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Master thesis

"A self is always becoming"

A Narrative Analysis of Carrie Meeber and Edna Pontellier's Selves

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Abstract

The thesis analyzes and compares how the narrators of *The Awakening* (1899), by Kate Chopin, and *Sister Carrie* (1900), by Theodore Dreiser, represent the selves of the novels' two protagonists, Edna Pontellier and Carrie Meeber. It bases its analysis on Dorrit Cohn's concept of psycho-narration, a narrative technique for representing consciousness in a text. The thesis also utilizes selected theories of the "self" to more fully perceive the subtle nuances and detailed aspects of Carrie and Edna's selves. When discussing Carrie's self, the thesis uses Thorstein Veblen's concept of "pecuniary emulation" and theory on action-based desire. It does so to examine her mental life and how it inspires action intended to create her self. When discussing Edna's self, the thesis uses theory on emotional detachment caused by repression to examine how her self both relies on and is constituted by emotional reactions and a desire for romantic fusion.

Furthermore, the analysis investigates how aspects of narrative technique such as indirect and direct characterization, consonance and dissonance in psycho-narration, internal and external focalization and narrative meditation can create different narrative representations of literary selves. To show the importance of psycho-narration in the texts, the thesis compares the narrators' representations. A comparison permits the reader to see how the literary devices shape and create different portrayals of literary selves. It brings forth and enhances our perception of the subtle differences in the narrators' representations.

Given that little research has been conducted on literary selves in naturalist novels and how characters are represented, the thesis also seeks to cover new ground by combining a focus on psycho-narration and with the selected theories of the self. Despite naturalist texts sometimes being considered as inept at rendering consciousness, the thesis shows that *Sister Carrie* and *The Awakening* offer nuanced representations of literary selves.

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1   Introduction

In *Sister Carrie* (1900), Carrie Meeber's quest for a self suggests a close bond between external circumstances and the psychological acquisition of a self. The formation of Carrie's self suggests an active process, Karl F. Zender remarks, "a dialectic of character and circumstance" (64) in which she contributes to the psychological formation of a self. This self consists of a consciousness and an identity. Inquiries exist on how she does so, such as that she seeks to attain an "achieved" identity by assuming "an array of rewarding possible further identities" (Zender 65). She is able to do so since she imagines a future self for herself that she aspires to realize and attain, imposing her mental construction of it onto reality. External objects inspire the mental construction, as Carrie often desires to attain, the narrator of *Sister Carrie* remarks, what the "more expensively dressed people" (34) have. At the end, she has "attained that which in the beginning seemed life's object," and she could "look about on her gowns and carriage, her furniture and bank account'" (354). At the end, she becomes an "illustration of the devious ways by which one who feels [desire], rather than reasons, may be lead in the pursuit of beauty" (354).

Edna Pontellier's quest for a self is, similarly, modulated by external circumstances that "both motivate and frustrate her search for capable selfhood" (Glendening 41). Among these external circumstances are contemporary conventions of female sexuality. Women were, as Chopin writes, to assume the role of the "mother-woman" (26), "women who idolized their children, worshiped their husbands, and esteemed it a holy privilege to efface themselves as individuals and grow wings as ministering angels" (26). This notion of motherhood omits female sexuality, and it arguably reveals an embedded fear of it. The notion caused women to repress their sexual desires. Edna's emotional detachment from her "world within" (32) may be interpreted as a consequence of repression caused by this very notion. Her ensuing emotional and sexual isolation compel Edna to "seek further roles" (Gray 66) that elicit inner passion to create a self. Edna's self relies on external forces that provokes her "world within" (32).

Much of the current academic inquiry that focuses on the selves of Carrie and Edna seemingly restricts its attention to how they are created in circumstance, omitting how the dynamic between the circumstances and their selves is portrayed narratively. This arguably misses an interesting point: namely, how what transpires in their selves in their circumstances, and the mutual affect the self and circumstance have on each other, is represented narratively. The lack of inquiry as to how this dynamic between their selves and the external is portrayed

may not fully enable one to understand the complex bond between Carrie and Edna's selves and their circumstances. The complex bond encompasses how the external modulates and shapes their selves, and what mental processes the external initiates in their selves. How this is portrayed narratively enhances how one perceives their selves, and how one understands the dynamic itself. Although several scholars have examined Carrie and Edna's selves, not much has been conducted to show how they are represented narratively, dismissing and neglecting the effect the portrayal itself has on the text. Narrative technique constitutes an imperative part in portraying selves and the development of them. As Luc Herman and Bert Vervaeck writes, a crucial aspect of the representation of selves "concerns the ways in which the characters' statements and thoughts appear in the text" (23). Essential to the representation is "the relationship between the representing agent and the one who is being represented" (23). Critics resolve to investigate Dreiser's authorial presence,[1] while *The Awakening* has been subjected to interpretation by using free-indirect discourse to examine the relationship between Edna and Chopin (*author-character relationship*).[2] However, how their selves are represented remains little investigated.

This thesis seeks to examine how the selves of Carrie and Edna are represented narratively, arguing that the narrative portrayals of their selves illuminate and constitute a part in how they develop and can better explain their behavior. *Psycho-narration*, which represents a character's consciousness, can enable the reader to fully and better comprehend the mental processes that transpire in Carrie and Edna's selves, as well as their dynamic with their circumstances. The thesis sustains this point. It uses Dorrit Cohn's concept of psycho-narration, a third-person representation of consciousness, when discussing their selves.

Though primarily an analysis of the psycho-narration the narrators use to represent their heroines' selves, the thesis also uses theory of action-based desire to analyze the representation of Carrie's self. Action-based desire is a philosophical theory that emphasizes the importance of a mental construction of the object of one's desire as a motivating force behind behavior (Schroeder, par. 1.1-1.2). The thesis also uses Thorstein Veblen's

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[1] See William J. Handy, "A Re-examination of Dreiser's Sister Carrie" *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 3 (1959), 380-393, and Thomas P. Riggio, "Carrie's Blues" in Donald Pizer ed. *New Essays on Sister Carrie* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 23-42. Handy's article remarks that *Sister Carrie*'s point of view is what enables Dreiser not merely to "depict the world through the eyes of this or that character, but to infuse the novel with his own presence." This "presence," to Handy, is "something more," as Dreiser explains, justifies and interprets the characters' actions, rendering him not merely an authorial, but also an omnipresent entity in the text. Riggio's article makes several observations concerning Dreiser's presence in *Sister Carrie*, one of which is that he "set out to write a different and subtler story." This needed a more complex, nuanced psychology than a physiological analysis could account for. To Riggio, Dreiser achieves this new psychological story by instilling his own presence, thus maintaining a "tenacious attachment to . . . [the] tangible" world of the novel.

[2] See Mary Cuff, "Edna's Sense of an Ending: A Rhetorical Analysis of Chopin's Use of Narrative in *The Awakening*" *Mississippi Quarterly* 3 (2016), 327-345. Cuff employs Phelan and Rabinowitz's theory of maintaining a distinction between the actual author and the implied author (the fictive voice assumed by the author) and characters who control the narrative. In doing so, she argues that Edna seeks to craft a narrative "free from limitations," allowing the implied author to "subtly prefigure a particular end."

sociological concept of "pecuniary emulation," a theory that sees comparison and emulation as responses as central to the creation of a self (Veblen 28). The theories of action-based desire and Veblen's pecuniary emulation provides a framework that can better bring forth the nuances in the narrators' use of psycho-narration that contribute to the representation. When it discusses the portrayal of Edna' self, the thesis uses the theory of emotional detachment from one's self as brought about by repression. The theory of emotional detachment permits the psycho-narration to fully illuminate how Edna's self is depicted. The theories add psychological, sociological and philosophical levels to the psycho-narration, so that it can illuminate how Carrie and Edna's selves are crafted and develop, complementing each other to enhance the analysis and sustain the argument throughout.

The theories of Action-based desire and Thorstein Veblen's concept of "pecuniary emulation," both of which will be used when discussing *Sister Carrie*, will interact with the psycho-narration analysis by being used together throughout the thesis, as opposed to using them separately. Doing so would arguably prevent the reader from fully understanding how the narrative technique employed by Dreiser represents Carrie's self. The theory of emotional detachment caused by repression, which will be used when discussing *The Awakening*, serves the same purpose as the theories employed to analyze *Sister Carrie*; here, that is to enable the reader to fully understand how the narrative technique employed by Chopin represents Edna's self. *Psycho-narration* as a narrative technique restricts its attention to representing the consciousness (a self, for instance) of a literary character, meaning that it renders itself beneficial to a thesis that focuses on the selves of two characters. Psycho-narration also enables us to understand how the selves of Carrie and Edna are characterized (*characterization*) by the narrators. The analysis of their psycho-narration may thus enable the reader to access the representation of their selves more when combined with the psychological, sociological and philosophical as opposed to when applied separately.

The thesis, however, is not a psychological or sociological reading of the novels, but rather aspires to employ the theories to show how representation is achieved; that is, how the narrators render representations of the selves through psycho-narration, how they achieve portraying Carrie and Edna through it and how the respective theories are evident in the representations themselves. By doing so, the thesis demonstrates the effects the narrator constitutes on the portrayal of literary characters.

To explore this, the thesis narrows its focus within psycho-narration to the character-narrator relationship of Carrie and Edna, using concepts such as *dissonance/consonance, unrestricted access and cognitive privilege*, *indirect* and *direct characterization*, *the*

narrator's authorial narration and *internal* and *external focalization*. When the thesis analyzes Carrie's self, it focuses on how the narrator's actual representation of her self's desire for material wealth can reveal how it modulates and develops her self, as well as how it serves as the incentive behind her actions. When it analyzes Edna's self, the thesis focuses on how the narrator's actual representation of how her self experiences the emotional detachment caused by her repression, and how it influences her behavior.

This thesis chooses *The Awakening* and *Sister Carrie* as its main sources of inquiry because they share narrative similarities and differences. Both novels give accounts of how the protagonists develop their selves, and the narrative techniques as used by the narrators play an important role in the reader's understanding of their selves. By analyzing the narrators' use of psycho-narration, one may better understand how their selves develop and, by extension, how their consciousness is represented. *The Awakening* and *Sister Carrie* are also naturalist novels. Naturalist novels are often seen as inept or inadequate in providing portrayals of consciousness (Pitoniak 64-66). Recent trends in naturalist studies show that critics gradually focus more on consciousness in naturalist fiction to refute this claim, and this thesis seeks to contribute in this field of academic inquiry. Few analyses use narrative theory to explore the representation of consciousness in the novels, and naturalist novels are not examined often with regards to narrative representation of consciousness. This thesis seeks to add academic inquiry to narrative studies and studies that examine consciousness in naturalist texts.

1.1 Reception history and previous narrative studies

The Awakening was highly controversial upon its release. At the time of its publication, the novel received negative reviews because of its overt and explicit treatment of female sexuality at a time when it was condemned and repressed in the collective consciousness. Sex was not portrayed explicitly in literature. It was also written by a female author, which made it more controversial, given that female authors were rarely published (even when they used pseudonyms). *Chicago Times-Herald* (1899) described the novel as "sex fiction," stating that "this is not a pleasant story" (9). *Los Angeles Sunday-Times* (1899) contended that the story was "unhealthily introspective and morbid" (408), dealing with the sexual desire of an upper-class woman. During the 1890s, social commentator Amelia E. Barr contributed a series of social commentaries to the *North American Review* (1815-present), to which Henry James and Walt Whitman contributed. In it, she expressed her fears concerning women's roles in society (592). Writing about the "erotic-sensational novel," a novel that examines "demi-nude" and "demi-monde experiences," she explained that it "deserves unqualified anger and disgust," as

it "sap[s] all moral perceptions and teach only one lesson – that we may sin" (592). *The Awakening* arguably qualifies as an "erotic-sensational novel." It received negative reviews for its portrayal of sexual experiences acquired by a woman. Yet, it is today considered a landmark feminist text, particularly for its exploration of self-ownership over the body, a central tenant of first-wave feminism (1848-1920). Feminist critics, such as Ann Heilmann, have devoted time to discuss the novel's influence on feminist literature, noting that it played a part in introducing the New Woman – women who were intelligent, educated, emancipated, independent and self-supporting – and placing emphasis on self-ownership over the body (Heilmann 4).

Sister Carrie, however, received positive reviews, and most of the objections it received were restricted to the its "gloomy picture of life" (Salzman 124). The *Indianapolis News*, Salzman writes, acknowledged "that 'Sister Carrie' was true to an unhappy side of life and told of a common experience, nevertheless objected to the fact that it was 'unrelieved by a single ray of sunshine'" (qtd. in Salzman 124). Even so, *Sister Carrie* received praise for the characters of Carrie, Drouet and Hurstwood. The *Toledo Blade* (1900) "conceded that Carrie, Hurstwood, and Drouet were skillfully drawn, and that the novel 'is a faithful portraiture of the conditions it represents, showing how the tangle of human life is knotted thread by thread'" (qtd. in Salzman 124). However, critics who objected to the portrayal of life in the urban city, as presented in *Sister Carrie*, acknowledged the author's skills as a realist. Contrary to *The Awakening*, *Sister Carrie* received positive reviews for its realist style and complex characters. Contemporary writer Frank Norris also praised *Sister Carrie*, writing that "it was the best novel I have read" (Norris 113). The novel is, as Donald Pizer writes, "universally recognized as a major American" and naturalist novel (Pizer ix). Today, scholars have discussed the issue of moral consciousness and Carrie and Hurstwood's selves. Leon F. Seltzer has analyzed how the character of Carrie illuminates emotional longing and relatedness to others, arguing that it is "central to her character and dramatized throughout the narrative" (192). Critics have also employed *Sister Carrie* to refute the belief that naturalist fiction provides inadequate or inept portrayals of moral consciousness. Thomas Pitoniak does so by writing about the characters' difficulties in acquiring moral conscience and consciousness, remarking that "the distinctions between American realism and naturalism have been given at least one sharper edge as critics have discussed the increasing tenuousness of moral agency" (65-66). Pitoniak seeks to designate moral conscience in the text, refuting the notion about naturalism's inept depiction of conscience.

