatory power of this figure (a deformed version of "the angel in the house," and perhaps not unrelated to the deformed Angel presiding over Gilbert Pinfold's media of self-revelation). As much as she resents and fears this ghostly midwifely apparition, its anger and absurd vitality, she submits herself to this vision of the "other" and commits herself to "that woman's" release. In the end, to effect this, she must remove every vestige of paper from the walls, tearing at it first with her hands, at last with her teeth. Needless to say, the results in this case are not what the doctor ordered—not consciously anyway.

III. Gilbert the Filbert: Aboard the *Caliban* in a Nutshell

Gilbert Pinfold describes his berth on the SS *Caliban* in terms no less reminiscent of infancy than Mary's invention of a past for her "nursery." His first on-board sensation is of "rocking gently to and fro in his narrow bed." From this position he notes

a little window made of slats of opaque glass, fitted with tight, ornamental muslin curtains, and a sliding shutter. This gave, not on the sea, but on a deck where people from time to time passed, casting a brief shadow but with no sound that was audible above the beat of the engine, the regular creak of plates and woodwork and the continuous insect-hum of the ventilator. The ceiling, at which Mr. Pinfold gazed, was spanned as though by a cottage beam by a white, studded airshaft and by a multiplicity of pipes and electric cable. Mr. Pinfold lay for some time, gazing and rocking, not quite sure where he was but rather pleased than not to be there. (P. 44)

Such might be a premie's view from his incubator, a primitive theater allowing the baby a view of the shadowy incomprehensible movements of a world that is strangely nurturing, yet far from his sensible infant's grasp. Closely confined as he is, and "at sea," he is still presumably safe, buoyed up by a maternal (not yet infernal) machine.

The sort of "irritations" that Gilman's heroine attributes to indecent neglect of an old colonial mansion's interior design, Mr. Pinfold decides to attribute to "some trick or fault or war-time survival" (p. 65) of a multi-functional sound system. His cabin "throbs" and "thrills" with the con-

tinual racket of this "sound system" in a state of collapse; no longer a place of refuge and innocent entertainment, the cabin has "suddenly become a prison cell" (p. 62). Nevertheless, Mr. Pinfold will resort to this space throughout his ordeal, as he finds it comparatively "warm there and welcoming," finds he can "keep his vigil perfectly well below deck" (p. 93).

He hears, on one occasion, "a dramatic cycle" enacted outside his window, which he condemns as "grossly overplayed" (p. 94). On another, he hears "voices" singing about him, as "*Gilbert, the filbert, / The Colonel of the Knuts,*" taunting him:

"Come on, Gilbert. Time to leave your wooden hut." . . .

". . . Queer, aren't you, Gilbert? Come out of your wooden hut, you old queer." (P. 96)

By stages, Mr. Pinfold realizes that the "scenes" transmitted to him through the aged equipment of a military theater pertain most directly to his own survival and his own decayed "communications system." Here, he will "observe" certain threatening patterns and "hear" what he suspects he is not meant to hear from the other side of his bedroom wall.

Mr. Pinfold fears to speak of what he "overhears." He detects "mockery" in the attitude of his fellow passengers toward him, hears "obscene epithets" of which he is the subject, and is "silent with shame" upon noting apparent malice in the smiles that greet his attempts at friendly discourse. He seeks refuge in his cabin, intending to escape into the calm of a novel, only to be disturbed by a band rehearsing "primitive" music, the sort the Gestapo played (he overhears the bandleader explaining) to drive their prisoners mad (pp. 61-62).

On another of Mr. Pinfold's self-imposed retreats, just as he feels "possessed from outside himself with atavistic panic" and in fear of his own madness,

there broke not far from him in the darkness peal upon rising peal of mocking laughter— . . . an obscene cacophony of pure hatred. But it fell on Mr. Pinfold's ears at that moment like a nursery lullaby. (P. 142)

He is comforted in this case by his own "understanding," suddenly and defensively, that "they" are simply playing with the "defective wiring" in his cabin, that "somehow they had staged this whole charade to tease him" (p. 142). In childhood, after all, one learns to come to terms with

teasing; its satisfactions may be tormenting, but still more comforting than rejection—at least to a person obsessed with enfeebling lack of respect for his own being.⁵

The “obscene epithets” Mr. Pinfold overhears, with increasing frequency, expand into dialogues in which unseen fellow passengers or BBC broadcasters (over the “wireless”) air their opinions of him: as a bad writer, a drunk, a mean husband and father, a lecher, a liar, a braggart, one who is privileged by virtue of “trickery” or bribes; he is declared impotent, mad, suicidal, immoral—all in all “rather a nuisance for poor Captain Steerforth” (p. 149). He is most vulnerable to these bits of gossip, as his present (though medically sanctioned) dereliction of his professional and domestic responsibilities implies a grain of truth in each fault attributed to him. But there is worse to come: he is “accused,” beyond the common foibles and petty negligences that, exacerbated by illness, loom as major faults, of being entirely “other” than he is. To wit: a Jew, a debtor, a killer, a transvestite and homosexual; on one occasion,

everyone was talking about him, loudly and unashamedly, but not in his praise.