Evidently, the reception history of the novels reveals that attention has been dedicated primarily to their psychological aspects, realist styles, feminism and/or naturalism. The novels are considered landmark fiction for their astute psychological insight, style (naturalist or feminist), but the narrative portrayal of their selves remain little attended to. Yet, there are some narrative studies conducted on Dreiser's authorial subjective presence in *Sister Carrie*, most notably Alan Trachtenberg's (Trachtenberg 88-122), and Chopin's use of free-indirect discourse and how it enabled *The Awakening* to "deliver the first modern American female artist onto the American cultural landscape" (Xianfeng Mou 103-120). These, however, do not discuss the depiction of Carrie and Edna's selves.

Previous narrative research on *Sister Carrie* interprets how the novel portray its world and characters, and behavior as motivated by circumstance. Critics of representation focus on revealing details, self-contradictory passages, and descriptions of railroad journeys, city streets, and department stores. "They," Trachtenberg observes, "seek patterns - of motion, performance, speech, characterization, and have opened the texture of the text to new meticulous investigation" (88).

On *Sister Carrie*, narrative analyses focus primarily on Dreiser's subjective presence in the text and his personal life. Trachtenberg's essay discusses Dreiser's subjective presence, observing that he fuses himself with the characters' consciousness (102), which enables Dreiser to access the "unconscious, inarticulate, real feelings, [and] the working[s] of the mind of the other" (101). Trachtenberg claims that Dreiser gives attention to the mind and consciousness, and mental processes. He restricts his analysis to the form of *Sister Carrie*, employing it to show how it invented "a new way of telling a new American story - a new form for a new content" (88). Thomas P. Riggio discusses Dreiser's use of biography, contending that he implements memoirs and biographical details to represent and chronicle the characters (30). Dreiser instills himself into the characters' mental lives, rendering a new style of storytelling. Paul Giles argues that Dreiser's style "became a necessary touchstone for a certain kind of literary sensitivity" (48).

Yet, most of these studies resonate with how Dreiser, not the narrator, presents the characters and their behavior, and how the mental lives/consciousness constitutes a part of his writing style. The studies that are devoted to consciousness are still concerned with the externalities, employing them to discover how much attention the narrator devotes to what each character is conscious of and know of the other's mind. As such, they focus on the external and how it affects consciousness, but not how consciousness affects the character's perception of the external. This trend, focusing on the external to render meaning to the

internal, and not vice versa, mirrors an academic trend. Critics who interpret naturalist texts have often considered them as being inadequate or inept in representing consciousness as an internal entity (Pizer, "Dreiser and the Naturalistic Drama of Consciousness," 202). Consciousness is thus not a separate entity that effects how one perceives the external, but modulated and shaped by it, as characters of naturalist novels (like Maggie from *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* by Stephen Crane and McTeague from *McTeague* by Frank Norris, for example) are occupied by the struggle to survive in a hostile universe. This struggle reflects the character's inner condition. Few narrative studies have been conducted on how narrative techniques portray consciousness and selfhood as distinct internal entities.

Narrative studies on *The Awakening* often assume a feminist angle. Xianfeng Mou, for example, focuses on free indirect discourse to argue that "Chopin's purpose behind her techniques was to deliver the first modern American female artist onto the American cultural landscape" (103). Free indirect discourse merges character and narrator, enabling him/her to represent what a character is thinking or speaking while simultaneously indicating the his/her attitude toward the character. She sets out to demonstrate how Chopin uses free indirect discourse to illuminate and represent Edna's emotional and sexual awakening. Mou claims that free indirect discourse enables us to see that Edna "grows" closer to the narrator throughout the novel. Although Edna remains oblivious to her circumstances in the beginning, the narrator conveys crucial information about her development of selfhood and her situation. In focusing on free indirect discourse, however, Mou arguably restricts her attention to the narrator's fondness of Edna, and how Edna grows closer to her. Feminist narrative criticism on *The Awakening* often devotes its attention to the narrator's growing fondness of Edna as her sexual awakening intensifies and self-actualizes. As Edna assumes more ownership of her body, the narrator expresses increasingly sympathy and fondness, dismissing her previous critical view of her. This captures a criticism of feminist analyses of *The Awakening* often given by other critics: the narrator imbues her narration with the desire that Edna should awaken and assume ownership of her body. The analysis excludes how her self is portrayed. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese claims that the novel is not necessarily concerned with Edna's awakening as a social matter, however, but rather a "private and [exclusively] psychological matter" (Fox-Genovese 35). She argues that Chopin was not interested in social issues, like destructive conventions of female sexuality, but rather in the fundamental parts of a woman's nature. Fox-Genovese's analysis does not participate in the trend of contending that the novel is a polemic against phallocentric society. Mou's analysis use of free indirect discourse aligns

with the trend, causing her to arguably dismiss how Edna's self is portrayed in her circumstances.

Stewart Smith and Ruth Sullivan's essay observes that criticism of the novel claim that Chopin both sympathized with her heroine and on the whole presented her story objectively. Kate Chopin sympathized with Edna, but she did not pity her (63). Chopin, they argue, dramatizes two contradictory narratives (72). The first is critical of Edna's growing narcissistic sexual awakening. This narrative views Edna with detachment and assumes a critical judicial viewpoint of her behavior. Here, Edna is as an eccentric woman with significant issues admirably dealt with and yet she is seen as a narcissistic, thoughtless and self-destructive woman. The second is fond and sympathetic. Here, Edna's quest for sexual liberty is supported, even encouraged by the narrator and the *implied author*. An implied author is the fictive voice assumed by the author who wrote the text, and it may coincide with the actual author who wrote the text. The first narrative implies that identification between Kate Chopin and Edna is not necessarily encouraged, as it distorts Chopin's incentive, which is, according to Stewart and Smith, to dramatize to contradicting narratives on Edna's sexual awakening. This reading refutes Mou's.

Yet, not many inquiries exist on the importance of the narrative representations themselves in *Sister Carrie* and *The Awakening*. *Sister Carrie* has been discussed as a naturalist and psychological novel, but narrative analyses restrict attention to Dreiser's presence, attributing it to his writing style or refuting the claim that naturalism is inept at exploring consciousness. *The Awakening* is often subjected to interpretations that discusses the narrator's covert criticism of or fondness for Edna. The critical analyses emphasize the narrator's detached state, but do not focus on the type of narration Chopin uses. Feminist interpretations attribute that narrator to the novel's depiction of Edna's sexual awakening.

Evidently, little investigation has been conducted on how narrative technique enhances the depictions of the heroine's selves, as well as on how the relationship between their selves and the external is portrayed. Selfhood constitutes a significant concept in the novels, meaning that investigating it could illuminate the works and contribute new perspectives on already-existing discussions, such as on Dreiser's authorial subjective presence in *Sister Carrie* and Chopin's attitudes towards Edna. This thesis seeks to build upon existing academic inquires and, hopefully, bring forth new perspectives.

Both *The Awakening* and *Sister Carrie* are well-suited for carrying out the premise of the thesis. They give accounts on self and selfhood, but few studies have been conducted into how the narrators' narrative techniques convey their selves and enable them to achieve their

representations. Furthermore, the novels represent two different heroines with different selves. Narrative technique plays a vital part in achieving the different representations of the literary selves. Examining the techniques used by the narrators can illustrate the significance they have when used by the narrator to represent their heroines. The thesis also hopes to refute the claim that naturalist novels are inept at representing consciousness – a notion that may exist exactly because there are so few narrative studies on naturalist texts, especially on self and selfhood.

1.2   Theory on the "self"

Since the thesis focuses on literary characters, the philosophical definition of a self serves as the framework throughout it. Kristján Kristjánsson observes that, philosophically, the self is perceived "to be some sort of a mental entity . . . – the locus of moral agency (hence a 'moral self'), representing a conscious feeler, thinker and doer, with certain character traits that differentiate it from other selves" (26). The definition claims that a self encompasses moral agency, conscious feelings, behavior and distinct traits that distinguishes one's self from other's selves. Implied in the observation is that a self can be cultivated and acquired – one can employ feelings to heighten consciousness, utilize behavior to interpret moral values, acquire an understanding of oneself by interpreting feelings and emotional responses to circumstances, and use emotions as incentives behind behavior. A self might also be adjusted, as it depends on emotional and psychological responses to the external and internal, which can alter, depending on the environment. Hence, a self is arguably intertwined with relative forces, and it develops in accordance with the forces, suggesting a mutual dependency between a self and the relative, what Chopin called, "world within and about" (32). This can cause a self to be fragile. Henceforth, the definition outlined above serves as the theoretical framework.

Since the philosophical definition implies that a self can be self-created, the thesis uses theories from psychology, philosophy and sociology. The thesis uses the philosophical theory of action-based desire and sociological theory of "pecuniary emulation" when discussing *Sister Carrie*. The theory of action-based desire and sociologist Veblen's theory on "pecuniary emulation" provide a way to better understand her self and its workings, and the theories also make it more accessible to understand how her self is represented. The theories also resonate with the definition of a self that informs the analysis. To provide a framework to better understand the representation of Edna's self in *The Awakening*, the thesis utilizes theory on emotional detachment caused by repression. By doing so, the thesis restricts its attention to

how what transpires within Edna is represented. The theory offers a way to see how her inner workings, which often manifests itself in behavior, is represented in the text.

Even though this theory on the "self" and the theories outlined below are intended to be applied to "real" persons, they can enhance our understanding of the characters' self and how the representations of them in the novels contribute to the characterizations and representations of their selves. The theories may enable the reader to see the subtle nuances of the characterization of Edna and Carrie's selves and how they contribute to the meaning they acquire through their representations. By applying the theories, the thesis builds upon existing inquires on *Sister Carrie* and *The Awakening*. The thesis employs theories that focus more on the characters as opposed to how the societies they live in affect their selves. Much of the interpretations that have been provided on the texts employ theories that analyze how their selves develop in accordance with circumstances (i.e. an analysis of the characters in social contexts).

The theory of action-based desire holds that desires are "mental states that have the function of producing actions, rather than mental states that merely dispose agents to act" (Schroeder, par. 1.1-1.2). Mental states compel the individual to act, but the actions themselves may not satisfy the desire or realize it. The mental construction of what one desires inspires actions, serving as the incentive of the actions. As such, the mental construction of what one desires enables one to imagine it and act to attain it. Mental construction of desire is a decisive part of producing actions, motivating a person to bring about the mental construction (Schroeder, par. 1.1-1.2). Yet the actions taken can be ill-suited and produce unwanted outcomes. Ill-suited actions, which produce unwanted results, can nevertheless enable a person to remodel the mental construction of what one desires, compelling the person to continually adjusting it. Thus, the construction is relative and depends on stimulus, meaning that desire is not autonomous or static. Mental constructions are the foundation in action-based desire.

The mental constructions, however, may emanate from a source. Sociologist Thorstein Veblen's theories of "pecuniary emulation" provides, according to Clare Virginia Eby, insight into what inspires the mental constitutions that motivate behavior (1). In chapter II of *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Veblen outlines his theory of "pecuniary emulation" (29). Veblen maintains that a person's economic efforts to surpass a rich person's socioeconomic status by exhibiting wealth is a driving force in human behavior. To do so, a person compares himself/herself with others (objects) and emulates them in response. Veblen calls the comparison invidious; that is, "a process of valuation of persons in respect of worth" (39).

Invidious comparison provides esteem to the self. "The invidious comparison," Veblen writes, "becomes primarily a comparison of the owner with the other members of the group" (33). Humans compares one's self to others economically and emulate them. The invidious comparison becomes a matter of social comparison. "As the possession of property becomes the basis of popular esteem, therefore, it becomes also a requisite to the complacency which we call self-respect," Veblen observes, giving "rise to a new standard of sufficiency and a new pecuniary classification of one's self as compared with one's neighbors" (35). In the invidious comparison, the differences between one's self and the subject of comparison are made conscious. In response to this, one emulates the subject of comparison to enhance personal values. As the self-regarding differences between "man and man reach fuller consciousness, the propensity for achievement – the instinct of workmanship – tends more and more to shape itself into a straining to excel others in pecuniary achievement" (38). Yet, "The invidious comparison can never become so favorable to the individual making it that he would not gladly rate himself still higher relatively to his competitors in the struggle for pecuniary reputability" (36). As such, the self is relative and flexible, deriving meaning from the objects it seeks to emulate. A self, to Veblen, is given meaning through comparison and by emulating the objects it desires to surpass others. To Dreiser, a person emulates, "the innate trend of the mind" (34), and compares her/himself to persons "more expensively dressed" (34). Thus, one self-constructs a self by emulation, rendering it modulated by external circumstances (material objects, affluent persons) that give meaning to it.

The theory of emotional detachment caused by repression may be relevant to examine the representation of Edna's self. Clinically, emotional repression refers to a maladaptive (harmful) coping style that inhibits a person from "the experience and the expression of negative feelings or unpleasant cognitions in order to prevent one's positive self-image from being threatened" (Garssen 471). When a person with repressive tendencies experiences painful emotions or urges that threaten to tarnish the existing self, he or she, as opposed to examining them, represses them to regulate the emotions. Emotions are frequently employed to describe or render cohesion to one's self. As such, emotions are often a source of identity, whether they are immediate and instinctive, or painful and ominous. Repression is a maladaptive defense-mechanism against what an established self, complete or incomplete, perceives as threatening or distressing. The psychological repercussions of emotional repression are dire, as "this coping style may impoverish intimate social interactions and may in the long run have a negative impact on the person's own functioning" (Garssen 473). Because of the apparent lack of emotional awareness and psychological insight into one's

self, the person might genuinely perceive themselves as possessing few emotions, and the emotional responses to external forces might be perceived as confusing and ominous, even menacing. A person may thus experience difficulties in assigning meaning to emotional stimulus or immediate emotional experiences, especially because he/she are "(partly) aware of . . . or unaware of" (Garssen 473) their psychological world within.

Consequently, a person can suffer emotional detachment from their world within. Emotional detachment, according to Timothy J. Legg, "refers to the inability of a person to fully engage with feelings of their own or those of others," asserting that it "may interfere with a person's physical, psychological, emotional, and social development" (Legg). The condition centers on an inability to render meaning and cohesion to feelings, perceiving them as akin to an alien entity emanating from within. The condition can be an intermittent response to situation, entailing difficulties in intimate emotional and sexual relationships. Thus, emotional detachment can interfere not merely in intimate relationships with others, but also the relationship with one has with one's self (feelings, perceptions). Not only can emotions and emotional responses constitute an alien entity within oneself, but they may also be an alien presence in relationships, causing confusion and frustration.

Concurrently as emotional detachment can stem for a specific situation, it can also be generated by an underlying psychological condition or early childhood experiences, such as abuse, neglect and/or loss of a parent (Legg). Childhood experiences affect an adult's emotional cognition (that is, the ability to recognize and interpret others' emotions and to interpret one's own feelings correctly) and attachment style (i.e., avoidant and anxious, for example). However, by permitting oneself to experience repressed emotions, one can create a self that permits itself to experience contradictions and painful states, enabling one to access the world within. Inner emotional awareness entails social awareness, which cause a person to be able to astutely comprehend what transpires "around" one. This theory can enable one to better analyze and interpret the behavior of Edna, providing a foundation for further narrative analysis that helps accessing Edna's self and the narrative technique utilized to portray it.

1.3   Narrative theory: Psycho-narration

Both *Sister Carrie* and *The Awakening* are narrated from a third-person point of view, with the narrator being omniscient, enabling them to provide insight into Carrie and Edna's psychological/emotional processes that ensue as they attempt to self-create their selves.

A central problem of consciousness representation centers on the relationship between the representing agent and the character being represented (Herman and Vervaeck 23). If a narrator represents a character's thoughts, the reader may be inclined to believe that the

character's actual ideas and thoughts are represented, "while in fact he or she may only get formulations and opinions belonging to the narrator, who paraphrases the ideas in question" (Herman and Vervaeck 23).

Dorrit Cohn distinguishes two modes of representing consciousness, entailing two different relationships between narrator and character. The narrator who represents consciousness can coincide with the character whose thoughts he represents (first-person). Second, the narrator who represents consciousness can differ from the character whose thoughts are represented (third-person).

Third-person representation encompass three types of narration, one of which is *psycho-narration*. Psycho-narration enables the narrator to represent the character's consciousness through an unrestricted access to the character's mental life (Cohn 100), and it delves into the mind of the character, but with the narrator's ability to discern the characters' thoughts while using his own language to do so. As psycho-narration centers on the narrator having access to the character's mental life, conveying it to the reader and effecting how it is depicted, this thesis seeks to investigate how it is used by the narrators.

In psycho-narration, an omniscient narrator presents a character's consciousness without literally quoting. The characters' unconscious can be represented since the narrator has unrestricted access to their interior selves, rendering the method "the only way to render the emotions and thoughts of which the character is not aware" (Herman and Vervaeck 24). Yet, the border between the reporting narrator and the represented character often becomes a difficult distinction, since the narrator can, for example, be ironic when reporting on characters' interior life. The relationship between the narrator and character can be illustrated on a scale between *dissonance* (lack of agreement) and *consonance*. A narrator can be at odds with the thoughts and statements of the character, entertain doubts and develop uncertainties concerning the character's mental life. However, the dissonance does not necessarily insinuate that the narrator distorts a character's thoughts or disagrees with them. Cohn contends that this is because "the narrator is not much interested in the character's thoughts, as they can be summarily dismissed" (Cohn 21). This is "because it would add little to the understanding of a fictional character or a fictional world that has already been amply explored in preceding episodes of social interaction" (21). The avoidance of repeatedly "deep-diving" into the mental lives is characteristic where a hyperactive narrator deals with several characters and situations in which time and space alter rapidly. To Cohn, this pattern dominates the third-person novel well into the nineteenth century. Third-person novels concern manifest behavior, with the characters' inner selves revealed primarily indirectly through language and telling

gestures (*indirect characterization* through reactions and actions). Thus, the narrator may be more evasive of revealing the emotions, feelings and thoughts of the characters, opting instead to convey the selves through behavior. A conflict between narrator and character does not automatically mean that the narrator censors or alters the character's consciousness. Neither does it have to mean that the narrator entirely distances himself from the character.

In authorial narration, the inner life of an individual character becomes a "sounding-board for general truths about human nature" (23). As such, the authorial voice of the narrator might be unable to refrain from embedding his character's selves with his/her own generalizations about human nature. The authorial narration "fixes" the characters' selves on his own articulate self to reveal information, "a discursive intelligence who communicates with the reader about his character – behind his character's back" (25). The narrator possesses superior knowledge concerning the characters' consciousness, and he/she is able assess their selves and the development of them because of his/her superior ability to present and assess their inner life. The stronger the authorial cast, the more emphatic the cognitive privilege of the narrator. Cognitive privilege enables him to manifest dimensions of the character's selves that the character him/herself is unwilling or unable to portray. These dimensions are of particular importance, leading to the exploration of psychic depth and assessment of ethical worth.

Arguably, one of the most important advantages of psycho-narration is located in its verbal independence from the characters' self-articulation. It can order and explain a character's conscious thoughts better than the character him/herself, and it can articulate a psychic life that remains unverbalized, penumbral, or obscure. Accordingly, as Cohn observes, "psycho-narration often renders, in a narrator's knowing words, what a character 'knows,' without knowing how to put it into words" (25). This permits the articulation of inarticulate experience. The narrator may eventually serve the role of simultaneous translator or transcriber of a potentially articulate mind. When narration descends to the subliminal level – that is, below the threshold of conscious perception of the character – less elaborate justification is needed for authorial intervention. However, as Cohn writes, "narrators frequently draw explicit attention to the sub- or unconscious nature of the psychic states they narrate, or to the impossibility of their self-articulation" (48). An inner realm that often needs narrative mediation, to render meaning, is erotic experience, "with its singularly simultaneous involvement of psyche and soma" (49).

In the inner realm in need of narrative meditation, "psychological properties play an important role in the further description of focalization" (Herman and Vervaeck 77). With

"psychology," Herman and Vervaeck mean the cognitive and emotional levels of the narration (77). In terms of cognition, there are focalizers who are omnipotent and all-knowing, and there are narrators whose knowledge is limited. In terms of the emotional level, focalization can be detached or empathic (77). Here, the relation between focalizer and focalized object receives crucial meaning. "If only the outside of the focalized object is perceived," Herman and Vervaeck argues, "focalization is detached" (77). Yet, if there is a constant speculation about the thoughts and feelings of the focalized object, the perception is empathic. The type of focalization – internal and external – is of importance. If the narrating "I" considers, for example, a thought or an action the experiencing "I" thought or did, the focalization is external if it is perceived by the narrating "I," and internal if it is perceived by the experiencing "I." Additionally, if the events of the story are perceived by a single agent, this fixed focalization, but if they are perceived by two characters who constantly alternate, the focalization is variable (74). The focalized is the object of focalization, and the focalizer is the agent who "perceives and who therefore determines what is presented to the reader" (Herman and Vervaeck 70).

Evidently, psycho-narration restricts its attention to how consciousness (a self, for example) is represented by the narrator. It focuses on how the narrator conveys what transpires in the selves of the characters, as he/she restricts much of his/her attention to the characters' mental lives. This permits us to use psycho-narration, combined with the theories on a "self" outlined above, to focus more on the characters' themselves. By combining Cohn's theory on psycho-narration and theories that center on the characters' mental lives, one might understand the effects the representation of their selves contributes to the meanings they are assigned psychologically. The thesis builds upon current existing work conducted on the psychological aspects of *Sister Carrie* (e.g., identity, conscience, consciousness, instinct and morality) and *The Awakening* (e.g., sexual and emotional awakening, repression, emotional detachment, how circumstance modulates her awakening) as well as on narrative theory used to comprehend the authors' narrative techniques, thus contributing by illuminating how the two can complement each other to bring forth new perspectives.

1.4   Structure and outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into two parts; the main analytical body and the conclusion. The main analytical body focuses on how the narrators represent Carrie and Edna's selves, and it is further divided into three – Carrie's self, Edna's self, and the comparison.

First, it analyzes how the narrator of *Sister Carrie* represents Carrie's self. Here, the thesis endeavors to analyze her self as it is represented by the narrator by using psycho-

narration and Veblen's concept of "pecuniary emulation" and the theory of action-based desire as outlined above. Specifically, it focuses on how Carrie's desire for wealth and the influence it has on her behavior is represented by the narrator. To do so, it considers how the narrator's actual representation of her desire for material wealth can reveal how it modulates and develops her self, as well as how it serves as the incentive behind her actions. Combined with the theories of action-based desire and Veblen's concept of "pecuniary emulation," theories that can explain Carrie's desire for wealth and how it manifests as behavior, psycho-narration can better reveal details of her desire for wealth and what inspires it. The analysis focuses on the character-narrator relationship by examining the narrator's unrestricted access to her self, focalization, the narrator's authorial narration and the figural mind, consonance, and direct and indirect characterization through action, inner thoughts and reactions. The thesis does so as it can enhance the importance of the narrator in the representation of Carrie's self and how it is conveyed to the reader. Though they relate to representation of consciousness, it does not consider indirect and direct characterization through descriptions of physical space and speech/dialogue, as they do not necessarily serve to examine Carrie's self in the light of the theory on action-based desire and Veblen's pecuniary emulation. In terms of focalization, the thesis restricts its angle to fixed focalization, meaning that the narrator renders Carrie's mental life, and external focalization, meaning that the narrator considers and perceives the mental life of Carrie. Much of Carrie's self is represented through external focalization (successive thoughts, for example). The analysis restricts its attention to how Carrie's desire for wealth influences her relationships, mental state and behavior. The analysis does not focus on one of Carrie's relationships with Drouet and Hurstwood, but rather alternates between, since it can demonstrate the development of her self. The thesis does so as they can illustrate how her self is represented – through the narrative techniques above – and how the representation and fragmentation of her self can be better understood and enhanced by using theory on action-based desire and emulation. This section devotes time to analyze the narrative techniques the narrator employs to achieve his representation of her self.

Secondly, the thesis analyzes how the narrator of *The Awakening* represents Edna's self. Here, the thesis endeavors to analyze Edna's self as it is represented by the narrator by employing Cohn's theory of psycho-narration and the theory of emotional detachment caused by repression as outlined above. Specifically, it focuses on how Edna's desire for a romantic fusion with another person and the influence it has on her behavior is represented by the narrator. To do so, it considers how the narrator's actual representation of Edna's desire for a romantic fusion can reveal how it modulates and develops her self, as well as how it serves as

the incentive behind her actions. Combined with the theory of emotional detachment caused by emotional repression, a theory that can explain Edna's desire and how it manifests as behavior, psycho-narration can better reveal details of her self and how it develops. The analysis focuses on the character-narrator relationship by examining the narrator's unrestricted access to Edna's self, direct and indirect characterization through speech and dialogue, inner thoughts and emotional reactions, focalization, the narrator's authorial narration and the figural mind, dissonance and the implied reader, and the narrator's embedded ideology in the representation. The thesis does so as it can enhance the importance of the narrator in the representation of Edna's self and how it is conveyed to the reader. Though they relate to representation of consciousness, it does not consider indirect and direct characterization through descriptions of physical space and actions, as they do not necessarily serve as well to examine Edna's self in the light of the theory on emotional detachment as the others outlined above. In terms of focalization, the thesis focuses on internal and external focalization, as both the narrator (external) and Edna herself (internal) represent her self and thus contribute to how the reader perceives the representation, but it devotes most of its inquiry to external focalization. To restrict the analysis, it focuses on how Edna's desire for a romantic fusion influences her relationships with Mademoiselle Reisz, Robert Lebrun and, briefly, her husband (Mr. Pontellier), mental state and behavior. The thesis focuses mainly on these as they can better illuminate how her self is represented – through the narrative techniques above – and how the representation and the development of her self can be better understood and enhanced by using theory on emotional detachment to examine it. As with the section about Carrie's self, this section devotes time to analyze the narrative techniques the narrator employs to achieve his representation of her self.

The last part of the main chapter compares the narrators' representations. The comparison builds upon the important findings it uncovered in the proceeding parts and compares the narrators' representations, with emphasis on how the techniques employed contribute the representations. It seeks to illustrate and examine how imperative the techniques used (e.g. direct and indirect characterization, external and internal focalization, implied reader, authorial and figural mind, cognitive privilege, unrestricted access, literal consciousness representation and fusion, and dissonance and consonance) are to coney and create the literary selves of Carrie and Edna to the reader. The findings encompass what function desire has in Edna's self and how the respective narrative techniques represent it; how material objects fragments and creates Carrie's self is understood through the representation of the narrator; and the effect the role of the narrator as both meditator and

translator of their selves has on the novels as literary texts. In doing so, the comparison seeks to show how the narrative techniques employed by the respective narrators create different representations of their selves. By doing so, the reader sees how the narrative technique that the narrator uses contribute to the representations themselves and how the reader perceives them. Since representations of the heroines' selves have been analyzed in the previous sections, this part focuses mostly on comparing the representations.

The conclusion summarizes the main points of the thesis and its important findings. It also suggests directions for future research and inquiries into narrative studies concerning naturalist texts. As the thesis combines theories on the "self" and the narrator's use of psycho-narration to examine its inquiry, the conclusion also relates how narrative theory can be combined with philosophical and psychological theories to better comprehend how a self is at part of the narrative in the text and a complex entity.

2   The representation of Carrie and Edna's selves

2.1   The representation of Carrie's self

> "The material world has only been constructed at the price of taking the self, that is . . .; [the] mind is . . . part of it" – Erwin Schrodinger, *What is Life? With Mind and Matter and Autobiographical Sketches*

This section endeavors to analyze the narrator's representation of Carrie's self by using psycho-narration, Veblen's concept of "pecuniary emulation" and the theory of action-based desire as outlined. It focuses on how Carrie's desire for wealth and the influence it has on her behavior is represented by the narrator. It considers how the narrator's actual representation of her desire for material wealth can reveal how it modulates and develops her self, as well as how it serves as the incentive behind her actions. The analysis focuses on the character-narrator relationship by examining the narrator's unrestricted access to her self, focalization, the narrator's authorial narration and the figural mind, consonance, and direct and indirect characterization through action, inner thoughts and reactions. The thesis restricts its angle to the fixed focalization, meaning that it is the narrator who renders Carrie's mental life, and external focalization, meaning that the narrator considers and perceives the mental life of Carrie. The analysis is restricted to how Carrie's desire for wealth influences her relationships, mental state and behavior, and her relationships with Drouet and Hurstwood. These relationships illuminate imperative aspects of how her self fragments through actions and emulation.