“That’s Gilbert Pinfold, the writer.”

“That common little man? It can’t be.”

“Have you read his books? He has a very *peculiar* sense of humour, you know.”

“He is very peculiar altogether. His hair is very long.”

“He’s wearing lip-stick.”

“He’s painted up to the eyes.”

“But he’s so shabby. . . .”

“There are different types of homosexual, you know. . . .” (P.

147)

Just as the hysterical wife in *The Yellow Wallpaper* must accept her doctor-husband’s designation of her as a silly goose who indulges too much in “fancies,” Mr. Pinfold outwardly accepts and allies himself with these dismissive responses to his behavior, while inwardly cherishing and developing his angst. By social decree, thus, the invalids in both stories are led to cultivate habits of deceit, Gilman’s heroine pretending to take prescribed naps while really studying the wallpaper, Mr. Pinfold writing happy notes to his wife from the ship where he feels his life is in danger, to the effect that he is “entirely cured” (p. 117).

IV. The Final Crossing of the Doctors . . . Over and Out?

Both the hero of *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* and the heroine of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, in the dark and alone, begin by holding to remnants of faith in those authorities in whom they cannot confide, but who are correctly perceived as having the power to condemn them, not just to social isolation, but to what is tantamount to death: creative impotence. The images evoked by both the wallpaper in the nursery and the communications aboard the *Caliban*, as "understood" by their invalid witnesses, present figures condemned to humiliating postures, postures that imply the limp, asexual helplessness of infancy and/or imminent death.

Mary, who has abandoned her own child (and mature sexuality) in her assumption of infantile helplessness, must, like Gilbert Pinfold, "see through" the implications of her dereliction of duty and "uprightness." She is condemned to see, behind the "bars" and ugly vegetative decay of her wallpaper, that "provoking, formless sort of figure" (p. 18), who "creeps along" and hides from whoever might see her in passing. Mary doesn't blame her, as "it must be very humiliating to be caught creeping by daylight!" (p. 31).

As for the wall beneath the wallpaper, once she gets down to it:

There is a very funny mark on this wall, low down, near the mopboard. A streak that runs round the room. It goes behind every piece of furniture, except the bed, a long, straight, even *smooch*, as if it had been rubbed over and over.

I wonder how it was done and who did it, and what they did it for. Round and round and round—round and round and round—it makes me dizzy! (P. 29)

As a matron of the middle class, it may be her duty to oversee the mechanical tasks of cleaning the house from top to bottom, but having forsaken this duty, she now finds herself on her hands and knees, in actual contact with the "dirt" and the evidence of its continual subjection to the harassments of the mop. The weird "smooch" that finally mesmerizes her is evidence of repeated physical contact of an unpleasant nature, a sign of bondage to the removal of other, inadmissible evidence. She is bound to it now, not as responsible wife, but as curious investigator, as if she were an unenlightened savage visitor, or a very small child.

We may safely assume that Mary does not consider herself engaged in "flights of sexual fantasy,"—Heaven (not to mention John) forbid!—but "something" about that wallpaper, so ill hung above the "smooch"

beneath it, so smelly, so fascinating, so dangerously suggestive of entrapment and physical deformities, keeps her in its power. Engaging in an occupational therapy that has been forbidden, Mary is in constant fear of "discovery." Naturally, she suspects her sister-in-law and appointed caretaker, Jennie, is capable of the same deceit, that she may not only have seen the "wallpaper" including its hidden messages, for herself, but that she may have secretly "read" the forbidden writing and has correctly interpreted it as treating something shameful.

I caught Jennie with her hand on it once. . . .

Then she said that the paper stained everything it touched, that she had found yellow smooches on all my clothes and John's, and she wished we would be more careful!