The narrator's (the focalizer's) unrestricted access to her (the focalized's) thoughts and impressions permits the reader to see how wealth is important to her. Upon encountering Drouet, the narrator observes that Carrie instinctively notices his "business suit":

> His suit was of a striped and crossed pattern of brown wool, new at that time, but since become familiar as a business suit. The low crotch of the vest revealed a stiff shirt bosom of white and pink stripes. From his coat sleeves protruded a pair of linen cuffs of the same pattern, fastened with large, gold plate buttons, set with the common yellow agates known as 'cat's-eyes.' . . . He was, for the order of intellect represented, attractive, and whatever he had to recommend him, you may be sure was not lost upon Carrie, in this, her first glance. (3)

Carrie's mind is the figural mind, and the narrator's mind functions as the authorial mind. The narrator accesses Carrie's figural mind and represents her throughs and impressions about Drouet by instilling his authorial presence. He renders Carrie's thought-process as she observes Drouet, opting to represent the thoughts that center on his visual appearance: "His suit was of a striped and cross pattern of brown wool," which was "new at that time," but had "become a familiar business suit" (3), implying that Drouet's attire is that of an affluent

businessman. This impression, the narrator explains, "was not lost upon Carrie" (3). The narrator renders Carrie's impressions and thoughts about Drouet while infusing his own authorial observation about Carrie's mind itself, and his presentation of Carrie's thoughts thus socially distinguishing Drouet as a middle-class man, while simultaneously offering insight into what occupies Carrie's self: material wealth. The narrator's restriction of the thoughts he renders, which center on wealth, determines which ones are represented to the reader, limiting the attention to material wealth and shaping the reader's perception of Carrie. In the narrator's representation, she immediately notices Drouet's visual appearance, making her self-conscious of what socioeconomically distinguishes her from Drouet. In contrast to herself, Drouet wears fine expensive clothes, an impression that was "not lost upon Carrie [in] her first glance" (3). Carrie, the narrator indirectly points out, is thus astutely aware of her socioeconomic relation to others. The visual difference makes Carrie self-conscious of the socioeconomic "inequality" between them: it "became conscious of an inequality. Her own plain blue dress, with its black cotton tape trimmings, now seemed to her shabby. She felt the worn state of her shoe" (4). Carrie, as a consequence of the contrast she notices, which the narrator opts to portray, draws the distinction that she is poor and Drouet is affluent, causing her to feel "shabby." Carrie compares herself to Drouet to derive and render meaning to herself; here, that she is poor and of a lower social standing. The tendency of comparison and to derive meaning from its socioeconomic difference comes to characterize it and its development, as it derives its meaning from the material differences it notices and is made conscious of.

The cognitive privilege of the authorial mind enables the narrator, as Cohn writes, to "manifest dimensions of a fictional character that the latter is unwilling or unable to betray" (29), as it informs the psychic depth of the character. Carrie's desire for wealth arguably emanates from her encounter with Drouet, since she becomes conscious of her socioeconomic difference to others. "The self is pressurized," Pitoniak contends, "by desire . . . environment, and external authority" (66). The socioeconomic difference, the "environment and external authority" (66), is made conscious to her self partly through its encounter with Drouet via the narrator's external, fixed focalization of her self's perceptions. The reader learns that it instinctively aspires material objects to form itself and is dependent on them. Material objects as a foundation of selfhood are thus essential to Carrie's self. In *Sister Carrie*, "Dreiser presents quite explicitly [and examines] the force of material life and desire upon the self," Pitoniak observes (67). The endangerment of integral selfhood as it encounters material wealth is made arguably made obvious to the reader because of the narrator's characterization

of her self as dependent on wealth. However, though this endangerment may come to seem obvious from the reader's perspective, due to the narrator's unrestricted access to her mental life, it does not to Carrie. The cognitive privilege manifests dimensions of Carrie's self that she remains unaware of.

As the narrator's external and fixed focalization conveys Carrie's thoughts as they occur when they are provoked by wealth, it is arguably evident that it is her material differences from others that inspire her desire for wealth. Cohn writes that narrators may "come to play the role of simultaneous translator – or, better, transcriber – of a potentially articulate mind. . ." (48). Subsequently to acquainting herself with Drouet, Carrie wanders the streets in search for a profession. As she walks, she notices "stocking, coats, skirts [and] ribbons" (16), which, the narrator remarks, elicit a "drag of desire for all which was new and pleasing in apparel for women" (16). Yet, she "noticed too, with a touch at the heart, the fine ladies who elbowed and ignored her, brushing past in utter disregard of her presence, themselves eagerly enlisted in the materials which the store contained" (16). "Their clothes were neat, in many instances fine," and when Carrie "encountered the eye of one it was only to recognise in it a keen analysis of her own position – her individual shortcomings of dress and that shadow of manner which she thought must hang about her and make clear to all who and what she was" (17). Consequently, a "flame of envy lighted in her heart," and it "realised in a dim way how much the city held – wealth, fashion, ease – every adornment for women, and she longed for dress and beauty with a whole heart" (17). As Kevin Modestino writes, "conscious or unconscious, emotions nevertheless are generated in encounters between the self and others, or the self and its environment" (57). Carrie experiences "a flame of envy" (17). When she encounters the "fine ladies" (16), the narrator transcribes her reaction by representing her thoughts, all of which now encompass desire, which become a mental state. The mental state of desire eventually produce action. Carrie aspires to attain her mental idea of material objects that are associated with wealth. The narrator transcribes Carrie's thoughts and perceptions of the "stocking, coats, skirts [and] ribbons" (16), enabling the reader to see, as Cohn writes, a "pattern that induces cohesion . . . in which thoughts and feelings are intertwined with sensations" (31). Her perceptions cause her to "grow" conscious of her inadequacy, a sensation that produces thoughts that become intertwined with the mental state of desire. The narrator transcribes this reaction by conveying her thoughts as he observes them, permitting the reader to access how Carrie's self is modulated by "external authority" (Pitoniak 66) and what inspires her desire for material wealth. The reader learns that the

desire for and the mental state of material wealth constitutes a part of her self, but that she also remains oblivious to the endangerments of it (Pitoniak 67).

Schroeder contends that action-based desire is primarily "mental states that have the function of producing actions, rather than mental states that merely dispose agents to act" (par. 1.1-1.2). Mental states compel the individual to act, but the actions themselves may not satisfy the mental idea of the desire or realize it. The mental construction of what one desires serves as the incentive and enables one to imagine the desired object and act to attain it. The "expensively dressed" women (34) and the "soft, green, handsome ten-dollar bills" (45) ignites a "flame of envy lighted in her heart" (17), producing the mental idea of wealth material objects. To the narrator, however, it seems as if Carrie remains oblivious to the effect the desire has on her self, opting to observe how the state affects it. After their first encounter, Carrie and Drouet meet again. The narrator observes that "she felt that she liked him – that she could continue to like him ever so much. There was something even richer than that, running as a hidden strain, in her mind" (44). The narrator astutely claims that "she felt that she liked him – that she could continue to like him," but a deeper force, "running as a hidden strain, in her mind" (44), is driving Carrie. Cohn writes that the narrator can "descend to the subliminal level" (48) to convey subconscious aspects of a character he/she is unaware of. When a narrator descends to the subliminal level, fewer and less elaborate justification are needed for authorial intervention, but the narrator often draws explicit attention to the unconscious nature of the psychic states they narrate, as well as to the impossibility of their self-articulation (Cohn 48). *Sister Carrie*'s narrator draws attention to "something even richer than that, running as a hidden strain" (44). He is able to articulate the inarticulate better than Carrie, articulating a psychic life that remains unverbalized and obscure to her self. Carrie arguably remains oblivious of "the hidden strain" in "her mind" (44). The narrator's insight into her subliminal level is evident in the fact that he contemplates her believing that the attraction to Drouet could be akin to love. Although it may at first sight appear as if the narrator implies that Carrie is romantically attracted to Drouet, the narrator has already established, in their first encounter through his authorial mind, that it is primarily her material mental image of him as "expensively dressed" that cause her frequently to meet him. The narrator, contrary to Carrie, represents her mental construction of wealth as a force she remains oblivious to by rendering it conscious to the reader.

Yet there appears to be an agreement between the figural mind (Carrie's self) and the authorial mind (narrator's mind) about desire as an incentive for action. Consonance, Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck argue, "does not [necessarily] seem to leave the narrator a voice

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or contribution of his own," since "he renders the character's thoughts and reflections without any trace of criticism or rejection" (25). The narrator does not seem to condemn Carrie for what she does, but rather renders her psychic life to represent desire as a natural incentive, sympathizing with her. "In Carrie – as in how many of our worldlings do they not? – instinct and reason, desire and understanding were at war for mastery" (54), the narrator explains. The speculation about the thoughts and feelings of the focalized object, Carrie's self, imply that the narrator's perceptions are empathic. As opposed to morally condemn Carrie's behavior, the narrator opts to represent it as a natural repercussion of her desire, representing it as a part of human nature. Cohn asserts that narrators may use the psychic life of a character as a springboard for "general truth about human nature" (Cohn 23). The narrator is "uncritical . . . of Carrie, as evidenced by passage after passage of favorable, sympathetic, or frankly apologetic commentary" (Seltzer 192). These "apologetic commentar[ies]" (192) occur as generalizations about human nature infused with Dreiser's own thoughts about human nature. Carrie's mental state becomes a springboard for "truths" about human nature, as the narrator refrains from being "critical" (Seltzer 192). Shortly after noting that "instinct and reason, desire and understanding were at war for mastery" (54), the narrator compares desire, of all "forms," to a wisp, arguing that desire is "a wisp in the wind, moved by every breath of passion, acting now by his will and now by his instincts" (54). Carrie's behavior may objectively be viewed as amoral, but Dreiser, by instilling his presence in the narrator's generalizations, moralizes her behavior as part of her self.

The narrator thus represents Carrie's developing self devoid of judgement, making it almost as if his consciousness coincides with Carrie's. This makes "it impossible for the reader to separate the two clearly" (Luc Herman and Bart Vervaeck 25). This type of consonant psycho-narration means that, as illustrated by *Sister Carrie*'s authorial narrator, the narrator does not intervene in Carrie's mental processes, rendering it close to literal consciousness representation.

This type of fusion between the figural mind (Carrie's) and authorial mind (the narrator's) is present when Carrie compares herself to others' material wealth to esteem her own value. As Carrie walks in a store, subsequently to being dismissed by Drouet, the narrator portrays her self's comparisons as perceptions inspired by "bracelets, pins [and] chains" (49):

> There is nothing in this world more delightful than that middle state in which we mentally balance at times, possessed of the means, lured by desire, and yet deterred by conscience or want of decision. When Carrie began wandering around the store amid the fine displays she was in this mood. Her original experience in this same place had

> given her a high opinion of merits. Now she paused at each individual bit of finery, where before she had hurried on. . . She lingered in the jewelries department. She saw earrings, the bracelets, the pins, the chains. What would she not have given if she could have had them all! She would look fine too, if only she had some of these things. (49)

Her self's mental construction of wealth has arguably evolved from a mental state of it to a concrete idea manifesting in material objects, all attainable. Her thoughts are represented, as the narrator alternates between rendering her perceptions and his own observations about them, while she purposefully compares herself to others' wealth. She sees "earrings, the bracelets, the pins, the chains" while contemplating "what would she not have given if she could have had them all!" (49). "She would look fine too, if only she had some of these things" (49). Veblen writes that a person emulates the desired object to surpass its socioeconomic status by exhibiting wealth is a driving force in human behavior. A person compares oneself with other objects and emulates them in response to surpass them. Veblen calls this comparison invidious, "a process of valuation of persons in respect of worth" (39), meaning that the comparison fuels esteem to the self. "The invidious comparison," Veblen writes, "becomes primarily a comparison of the owner with the other members of the group" (33), insinuating that the invidious comparison is social. Here, the narrator gives the generalization that "there is nothing more delightful than that middle state in which we mentally balance" desire "by conscience or want of decision" (49). As Carrie is "wandering," she lingers "in the jewelries department," seeing the attainable objects that her self notices, generating "a high opinion of merits" (49) within her. Eby contends that Carrie recreates her self and enhances "her personal value by permitting herself to feel ever more elusive desires" (1), all inspired by the desire to attain them by emulation. By aspiring to attain objects that her self associates with wealth, Carrie enhances her personal value. Veblen's crux, that a person's personal value depends on accumulating property, corresponds with the source of what the narrator observes to be the source of Carrie's self's personal value: material items associated with wealth.

The narrator subtly characterizes her self's need for wealth and ensuing emulation as a mental state that continually permits her to recreate it in accordance with the material items she seeks to attain to enhance its value. Before accompanying each other to the theatre, Drouet describes Hurtswood to Carrie. He explains that Hurstwood is "manager of Fitzgerald and Moy's" (68), implying that his identity is intertwined with his employment as Fitzgerald and Moy's and "who has his endeavored to shine" (61). In response to hearing this, Carrie contemplates that she "was not enamoured of Drouet, as "she was more clever than he,"

beginning to "see where he lacked" (68). Thus, when Hurstwood "called, she met a man who was more clever than Drouet in hundred ways (69), and his "clothes were particularly new and rich in appearance" (69). The narrator presents Carrie's self's perceptions:

> The coat lapels stood out with that medium stiffness with a double row of round mother-of-pearl buttons. His cravat was a shiny combination of silken threads, not loud, not inconspicuous. What he wore did not strike the eye so forcibly as that which Drouet had on, but Carrie could see the elegance of the material. Hurstwood's shoes were of soft, black calf, polished only to a dull shine. Drouet wore patent leather, but Carrie could not help feeling that there was a distinction in favor of leather. (69)

Carrie observes that Hurstwood's "clothes were particularly new and rich in appearance," but the narrator illuminates the mental process that causes Carrie to conclude that "there was a distinction in favor of leather" (69). He claims that "Carrie could not help feeling that there was a distinction in favor of leather, where all else was so rich," adding that Carrie "noticed these things unconsciously" (70). "They," he claims, "were things which would naturally flow from the situation" (70). The narrator assesses Carrie's self and states that the mental process of observing others and using the perceptions of them as sources for attainable desire has become "natural" (70), subtly insinuating that it transpires as a natural consequence of seeing objects that she associates with wealth. Thus, the mental response ensues when she encounters desirable material objects, inspiring new mental states that permits her to remodel her self in accordance with the material objects she desires. Objects provide meaning to her self insofar as it comes to be constituted by them. The narrator's representation of how the process and the material objects continually provide meaning to her enables the reader to see how she remodels the self and the affect the process has as it remodels. The narrator renders her consciousness and instills his knowledge about it at the same time.

Carrie's self seems to be characterized as temporal, flexible and relative. The narrator's representation of Carrie's self, when it encounters material objects and persons associated with wealth, imply that it is temporal, flexible and relative. Eby writes that one's self "is relative and a work in progress" (1). One's self is thus neither autonomous or stable, but rather changes in relation to circumstance and environment. Cohn notes that "psycho-narration has almost unlimited temporal flexibility" (34). "It can as readily summarize an inner development over a long period of time as it can render the flow of successive thoughts and feelings, or expand and elaborate a mental instant," she writes (34). The narrator observes that Carrie's relationship with objects is "not a matter of greedy consumption but of hungry self-creation" (Eby 2). The narrator's flexibility in Carrie's self (the focalized) as it encounters material objects enables the reader to see the development of it, as the narrator

provides the successive thoughts of Carrie when she emulates. This "self-creation" is summarized by the narrator throughout *Sister Carrie*. After inquiring why Drouet and her have not married, Drouet explains that "we will, just as soon I get this deal of mine closed up" (68). "Carrie," the narrator contends, "accepted this as basis for hope – it was a sort of slave to her conscience" (68). As he renders Carrie's successive thoughts in response to Drouet financial matters, he summarizes a development in her self, mainly that it has come to consider wealth "as the basis for hope." Where she prior had sought to attain wealth to enhance her value, it now sees it as the premise for "hope."

Eby argues that Dreiser inserts material objects into *Sister Carrie* to explore and "bring together economic and psychological concerns into a new theory of the self" (1). Central to this "psychology" is what Dreiser calls "the innate trend of the mind" (34). "The innate trend of the mind," Dreiser says, is to "emulate the more expensively dressed" (34). Carrie's desire for material wealth conform to the observation Dreiser asserts. Veblen insisted that central to the creation of a self is ownership and emulation, writing that ""the motive that lies at the root of ownership is emulation" (30). Emulation "continues active in the further development" (30). Emulation "may of course be conceived to serve the consumer's physical wants – his physical comfort – or his so-called higher wants – spiritual, æsthetic, intellectual, or what not" (30), Veblen argues. As mentioned, the narrator explains that "a flame of envy lighted in her heart" (14) as Carrie conducts a "keen analysis of her position" (17) in the social world: Their clothes were neat, in many instances, fine, and whatever she encountered the eye a keen analysis of her own position – her individual shortcomings of dress and that shadow of manner which she thought must hang about her and make clear to all who and what she was" (17). Though the narrator observes that she conducts this "analysis," the successive thoughts as represented by him corresponds to Veblen's observations of emulation and comparison. The narrator's transcription of her conscious thoughts illuminate how she emulates. To the narrator, it, first, observes that "their (the ladies') clothes were neat, in many instances, fine" (17), serving as a contrast to her own appearance. This contrast arguably makes her conscious of what visually and socioeconomically sets her apart from the "more expensively dressed" (34). This social analysis of her position in the social hierarchy is the "analysis" that she conducts. In turn, her self "grows" conscious of "her individual shortcomings and that shadow of manner which she thought must hang about her" (17). Carrie compares herself, and material objects that constitutes her self, to others and rapidly reconstructs a new, mental self in her mind. The new mental self in her mind resolves her to enhance her personal value by emulating the "expensively dressed" (34) women, realizing "in

a dim way how much the city held – wealth, fashion, ease – every adornment for women, and she longed for dress and beauty with a whole heart" (17).

Through the narrator's external focalization and cognitive privilege, the reader learns that her emulation causes her self to become fragmented. Though the narrator summarizes its development primarily when it encounters material objects, the summaries also permit the reader to see how it fragments. Modestino writes that "In the world of 'Sister Carrie' there are no innate and universal ideas to step in and redeem the self in its cognitive struggle with the exterior world. As a result, Carrie's encounter with the urban sublime only produces feelings of despondency and alienation" (59). The "self's cognitive struggle with the exterior world" is explored through the narrator's external focalization. "There had been," the narrator states, "something so personal, so subtle, in each meeting between them, both when

> he was absent that Carrie could not speak of it without feeling a sense of difficulty. She was no talker. She could never arrange her thoughts in fluent order. It was always a matter of feeling with her, strong and deep. Each time there had been no sentence of importance which would reveal them? Such things had never been between her and Drouet. As a matter of fact, they could never be. She had been dominated by distress and the enthusiastic forces of relief which Drouet represented at an opportune moment when she yielded to him. Now she was persuaded by feelings which Drouet had never understood. (84)

The narrator explains that Carrie, upon meeting Drouet several times, "could not arrange her thoughts in fluent order," as "she had been dominated by distress and enthusiastic forces of relief which Drouet represented at an opportune moment when she yielded to him" (84). As Carrie seeks to create a self by modeling it by material wealth, it experiences incoherent psychological responses and reactions to external forces. Drouet offers a temporary escape from the "distress" caused by her emulation. Lester H. Cohen explores the issue of "locating one's self in the social world," writing that Carrie "in a more ambiguous and subtle way – are the most notable character who do seek[s] to encounter . . . [herself] as others encounter [her]" (362). He contends that Carrie's distress emanates from the emulation executed in the social world: the self "takes as its principal concern the theme that underlies the social world: the commonplace and the individual's relationship to it" (363). Carrie's emulation is what binds her self to the social world, which entails an interdependent relationship between it and the material world. The narrator illuminates the symbiotic bond by commentating on the distress it causes her, which he is able to due to his unrestricted access (the cognitive level). "It was always a matter of feeling with her, strong and deep" and "she could never arrange her thoughts in fluent order" (84), the narrator states. Simultaneously as her self derives its self-construction from "the social world," it is also fragmented by it, rendering her unable to

articulate her experiences and fully comprehend why she engages in relationships. The narrator's external focalization and unrestricted access to her successive thoughts and emotions makes it clear that it is her desire for material wealth, but Carrie arguably remains oblivious to the fragmented state of her self.

The narrator adheres closely to her perceptions to the extent that it can become difficult to distinguish between the focalizer and focalized, the authorial and figural mind. As Herman and Vervaeck writes, external focalization is "ideally suited to manipulate the reader, who often does not see that information has been filtered through the perception of a character or the narrator" (73). Consequently, the reader might treat subjective information provided by a character as objective information coming from a detached narrator, who merely renders the characters psychological life and occasionally infuses his own comments. Arguably, as seen, the narrator of *Sister Carrie* does not alter or distorts Carrie's self, since he does not intervene in Carrie's mental processes. Carrie the perceiving agent, while the narrator remains restricted to voicing his perceptions, opting instead to observe them while occasionally instilling generalizations about human nature by using her self as a springboard.

The narrator arguably links Carrie's identity and selfhood to the theater, which mirrors her mental state and emulation thus far. The theatre is a world of imagination, a real place in which the imaginary and dreams transform into performances that enables one to "act out" the imaginary. As mentioned, Carrie derives her meaning by emulating the objects she desires, which generate a mental image of the object that, eventually, inspires action. In Chicago, the narrator observes the riches she aspires, which, to Dan Fyfe, "can only be possessed in her imagination" (134). According to Fyfe, "the imaginary of Chicago of her dreams only exacerbates Carrie's disenchantment with the arduousness of her toil" (133). "Her meager existence is at odds with the beauty and wealth of Chicago that stirs her imagination" (133), she writes. Her mental idea of wealth contradicts her self's actual circumstances. The external "authority" (Pitoniak 66) – an employee at a low-budget play, designating her as a less-off actress than the "expensively dressed women" (34) – are conveyed intermittently through external and fixed focalization. At this point, however, it seems to contradict Carrie's imaginary state, despite her self being the focalized. When Carrie arrives in New York, she is "made aware – more than ever – of her inferior social status. Her feeling of inequality causes shame; she thinks that the riches of the city can bring happiness" (Fyfe 135). When Carrie discovers that she is to take part in a play, Hurstwood

> had truly never seen so much spirit in the girl before. Her tendency to discover a touch of sadness had for the nonce disappeared. As she spoke her eyes were bright, her

> cheeks red. She radiated much of the pleasure which her undertakings gave her. For all her misgivings – and they were as plentiful as the moments of the day – she was still happy. (115)

The theater is a real place for imagination, and Carrie uses it to enhance her personal value since it constitutes a vernacular for her mental state. What Carrie has sought to emulate, to enhance her self's value, now receives an outlet to manifest itself. The theater offers a real place to act out imagination, and, for Carrie, to attain material wealth through performing a role. The prospect of the theater, a place for her imagination to self-actualize, the narrator renders, provokes "much spirit" in Carrie, brightening "her eyes" (115). In the invidious comparison, Veblen emphasizes, the differences between one's self and the subject of comparison that are made conscious, generating shame. In response, one emulates the subject of comparison to enhance personal values and to mitigate the shame. The narrator has established that it is the mental state is inspired by the idea of wealth, and Carrie seeks to emulate material objects and persons to attain it. Up until now, her self has responded and remodeled itself according to the "expensively dressed" (34) persons and objects it has encountered. The prospect of self-actualizing her mental state through an actual physical place provokes inarticulate forces, causing her "eyes to be bright, her cheeks red" (115). The narrator seems to refrain from transcribing what these forces are, opting instead to assert that she experiences "happiness" (115). The reader is not permitted to comprehend what the forces are, but through the narrator's representation, one may deduce that the forces are provoked by the theater. Carrie is able to enlarge her circumference of being through the theater (Lehan 67). The self has thus come to be defined from without – that is, externally – within the realm of such materiality, the theater.

The narrator's representations of Carrie's mental state of material wealth coincide with the external; that is, the narrator's transcriptions of her mental life come to correspond with the external reality. After establishing her reputation in New York as an aspiring but less-off actress, Carrie contemplates leaving. Lola, however, one of Carrie's co-actresses, explains that if she leaves, "they forget all about you" (312). "It doesn't do you any good leaving New York," she says, since "they forget all about you if you do" (312). Since Carrie "was pretty," the manager selects her "photo along with to illustrate the announcement," and because she "was pretty, they gave it excellent space and drew scrolls about it" (312). This "delighted" Carrie (312). Lehan writes that if one "take[s] away Carrie's connection to the theater," then "she . . . becomes devoid of self" (67). This observation coincides with what the narrator's external, fixed focalization illuminate about Carrie's self. It seems to have become

intertwined with the external. Lola explains that "they forget all about" (312) Carrie should she choose to take leave. This implies that the external – the theater, the play, *Augustin Daly's Under the Gaslight*, and the photo of her in the hallway – not merely provide her with a self and identity, but is somewhat melted together with it. "It is curious to note how quickly a profession absorbs one," the authorial mind comments (308). Carrie's identity is the Carrie of the theater, the character she plays, whom she has become absorbed in.

Carrie's self, then, remodels itself according to the circumstances it encounters. The narrator represents this continuous process by transcribing her mental states of wealth as she encounters objects associated with wealth and, as Lehan writes, "money" (67). The remodeling consists of emulation, and the narrator represents this emulation by portraying Carrie's self's thoughts, feelings and incentives. Emulating those "expensively dressed" (34), the "innate trend of the mind" (34), according to Dreiser, enhances her self's value, mitigating her feelings of shame. This shame, to the narrator, is provoked once she is made conscious of her inferiority and differences from what she seeks to emulate. Yet, shame inspires new mental states, which further motivates Carrie to act. Feelings, then do not serve as a part of her self, but serve as an incentive in its development. The reader is able to understand what transpires in the development of Carrie's self due to the narrator's representation. The narrator relies on external focalization to convey the development of it and how it fragments as it remodels itself, characterizing it as relative, flexible and interdependent through his representation. The narrator astutely observes the mental processes of Carrie and the incentive that drives her thanks to his unrestricted access, rendering him adept at providing the reader with insight into Carrie's self that she remains oblivious of. Wealth constitutes Carrie's self, and her mental state of it compel her actualize the states in reality.

2.2 The representation of Edna's self

> "Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakens" – Karl Gustav Jung, *Letters Vol 1: 1906-1950*

This section endeavors to analyze the narrator's representation of Edna's self by focusing on her use of psycho-narration and by applying the theory of emotional detachment caused by repression. It focuses on how Edna's desire for a romantic fusion with another person and the influence it has on her behavior is represented by the narrator. It considers how the narrator's actual representation of Edna's desire for a romantic fusion can reveal how it modulates and develops her self, as well as how it serves as the incentive behind her actions. The analysis focuses on the character-narrator relationship by examining the narrator's unrestricted access to Edna's self, direct and indirect characterization through speech and dialogue, inner

thoughts and emotional reactions, focalization, the narrator's authorial narration and the figural mind, dissonance and the implied reader, and the narrator's embedded ideology in the representation. The thesis focuses on internal and external focalization, as both the narrator (external) and Edna herself (internal) represent her self and thus contribute to how the reader perceives Edna's self. To restrict the analysis, it focuses on how Edna's desire for a romantic fusion influences her relationships with Mademoiselle Reisz, Robert Lebrun and her husband, mental state and behavior, as these illustrate the theories of emotional detachment.