Did not that sound innocent? (P. 27)

Not so innocently, Mary has got a rope hidden in her room, and this gives her some comfort, as anything hidden from John and Jennie is felt to be a sign of her separateness from them and her power to control her own life. She considers using her rope to tie "the woman" behind the wallpaper in place, prevent her "escape." Or, of course, she could hang herself. Whatever she does, she knows, will be an exposure, a giving up of her freedom to imagine her fate in solitude. Her problem is not so much *whether* to let her self be discovered in its new "mad" state, because it will be in any case, but *how* she wants that self to be seen in the end.

Mary regards the end of her "vacation" and the return to simulation that will be required of her as a fearful prospect, more fearful even than her relegation to the attic in the first place.

It is so pleasant to . . . creep around as I please!

I don't want to go outside. . . .

For outside you have to creep on the ground. . . .

But here I can creep smoothly on the floor, and my shoulder just fits in that long smooch around the wall, so I cannot lose my way. (P. 35)

By the time Mary invites her doctor-husband to discover her in the act of creeping by daylight, of course, she is beyond humiliation.

"What is the matter?" [John] cried. "For God's sake, what are you doing!"

I kept on creeping just the same, but I looked at him over my shoulder.

"I've got out at last," said I, "in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!"

Now why should that man have fainted? But he did, and right across my path by the wall, so that I had to creep over him every time! (P. 36)

The end of Mr. Pinfold's ordeal, naturally, is differently submissive and subversive; similarly both, as well. In the end, Angel offers to "switch off the apparatus" if Mr. Pinfold will just keep quiet about the whole affair: "Tell your wife you had noises in the head through taking those grey pills [prescribed by Dr. Drake]" (p. 221). He refuses the bargain. He tells, and eventually the voices stop. Dr. Drake diagnoses what he understands of the case as "a perfectly simple case of poisoning" (p. 231), yet

[Mr. Pinfold] knew, and the others did not know—not even his wife, least of all his medical adviser—that he had endured a great ordeal and, unaided, had emerged the victor. There was a triumph to be celebrated, even if a mocking slave stood always beside him in his chariot reminding him of mortality. (P. 231)

Is this "mocking slave" the final minister of angelic cures? A creeping femininity shaken loose from her bars? The last Aesculapian minister to be crossed, to have crossed over the bars from the "other" side of creation, to add his cynical two bits to his author's renewed task of creation? Whoever this figure is, this vestige is *in* the text for good, and in mocking may be giving a necessary blessing as well.

The literal doctors who appear in these novels are minor, or at most shadowy, figures; yet their haunting or hallucinatory pervasiveness as strains of "authority" prove richly susceptible to crossing with certain strains of "authorship." In the end, we might look to works such as these for evidence that organic and possibly fertile hybrids do occasionally spring up in the hedgerows between the fields of medicine and literature.

NOTES

1. The page numbers that will follow quotations from these texts refer to the following editions: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899; reprint, Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press, 1973); and Evelyn Waugh, *The Ordeal of Gilbert Pinfold* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1957).

2. Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: An Autobiography* (1935; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972), 96.

3. Gilman proceeded to write not only fiction, but many seminal feminist and socioeconomic studies; in addition, she single-handedly founded and edited a journal called *The Forerunner*, and became nationally prominent as lecturer and teacher.

4. "Now there is a certain class of human beings upon whom not a god, indeed, but a stern goddess—Necessity—has laid the task of giving an account of what they suffer and what they enjoy. These people are the neurotics; among other things they have to confess their phantasies to the physician. . . . [A]nd we have later found good reason to suppose that our patients tell us about themselves nothing that we could not also hear from healthy people." Sigmund Freud, "The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming" (1908), from Sigmund Freud, *On Creativity and the Unconscious: Papers on the Psychology of Art, Literature, Love, Religion*, ed. Benjamin Nelson (New York: Harper and Row, 1958), 47.

5. It does not seem farfetched to compare this "scene" with one in *The Yellow Wallpaper*, where Mary faces the barred windows and "rings and things in the walls," the patches of paper "stripped off" around the bed, the floor "scratched and gouged," the plaster "dug out here and there," and attributes these signs of an attic madhouse to "such ravages as the children have made" (pp. 12, 17). The specific comfort, in both cases, is the memory that children are *allowed* such sadistic behavior, and are allowed to be *satisfied* by it; children, unlike "mad" adults, are not rejected by society merely due to their being the agents or objects of destructive fantasies. The hysteric or obsessive neurotic, consciously or unconsciously, may lull herself or himself by "remembering" (or imagining, here amounting to the same thing) that "this is just a stage" that the unfortunate room has passed through; or "just a stage" that one's unfortunately childish fellow passengers recall; these damages, unlike the damages of true "madness," may be understood, survived.