The narrator's (the focalizer's) unrestricted access to Edna's self (the focalized), and superior knowledge of it, permits the reader to access her emotional reactions and the confusion they initially provoke. The narrator initially represents Edna's emotional reactions as confusing. When she is approached by Robert, she experiences an incomprehensible reaction. Early in *The Awakening*, Robert asks Edna if she is "going bathing," to which Edna replies, "Oh, no" (31). Robert insists that she "mustn't miss . . . [her] bath" (31). Edna concurs after her minor resistance, but the narrator observes that she

> could not have told why, wishing to go to the beach with Robert, she should in the first place have declined, and in the second place have followed in obedience to one of the contradictory impulses which impelled her. A certain light was beginning to dawn dimly within her – the light which, showing the way, forbids it. At that early period it served but to bewilder her. It moved her to dreams, to thoughtfulness, to the shadowy anguish which had overcome her the midnight when she had abandoned herself to tears. (31)

"Contradictory impulses" impel Edna, and a "certain light was beginning to dawn dimly within her" (16). However, the narrator explains that the contradictory impulses "served but to bewilder her," moving "her to dreams" and "thoughtfulness" (31). The reaction, the narrator notes, is an "anguish" (31) to Edna, an emotional reaction that she is unable to render meaningful. However, though the narrator comments on the reaction by labeling it as "contradictory impulses" (31), she arguably creates cohesion for the reader through the representations itself by describing the ensuing reaction to Robert's directive. First, the narrator accesses Edna's emotional reaction and observes her confusion, explaining that she "could not have told why . . . she should in the first place have declined, and in the second place have followed [Robert's directive] in obedience" (31). The narrator describes the two impulses as "contradictory," insinuating, to the reader, that Edna's mental life is "shadowy" (31). She seems unaware of her emotional life. The narrator subtly and indirectly characterizes Edna's emotions as "shadowy" (31), as akin to unconscious, subliminal parts of her psyche that she remains unaware of – her self's "emotional blind spot." Cohn writes that the narrator may descend to subliminal level and render narrative meditation on it (48),

attending to repressed emotions and articulating them. The reader receives the narrator's cohesion of Edna's incomprehensible emotional reaction, serving as a translator of her mental confusion. At this point, Edna, and, arguably, the reader, remain oblivious as to what she actually feels and hopes for. As Cohn writes, the narrator may "not [be] much interested in the character's thoughts, as they can be summarily dismissed because it would add little to the understanding of a fictional character or a fictional world that . . . [is explored in] episodes of social interaction" (23). The narrator avoids articulating the emotional life of Edna, opting instead to transcribe it in her social interactions by briefly labeling her state as "contradictory" (31) and emotional life as "shadowy" (31). Despite the focalizer's unrestricted access to Edna's repressed emotions, the focalized, it remains unclear what they are and how they are related to her self, subtly implying that it is not self-actualized.

The narrator's initial avoidance of explicitly articulating Edna's "contradictory impulses" (31) causes the implied reader to imagine the emotions that generate Edna's impulses. Herman and Vervaeck contends that "consciousness representation is not just the work of a narrator representing the consciousness of a character but also – and often more importantly – the work of a reader trying to imagine the original version of a represented thought or utterance" (93). In the interaction between Edna and Robert, the narrator vaguely observes that a "certain light was beginning to dawn dimly within her - the light which, showing the way, forbids it" (31). The narrator's vague representation of Edna's emerging "light . . . within" as "[something] certain," but not definable, accompanied by her own silence, renders her inner realm as ambiguous and ineffable to the reader. The implied reader, who the narrator engages as a discursive intelligence, may experience Edna's mental confusion similar to how Edna herself experiences it, according to the narrator; that is, as incomprehensible reactions devoid of cohesion. The implied reader attempts to create his/her own perception of Edna's "impulses" (31), which is informed by the narrator's representation of her mental life, since she refrains from transcribing the "contradictory" and "shadowy" (31) feelings that constitute the reactions. As Cohn writes, the narrator becomes a "discursive intelligence who communicates with the reader about his character—behind his character's back (Cohn 25)" and with a self of her own. Thus, the narrator functions as a "thinking" agent who articulates her own self while representing Edan's reactions (48). By abstaining from articulating Edna's confusing emotional reactions, the communication of the narrator, Cohn writes, "can even become a dialogue, with a narrator engaging an implied reader in a discussion regarding [the] fictional hero" (25). The dialogue consists of the implied reader imagining Edna's feelings, deducing what they are based on the transcriptions and perceptions

of her emotional reactions that the narrator represents. The narrator's avoidance of articulating Edna's self engages the implied reader, as the narrator communicates with the reader, initiating a "discussion" (Cohn 25) about her undeveloped self with the implied reader.

This apparent disconnection between the narrator, the authorial mind, and Edna's self, the figural mind, and the narrator's avoidance arguably inform Edna's detachment from her romantic desire. One may argue that there is initially a dissonance between the narrator and Edna, between the authorial and figural mind, that informs Edna's detachment from her "world within" (32). The narrator seems to separate Edna's successive thoughts from her own comments, her own "thinking" self, and Edna's repressed emotional life. When Edna and Adèle Ratignolle are sitting at the beach, Adèle notices that Edna fixates on the sea. The narrator observes that, casting "her eyes about, had finally kept them at rest upon the sea. The day was clear and carried the gaze out as far as the blue sky went; there were a few white clouds suspended idly over the horizon" (34). The narrator's authorial mind merely observes Edna and may render her own thoughts about her. She explains that Edna "kept" her eyes "at rest upon the sea" (34). The narrator refrains from accessing and transcribing the figural mind (Edna's) and merely renders her own perceptions of Edna's physical state, explaining that her eyes are reminiscent of a "gaze" (34). Though the narrator abstains from transcribing how the sea elicits repressed passion within Edna, the reader can deduce that there is an alluring appeal of the sea for Edna, as the narrator makes the reader imagine Edna's repressed emotional life and her detachment. Adèle then asks Edna, "'Of whom –of what are you thinking?'," with the narrator adding that "she had been watching" Edna's "countenance" "with a little amused attention, arrested by the absorbed expression which seemed to have seized and fixed every feature into statuesque repose" (34). The external focalization of Adèle's perceptions of Edna illuminate that her "countenance" is "absorbed" (34) by the sea. By alternating between representing her own and Adèle's perceptions of Edna, and by refraining from accessing the figural mind of Edna, the reader learns that the sea resonates deeply with Edna, but the reason why is omitted in the representation. The authorial mind's avoidance of articulating the figural mind permits the narrator to alternate between representing Edna's detached emotional state through external focalization of others' impressions of her and infusing her own comments about Edna's repressed emotions. "This avoidance of psycho-narration," Cohn writes, "is characteristic for a novel in which a hyperactive narrator deals with a multitude of . . . situations by rapid shifts in time and space" (21). In addition to informing the detached emotional state of Edna, the disconnection, between the authorial and figural mind, mirrors Edna's detachment, which becomes illustrated

when the narrator alternates between the minds of the characters in the "world about" (16) to illuminate her developing self.

Edna's apparent silence, however, may be the appropriate way to communicate her repressed desire for a romantic fusion. The narrator seems to imply that silence is the most effective way to communicate her romantic longings. Edna's lack of expression, the narrator implies, mirrors her emotional detachment. Silence, Cynthia Griffith Wolff argues becomes her "language of . . . sexuality" (12) concurrently as it illustrates her own difficulties in expressing and identifying her repressed romantic sensations, evident in her sexual confusion when she encounters Robert at the beach. By resolving to not articulate Edna's expression, the narrator shows her inability to define her eroticism, exposing the destructive psychological effect repression constitutes on Edna's self.

The narrator represents the development of Edna's self as dependent upon persons she encounters. Edna's emotional and psychological detachment is further illuminated in how her romantic desire is, the narrator implies, conditioned by persons, like Mademoiselle Reisz. After hearing Mademoiselle Reisz play, the narrator remarks that a "thousand emotions have swept through" Edna (47), but that she does "not understand half of them" (47). The authorial narrator, however, engaging the implied reader, notes that they "[were] like a night in a dream" (48). Elizabeth Le Blanc contends that Edna's desire for Mademoiselle Reisz is "boundless, her yearnings vast . . ., [h]er erotic potential seems to have a life of its own, seeking release in something as unlimited as itself" (300). Edna's repression of her romantic desire is relinquished by Mademoiselle Resiz, permitting her to experience desire as a part of her self as she discovers a "vernacular with which to name her feelings" (Wolff 12). Edna "can never affirm [her] 'self' merely through silence and [erotic] fantasy," Wolff observes, because of the "vital connection between the 'me' and the 'not-me' that validates [her selfhood] and identity" (Wolff 12). The narrator represents Mademoiselle Reisz as reminiscent of a vessel to Edna, reciprocating Edna's emotional needs as she "echo[s] the thought which was ever in Edna's mind; or, better, the feeling which constantly possessed her" (65). The development of Edna's self is dependent upon the external "world about" (32).

However, when Edna encounters Adèle, her successive thoughts are represented by herself through speech, conveying them concurrently as she attempts to ascribe cohesion to her incomprehensible reactions. The authorial mind (the narrator's mind) and the figural mind (Edna's self) seem to coincide in Edna's attempt to "retrace" (34) her thoughts, thus arguably relinquishing the intermittent dissonance between the two. Herman and Vervaeck contends that "the narrator's consciousness," when the figural and authorial mind coincide, "almost

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seems to coincide with the character's" (25). The narrator's consciousness does not differ from the focalized and figural mind (Edna's self), as it does in dissonance. Shortly after being asked why she is "absorbed" (34) in the sea, Edna responds to Adèle's question and tries to "retrace [her] thoughts" (34) herself:

> 'Nothing,' returned Mrs. Pontellier, with a start, adding at once: 'How stupid! But it seems to me it is the reply we make instinctively to such a question.' 'Let me see,' she went on, throwing back her head and narrowing her fine eyes till they shone like two vivid points of light. 'Let me see. I was really not conscious of thinking of anything; but perhaps I can retrace my thoughts.' 'But for the fun of it,' persisted Edna. 'First of all, the sight of the water stretching so far away, those motionless sails against the blue sky, made a delicious picture that I just wanted to sit and look at. The hot wind beating in my face made me think – without any connection that I can trace – of a summer day in Kentucky, of a meadow that seemed as big as the ocean to the very little girl walking through the grass, which was higher than her waist. She threw out her arms as if swimming when she walked, beating the tall grass as one strikes out in the water. Oh, I see the connection now.' (34)

The narrator's consciousness coincides with the successive thoughts that Edna retraces. She explains that she "was not conscious of thinking anything," but then endeavors to "retrace" her "thoughts" (34). As Edna does so, the narrator's consciousness seems to coincide with Edna's detached state as she represents her successive thoughts through speech. The sight of the water "made a delicious picture that" Edna "just wanted to sit and look at" (34). "The hot wind beating in my face," she says, made her "think" – without any connection that I can trace – of a summer day in Kentucky, of a meadow that seemed as big as the ocean to the very little girl walking through the grass" (34). "She threw out her arms as if swimming when she walked, beating the tall grass as one strikes out in the water" (34), she renders. The narrator does not, as Herman and Vervaeck writes, distance herself "from the thoughts arising in the minds of his characters," nor "does . . . [she] side with one of them," making it "difficult to figure out whether [she]" (25) and Edna are two distinct entities as she represents the successive thoughts by talking about them. Thus, when Edna's exploration of her inner realm, in need of narrative meditation, is represented by herself, the authorial and figural mind seem to coincide and fuse with one another. Though the narrator's consciousness becomes hard to separate from Edna's in this fusion, it may enable Edna to grow conscious of her detached state, as the narrator assists her in articulating her experiences. By retracing her own thoughts, which she coneys through speech in a dialogue with Adèle, she arguably indirectly characterizes her self as cohesive, overtly influencing her representation and how the reader imagines it.

Theory on emotional detachment caused by repression holds that when a person with repressive tendencies experiences painful emotions or urges that threaten to tarnish the

existing self, he or she, as opposed to examining them, represses them to regulate them (Garssen 473). Emotions are frequently employed to describe or render cohesion to one's self and experiences that transpire "around" oneself. Emotions are often a source of identity, whether they are immediate and instinctive, or painful and ominous. The psychological repercussions of emotional repression are dire, as "this coping style may impoverish intimate social interactions and may in the long run have a negative impact on the person's own functioning" (Garssen 473). If emotions or desires are rejected from the self, they can manifest in reactions, which the self sees as dangerous.

The authorial narrator's external focalization permits the reader to see that Edna's self often perceives its emotional reactions as threatening to its foundations, despite it being what provides meaning to her self. When Edna, with the assistance of the narrator, analyzed why the sea holds a dear place in her heart, she articulated what previously remained inarticulate and incomprehensible. Feelings, then, complete Edna's self. However, upon meeting Mademoiselle Reisz, the narrator (the focalizer) astutely transcribes how dangerous her self, the focalized, perceives the repressed intense feelings to be. As Mademoiselle Reisz commences playing, the narrator observes that

> the very first chords which Mademoiselle Reisz struck upon the piano sent a keen tremor down Mrs. Pontellier's spinal column. It was not the first time she had heard an artist at the piano. Perhaps it was the first time she was ready, perhaps the first time her being was tempered to take an impress of the abiding truth. She waited for the material pictures which she thought would gather and blaze before her imagination. She waited in vain. She saw no pictures of solitude, of hope, of longing, or of despair. But the very passions themselves were aroused within her soul, swaying it, lashing it, as the waves daily beat upon her splendid body. She trembled, she was choking, and the tears blinded her. (44-45)

Edna's "shadowy" (31) feelings are represented as intense. Edna's rejection is a source of unease and emotional distress, Glendening observes (61), and that her "emotional destitution and maladjustment appear pathological" (58), with pathological referring to "any departure from what is considered healthy or adaptive" ("Pathology"). Mademoiselle Reisz's playing "sent a keen tremor down Mrs. Pontellier's spinal column" (44). Yet, the narrator explains that "it was not the first time she had heard an artist" (44) and felt a "keen tremor" (44), insinuating that it was not the first time she felt a "keen tremor." The narrator's choice of describing her emotional reaction as akin to a "tremor" communicates, to the implied reader, how intense the feelings are to Edna's self, as well as how threatening they appear to be to it. However, the narrator observes a subtle change, representing it as being "ready" to feel "the very passions themselves . . . aroused in her soul" (45). The narrator transcribes and

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represents her Edna's experience of the reaction as a "tremor." Edna "saw no pictures of solitude, of hope, of longing, or of despair" (45), but "the passions themselves . . . beat upon her splendid body," causing her to "trembler . . . chocking, and the tears blinded her (45). Thus, the narrator astutely observes how threatening Edna's self perceives the "passions" to be, but also that Edna is starting to look within. The natural reaction to look within to comprehend repressed, "shadowy" (31) emotions surfacing, the narrator implies, is experiencing them as intense, manifesting in "tremb[ling], chocking, and tears" (45).

The cognitive privilege of the authorial mind enables the narrator, as Cohn writes, to "manifest dimensions of a fictional character that the latter is unwilling or unable to betray" (29), as it informs the psychic depth of the character. The cognitive privilege of the narrator informs the gradually emerging incentive behind Edna's growing awakening to her romantic desire. Elizabeth Leblanc observes that Edna desires a romantic fusion with another person (300). To Leblanc, the person is Mademoiselle Reisz. Edna's desire for Mademoiselle Reisz is "boundless [and] vast" (300). Concurrently as Edna and Mademoiselle Reisz are at Grand Isle, the narrator represents their mutual attraction as romantic. One morning when Mademoiselle Reisz comes "creeping up behind Edna" (65), she inquires,

> 'Do you miss your friend greatly?' asked Mademoiselle Reisz one morning as she came creeping up behind Edna, who had just left her cottage on her way to the beach. She spent much of her time in the water since she had acquired finally the art of swimming. As their stay at Grand Isle drew near its close, she felt that she could not give too much time to a diversion which afforded her the only real pleasurable moments that she knew. When Mademoiselle Reisz came and touched her upon the shoulder and spoke to her, the woman seemed to echo the thought which was ever in Edna's mind; or, better, the feeling which constantly possessed her. (65)

The narrator subtly characterizes their attraction as romantic, observing that Edna feels as if Mademoiselle Reisz "echo[s] . . . the feeling which constantly possessed her[self]" (65). The "feeling" (65) that "constantly possessed" (65) is insinuated, by the narrator, to be romantic. Leblanc argues that Edna "most nearly accesses the power of the erotic not with men, but . . . through her female friends" (300). The inner realm in need of articulation and narrative meditation is Edna's desire for a romantic fusion with another female. Cohn writes that erotic desire constitutes "an inner realm peculiarly in need of narrative mediation," as it is an "experience, with its singularly simultaneous involvement of psyche and soma" (49). Erotic desire, to Cohn, is involved with the "psyche" (49). Mademoiselle Reisz "echo[s]" (Chopin 65) Edna's erotic desire and articulates her erotic desire, serving as a vessel onto which Edna's "world within" (32) becomes articulated and illustrated by the narrator, thus aiding her in representing Edna's eroticism.

Edna's self is represented as intertwined with her erotic desire for a romantic fusion that she locates and experiences in romantic encounters and her sensations. Cynthia Griffith Wolff writes that Edna "can never affirm [her] 'self' merely through silence and [erotic] fantasy" because of the "vital connection between the 'me' and the 'not-me' that validates [her selfhood] and identity" (12). Until now, Edna's self has been represented as dependent upon the "world . . . about" (32) to derive and esteem meaning to her incomprehensible, repressed erotic desire for a romantic fusion, manifesting itself in confusing, "shadowy" (31) emotional reactions. This narrative pattern, Cohn writes, "induces cohesion is the manner in which thoughts and feelings are intertwined with sensations" (31). Edna's repression of her romantic desire is partly relinquished by Mademoiselle Reisz, which permits Edna to experience desire as a part of her self. Thus, her sensations are permitted by Mademoiselle Reisz to be intertwined feelings. As Wolff observes, she uncovers a "vernacular with which to name her feelings" (12), rendering her increasingly capable of containing, esteeming and comprehending her immediate, distinct romantic desire.

Theory on emotional detachment emphasizes that permitting oneself to experience threating and ominous desires is crucial in cultivating a self. This is because a self often is constituted by emotions. A self is not cultivated by cutting off a portion of it, like emotions and desires, but rather by integrating it, rendering it as a part of one's self conscious of it. As such, assigning meaning to emotional stimulus or immediate emotional experiences becomes simpler, since the person is aware of their psychological world within (Garssen 473). Timothy J. Legg writes that detachment "refers to the inability of a person to fully engage with feelings of their own or those of others," asserting that it "may interfere with a person's physical, psychological, emotional, and social development" (Legg). By permitting oneself to feel and experience intense, even "shadowy" (32) feelings, a self can be rendered conscious. The narrator represents Edna's growing ability to engage with Mademoiselle Reisz as a result of engaging with her own romantic desire, making her capable of identifying the emotional states of others. As Mademoiselle Reisz and Edna are conferring at the beach, Edna assigns emotional meaning to Madame Lebrun: Madame Lebrun "'must feel very lonely without her son,' said Edna, desiring to change the subject. 'Her favorite son, too. It must have been quite hard to let him go'" (67). Through Edna's sentences and now internal focalization, it is made clear that she "grows" conscious of others' feelings concurrently because she increasingly engages with her own. This, to the narrator, also makes Edna more perceptive. Edna understands that Mademoiselle Reisz "laughed maliciously" (68) at her observations of Madame Lebrun before replying:

> 'Her favorite son! Oh, dear! Who could have been imposing such a tale upon you? Aline Lebrun lives for Victor, and for Victor alone. She has spoiled him into the worthless creature he is. She worships him and the ground he walks on. Robert is very well in a way, to give up all the money he can earn to the family, and keep the barest pittance for himself. Favorite son, indeed! I miss the poor fellow myself, my dear. I liked to see him and to hear him about the place-the only Lebrun who is worth a pinch of salt. He comes to see me often in the city. I like to play to him. That Victor! hanging would be too good for him. It's a wonder Robert hasn't beaten him to death long ago.' 'I thought he had great patience with his brother,' offered Edna, glad to be talking about Robert, no matter what was said. (68)

Although the narrator renders Edna's impression that Mademoiselle Reisz "laughed maliciously" (68) about her observations concerning LeBrun's' grievances, it is Edna that comes to represent her emotional awareness of other subtly through her perceptions of others. Edna insinuates that Victor was LeBrun's "favorite son" whilst, according to the narrator's representation, emotionally interpreting the significance of the loss. Mademoiselle Reisz responds emotionally to Edna's analysis by saying that she must "miss the poor fellow" (67) herself, thus emotionally engaging with Edna, whom, in turn, employs an observation about Robert, that he "had great patience with his brother [Victor]" (68). Indirectly, their exchange is characterized other as mutual with both engaging in it emotionally. The narrator transcribes her impression of Mademoiselle's laughter, that it is "malicious" (68), and her reaction of talking about Robert – that she was "glad to be talking about Robert" (68). This relinquishes the dissonance and disconnection between them. The emotional depth in Edna's desire is enhanced as her detachment is relinquishes, evident when she says that "I [Edna] thought he had great patience with his brother" (68). Arguably, in this interplay between Edna's own overt characterization of her desire through internal focalization and the narrator's transcription, the reader sees the growing sexual awakening because of Edna's internal focalization.

As the authorial mind (the narrator's) and figural mind (Edna's self) seem to grow closer to each other simultaneously as Edna fully awakens to her romantic desire, it might become hard to separate the two as distinct agents within the text. Herman and Vervaeck write that "the potential confusion . . . [arises] when it is no longer possible to tell the person of the narrator from that of the character – in other words, when the narrator is talking about" (27) herself and operates as a separate thinking agent, and when she transcribes or represents the inner realm literally. "A sentence . . . can be a representation of the consciousness either of the narrating I (the authorial mind) or of the experiencing I (the I as character; the figural mind), and very often it becomes difficult to make the distinction" (27), they observe. After

Robert and Edna return from Grand Isle, they are seated, one evening, and the dinner table. Mr. Pontellier inquires:

> 'Tired out, Edna? Whom did you have? Many callers?' he asked. He tasted his soup and began to season it with pepper, salt, vinegar, mustard-everything within reach. 'There were a good many,' replied Edna, who was eating her soup with evident satisfaction. 'I found their cards when I got home; I was out.' 'Out!' exclaimed her husband, with something like genuine consternation in his voice as he laid down the vinegar cruet and looked at her through his glasses. 'Why, what could have taken you out on Tuesday? What did you have to do?' 'Nothing. I simply felt like going out, and I went out.' 'Well, I hope you left some suitable excuse,' said her husband, somewhat appeased, as he added a dash of cayenne pepper to the soup. 'No, I left no excuse. I told Joe to say I was out, that was all.' (70)

Contrary to previously, when the narrator's external focalization merely rendered Edna's successive thoughts to represent her emotionally confusing reactions, it seems now as if the narrator has melted together with Edna, since she renders her impressions. Briefly, the narrator observes that Edna replies and eats with "satisfaction" (70). Then, in the following part, Edna, not the narrator, is the narrating agent, representing her own inner responses manifested in words to her husband. "Nothing, I simply felt like going out, and I went out" (70), Edna explains. Previously, the narrator would have represented Edna's inner, emotional response to her husband and refrained from permitting Edna to articulate and utter a verbal response. Now, however, it seems as if the novel "combines the character's ideology with that of the narrator's, and because of this ambiguity the reader has a hard time figuring out . . ." (Herman and Vervaeck 27) who functions as the authorial mind (the narrator and focalizer), who transcribes the sexual awakening of Edna and how it develops her self (the focalized), and the figural mind (the character), who is being represented by the focalizer (authorial mind).

The fusion between the narrator's authorial mind and Edna's figural mind complicates the representation of Edna's actual self within the text. Herman and Vervaeck observes that "that there are two levels and two phases [inherent in consciousness representation]: first there is consciousness and then its representation within a narrative" (94). Kristján Kristjánsson observes that the self is perceived "to be some sort of a mental entity . . . – the locus of moral agency (hence a 'moral self'), representing a conscious feeler, thinker and doer, with certain character traits that differentiate it from other selves" (26). A self is a mental construct with a consciousness. In a text, however, "consciousness is considered the deep structure, while its representation is the superficial manifestation of that structure" (Herman and Vervaeck 94). The text itself and the story serve "as . . . so-called foundation . . . for consciousness: it is an abstract and hypothetical construct that often remains irretrievable, meaning that "there is no

way to ascertain what . . . [the characters] were 'really' thinking" (94). A character's "real" successive thoughts are as irretrievable as original utterances in the text. Although it might seem as if the reader is now fully permitted, by the narrator, to access and engage with, as opposed to imagine, Edna's self unconditionally and learn about her growing romantic awakening through her own representation of it, this is arguably due to the narrator's change in attitude towards and fusion with Edna's self.

The fusion is made clear as the narrator alters her attitude towards Edna while she awakens to her romantic desire, which complicates the representation of her self, after she acknowledges her romantic desire, and her relationship with the narrator. As opposed to merely render and assess Edna's successive thoughts when she, for example, confers with Robert, or render Edna's intense, "shadowy" (Chopin 32) romantic reaction when she encounters Mademoiselle Reisz, thus adopting a judgmental and judicial role towards her, the figural mind, the narrator and Edna now seem to agree with each other (consonance) about her romantic desire. Upon being asked by Mademoiselle Reisz if she loves Robert, Edna's almost-lover, she answers,

> 'Yes'. . . It was the first time she had admitted it, and a glow overspread her face, blotching it with red spots. 'Why?' asked her companion. 'Why do you love him when you ought not to?' Edna, with a motion or two, dragged herself on her knees before Mademoiselle Reisz, who took the glowing face between her two hands. 'Why? Because his hair is brown and grows away from his temples; because he opens and shuts his eyes, and his nose is a little out of drawing; because he has two lips and a square chin, and a little finger which he can't straighten from having played baseball too energetically in his youth. Because-' ''Because you do, in short,' laughed Mademoiselle. 'What will you do when he comes back?' she asked. 'Do? Nothing, except feel glad and happy to be alive.' (102)

The narrator observes that Edna "admitted" her love for Robert, and that "a glow overspread her face, blotching it with red spots" (102). The narrator represents Edna's romantic desire for Robert as genuine, observing how the desire manifests physically. However, the narrator abstains from observing and representing how Edna's emotional, romantic desire manifests. In the ensuing emotional questioning by Mademoiselle Reisz, she seemingly fuses with Edna, as Edna represents her own "world within" (16). Edna elaborates on why she desires Robert romantically, detailing his physical looks and that she "feel glad and happy" (102). Her romantic desire seems to coincide and even reconcile with the narrator's previous representation and assumptions concerning her underlying romantic desire. "The character's 'ideology'" combines "with that of the narrator's, and because of this ambiguity the reader has a hard time figuring out the ideology promoted by the text" (Herman and Vervaeck 27). When the narrator fuses with Edna in the dialouge, the narrator represents Edna's romantic

desire as her own, devoid of the need of narrative meditation. As Cohn implies, the characters' unconscious can be represented since the narrator has unrestricted access to their interior selves (39). This provides the "only way to render the emotions and thoughts of which the character is not aware" (Herman and Vervaeck 24), implying that narrative meditation relinquishes once the character is aware of "the emotions and thoughts" (24). The change in the narrator's narrative meditation mirrors her change in attitude towards Edna, reflecting her romantic awakening.

The language Edna, and not the narrator, now uses when she transcribes her desire informs the fusion and their combined "ideologies" (Herman and Vervaeck 24), constituting a type of direct characterization. Mou observes that "instead of allowing . . . [Edna] to use the first-person pronoun 'I,' Chopin keeps the third person pronoun 'she'" (107). In the early parts of *The Awakening*, the narrator utilizes third-person pronouns and judicial directives when she transcribes and observes Edna's confusing, contradictory reactions and successive thoughts: "wishing to go to the beach with Robert, *she should* in the first place *have declined*, and in the second place *have followed in obedience* to one of the contradictory impulses which impelled *her*" (31, my emphasis). Sullivan and Smith contend that the "judicial [and observing] voice, so ironic about other characters but serious about Edna, is the perspective many readers of 'The Awakening' accept. . ." (64). The language receives importance in the representations, as it not merely represents Edna's self and conveys it to the reader, but may mirror the narrator's own embedded opinion of her throughout the narrative. As the narrator observes and represents that Edna gradually acquaints herself with her romantic desire and becomes conscious of it, the narrator gradually permits Edna to represent it directly (direct characterization). Whereas the language employed in the first parts were judicial, omnipotent and observing (Sullivan and Smith 63), even detached, it comes to express and reveal an embedded fondness for Edna, as she herself now represents her romantic desire. Edna acknowledges her desire for a romantic fusion and employs first-person pronouns and amorous adjectives: "'Good-by, *my sweet* Robert. Tell *me* good-by.' He kissed her with a degree of passion which had not before entered into his caress, and strained her to him. '*I love you*,' she whispered (130, my emphasis). Given that Edna speaks to Robert with an intimacy and proximity to her romantic feelings, the narrator is no longer "a discursive intelligence" (Cohn 25) that communicates with the implied reader behind Edna's back, a transcriber or a narrative meditator of Edna's successive, confusing reactions. Rather, Edna communicates with the reader directly. This, however, may cause the reader to perceive Edna and the narrator akin to a unified thinking agent, with Edna representing her self. The narrator's

representation of Edna's desire for a romantic fusion is influenced by her embedded ideology, reflected in the narrator's language employed throughout the first parts when she transcribes Edna's subliminal levels and Edna's own direct characterization.

Edna's self, then, comes to be constituted by the desire for a romantic fusion. The narrator represents this desire as a source of inner cohesion and completeness; that is, once Edna acknowledges that she desires to be fused with a person romantically, as in her confession to Robert, her "shadowy" and "contradicting" (31) emotional reactions subside and are relinquished from the narrator's representation. Initially, the narrator refrains from transcribing the intense, confusing reactions Edna suffers early in the novel, but as Edna consult her feelings, the representation of her self as contradictory and confusing changes to coherent, as she herself becomes the focalizer of her romantic desire (her self), the focalized. The narrator, who has unrestricted access to her self and a cognitive privilege, possesses initially superior knowledge about Edna's desire for this, more than Edna herself (dramatic irony), and implicitly reveals details to the implied reader. Her erotic life, which is represented as an undiscovered part of her self, is thus in need for transcription and mediative narration. The narrator relies on an external focalization to render the articulation of Edna's sexual life, while Edna later conveys it herself through internal focalization. However, Edna's self, even though it is unclear if the narrator intentionally seeks to do so, is portrayed as dependent upon other persons to receive stability and cohesion, suggesting that it is unable to be independent and needs to fuse with others. The gradual change in the narrator's attitude suggests a high degree of consonance and an embedded fondness of Edna. The consonance, however, complicates the representation of Edna's self in that it sees the narrator and Edna fuse when Edna experiences her romantic desire.

2.3   Comparison of the narrators' representations

> "A self is not something static, tied up in a pretty parcel and handed to the child, finished and complete. A self is always becoming" – Madeleine L'Engle, *A Circle of Quiet*

This section compares the narrators' representations, seeking to illuminate how they achieve their respective representations of Edna and Carrie's selves. The comparison builds upon the important findings it uncovered in the proceeding parts and compares the narrators' representations, with emphasis on how they create the representations. The findings encompass how what function desire has on Edna's self is represented by the narrative techniques; how the material objects fragment and create Carrie's self is conveyed by the representation of the narrator; and the effect the role of the narrator as both meditator and transcriber of their mental life has on their selves as literary entities in the novels as texts. It

seeks to illustrate and examine how direct and indirect characterization, external and internal focalization, implied reader, authorial and figural mind, cognitive privilege, unrestricted access, literal consciousness representation and fusion, and dissonance and consonance are utilized to coney and create the literary selves of Carrie and Edna. In examining the findings and the effect of the techniques, the comparison seeks to show how the narrative techniques employed by the narrators create different representations of their selves, even though they may at times use the same techniques. By doing so, the reader will see how significant narrative techniques that the narrator uses contribute to the representations themselves, and how the reader perceives and experiences them in the texts. The section still focuses on the same relationships as in the individual parts about the heroines, and assume the same narrative starting points to create cohesion and enhance their importance in the novels. As such, as opposed to further analyze the representations of Edna and Carrie's selves extensively, this section focuses on comparing the narrators' representations to show how narrative techniques create different representations of literary selves.

Contrary to Edna's self in *The Awakening*, who represents a romantic desire as integral to her selfhood, the narrator of *Sister Carrie* represents Carrie's self as dependent on material objects to provide meaning for it. The narrator of *Sister Carrie* represents Carrie's self as dependent upon external, material objects to esteem its own value. Shortly after performing, and rendering it a "triumph" (313), Carrie is praised for the "quality" (313) of the play in prestigious news magazines, causing the manager to send a "congratulatory message" (314) to her. Carrie is also asked to change chamber to a "comparatively large and commodious with conveniences" (315). The narrator observes that Carrie "breathed with delight. Her sensations were more physical than mental," as she "was hardly thinking at all" since the "heart body were having their say" (315). The narrator transcribes the praise Carrie receives as a modulating force, which seems provoke and even regulate her mental life, as he observes the effect it constitutes on her. "Gradually," the narrator explains, "the defense [of the performance] and congratulation gave her a mental appreciation of her state" (315). The narrator transcribes and articulates the ensuing successive thoughts her "mental appreciation of her state" (315) elicits:

> She was requested, not ordered. The others members of the cast looked at her enviously as she came out arrayed in her simple habit. . . All those who had been her equals and superiors now smiled and smiled the smile of sociability, as much as to say: 'How friendly we have always been.'. . . Doing her simple part, Carrie gradually realized the meaning of the applause which was for her, and it was sweet. (315)

Evidently, according to the thoughts the narrator opts to transcribe, Carrie appears to be more concerned about how the "enviously" looks of "the other members of the cast" render her compared to "those who had been her equals and superior" (315). The adjectives located in Carrie's successive thought – "equals," "superior" – encompasses and denotes a socioeconomic awareness that is of concern for her selfhood. The narrator indirectly characterizes Carrie as more concerned with her socioeconomic position as opposed to the material objects she seeks to emulate and surpass, rendering the items – the chamber, praise and "triumph" (314) – more akin to exchange-values for her self that enhance its value. She seems to relish in the feeling of experiencing herself as superior to the other actresses. Ebby contends that Carrie's relationships with money resembles a "love affair" (2), arguing that "[h]er notorious love affair with money and consumer goods" is not "a matter of greedy consumption but of hungry self-creation" (2). The objects Carrie seeks to attain or emulate, whether it be praise, fame or a new chamber, esteem her self, but only insofar as they enhance her socioeconomic status and how she experiences the value of herself. The narrator represents Carrie's self-creation as constituted and modulated by material objects, indirectly characterizing her self-value as regulated by material objects, which further dictate how she perceives and experiences herself as superior. The narrator of *Sister Carrie*, then, relies at times on implicit characterization, through Carrie's successive thoughts, to convey and represent how integral the social value the item she attains is to her self.

Desire itself, albeit romantic, is represented as integral to Edna's self in *The Awakening*. Contrary to Carrie's self, who derives the value of her self from the value the objects she desires have, it is the desire itself that provides meaning to Edna's self. The narrator of *The Awakening* seems to imply that Edna's desire for a romantic fusion constitutes a source of emotional cohesion and a source for an emotional identity. Late in the novel, the narrator transcribes that Edna experiences days "when she was unhappy, she did not know why, – when it did not seem worthwhile to be glad or sorry, to be alive or dead; when life appeared to her like a grotesque pandemonium and humanity like worms. . ." (78). "It was during such a mood that Edna hunted up Mademoiselle Reisz," the narrator explains to the reader (78). The narrator, through external focalization of Edna's turbulent contemplations, implicitly characterizes Mademoiselle Reisz as a mitigating, soothing presence for her turbulent inner life. Once Edna visits Reisz, the focalization alters to internal, then to external, as the two engage in a dialogue:

> 'I [Mademoiselle] sometimes thought, 'she will never come . . . for I don't really
> believe you like me, Mrs. Pontellier. 'I don't know whether I like you or not,' replied

> Edna. . . . The candor of Mrs. Pontellier greatly pleased Mademoiselle Reisz. She expressed her gratification by repairing forthwith to the reign of gasoline stove and rewarding her guest with the promised cup of coffee. . . (82)

Edna explains that she does not "know whether I like your or not," to which the narrator observes Mademoiselle Reisz's contentment. Although it might seem as if Edna's statement literally denotes that she remains uncertain about her romantic attraction, it may be argued that the narrator's external focalization – of her perception of Reisz as "pleased" (82) and her ensuing polite behavior – refutes this claim. The narrator, evident in the external focalization of Edna's perception of Reisz, relies on implicit characterization through Mademoiselle Reisz's behavior. Her behavior, making coffee and accepting Edna's own observation as opposed to refuting them, imply that their relationship consists of intimacy and emotional acceptance. Mademoiselle Reisz's presence serves as a mitigating presence, soothing Edna's turbulent emotional life through their genuine intimacy. The desire itself for being close to her, the narrator insinuates, supplants Edna's turbulent psychic state, calming and elevating it, concurrently as it remains integral to her notion of selfhood. The need for emotional cohesion and psychological stability cause Edna to seek the company of Mademoiselle Reisz, emanating from her desire for a romantic fusion, who creates cohesion. Thus, Edna's desire for a romantic fusion arguably emanates from a desire for an emotional fusion to stabilize her turbulent emotional life.

Through focalization and characterization, both of the narrators seem to represent their heroines' selves as dependent on the external world to derive some form of psychological or emotional stability. Although it is the romantic desire itself that provide a self for Edna, and Carrie's desire to possess objects to enhance her own value, both of the narrator characterize their selves as modulated, dependent on and conditioned by the external. The narrator of *The Awakening* indirectly characterizes Edna's self as dependent on, among others, Mademoiselle Reisz to derive psychological and emotional stability; whereas the narrator of *Sister Carrie* characterizes her self as modulated by material objects associated with socioeconomic value. However, the narrator of *The Awakening* seems to rely mostly on indirect and direct characterization through Edna's thoughts, dialogue and emotional reactions, whereas the narrator of *Sister Carrie* arguably relies heavily on indirect and direct characterization through Carrie's successive thoughts, action-based behavior and emulation-reactions as opposed to dialogue/speech. Frequently throughout *Sister Carrie*, the narrator characterizes Carrie's emulation-reaction through her successive thoughts, which are provoked once she

emulates. After receiving "hundred and fifty" dollars (321) for her performance at the theater, the narrator renders Carrie's successive thoughts about the value of them:

> With her one hundred and fifty in her hands, Carrie could think of nothing particularly to do. . . . Her clothes had for some time been wholly satisfactory. Another day or two and she would receive another hundred and fifty. It began to appear as if this were not so startlingly necessary to maintain her present state. If she wanted to do anything better or move higher she must have more – a great deal more. (321)

The narrator transcribes her thoughts, observing that Carrie "could not think of nothing particularly to do," but that she "must have more – a great deal more" (321) if she is to realize her mental state of wealth. Even though the successive thoughts are Carrie's, the narrator articulates them to reader, thereby indirectly characterizing her emulation process and self-creation through them. The successive thoughts eventually conclude that Carrie "must have more" (321) to make her mental state realize itself, serving as the incentive behind her ensuing action of performing more in New York. The narrator subtly characterizes Carrie's process of emulation and acting on her mental image of wealth (her desire) through the successive thoughts the narrator articulates and transcribes. These, which emanate from objects (here, money) dictate her self, rendering it modulated by the external.

 The Awakening's narrator, however, relies more on indirect characterization through, in addition to speech and dialogue, thoughts and emotional reactions to achieve her representation of Edna's self's. One time as Edna visits Mademoiselle Reisz, they discuss what the "courageous soul" (83) encompasses. Edna asks,

> 'What do you mean by courageous soul?' 'Courageous, *ma foi*! The soul that dares and defies.' 'Show me the letter [from Robert, delivered to Reisz] and play me the Impromptu. You see that I have persistence. Does that quality come from anything in art?' 'It counts a foolish old woman whom you have captivated,' replied Mademoiselle, with her wriggling laugh. . . . Mademoiselle played a soft interlude. . . Edna did not know when the Impromptu began or ended. She sat in the sofa corner reading Robert's letter. . . . The music grew strange and fantastic – turbulent, insistent, plaintive and soft with entreaty. . . The music filled the room. . . . Edna was sobbing, just as she had wept one midnight at Grand Isle when strange, new voices awoke in her. She arose in some agitation to take her departure. 'May I come again, Mademoiselle?' she asked at the threshold. 'Come whenever you feel like it.' (84)

Edna and Mademoiselle discuss "the courageous soul," a soul that "dares and defies." Edna, now the focalizer (internal), inquiries about what a free soul is, arguably mirroring her increasingly awakened emotional state. After the characterization of Edna's increasing emotional awakening is established through the brief dialogue, the narrator, now the focalizer (external), transcribes and articulates the emotions Mademoiselle Reisz's playing has on her, explaining that, as the "music grew strange and fantastic – turbulent, insistent, plaintive," Edna was "sobbing, just as she had wept one midnight at Grand Isle when strange, new voices

awoke in her" (84). The music not merely provokes, but also regulate Edna's emotions, offering insight into her emotional state. The narrator's indirect characterization of Edna's intense emotional reaction enhances how her self is dependent upon the external. "[N]ew voices" (84) arise in Edna, but they rely on external circumstances to self-actualize and "arise" Although it may seem as if the music merely provokes an emotional reaction within Edna, simply because it is music, the narrator's indirect characterization and external focalization of how her emotional reaction seems akin to intertwined with and regulated by the "Impromptu" imply that it, thus the external, is, as for Carrie, integral to her self. Edna's self is represented as reliant on and constituted by emotions to have a "core." Shortly after, Edna, now the focalizer, asks if she can "come again," to which Mademoiselle replies, "you may come whenever you feel like it" (84). This mutual romantic attraction, arguably evident in the sincerity and shared emotional intimacy underpinning the brief exchange, is made implicit through dialogue. Like Carrie's self, then, Edna's self relies on the external to validate her self. For Edna, though, it provokes "new voices" (84) within her that come to constitute her self. For Carrie, the desire for wealth motivates her to act out her mental images of it. Both of their selves are modulated by the external.

The internal focalization, cognitive privilege and dialogue contribute to the representation of Edna's self as unstable. According to the narrator's representation of Edna's self (that is, as dependent upon and constituted by emotional reactions and romantic desire), it is unstable. As established, Carrie's self is, partly through the narrator's external focalization, cognitive privilege and ensuing narrative meditation and transcription of her successive thoughts, represented as fragmented because of its symbiotic, interdependent relationship with material objects (money, expensive clothes, the theater). Herman and Vervaeck observe that a narrator can serve a cognitive purpose within a text, adopting a cognitive function (70). The narrator may elaborate on cognitive matter, such as thoughts, feelings and perceptions (70). After emulating the "more expensively dressed people" (34), envisioning new mental states of wealth, "[t]he stimulus which prompts the mental transformation" (Ebby 3), and imposing them onto reality, Carrie's self ultimately melts together with the material objects (the theater, clothes), rendering her identity absorbed and derived from them. The narrator, through transcribing her successive thoughts as she encounters material objects, argues that the process of emulation is the reason for its fragmentation, rendering it as temporal and flexible – as a constant, perpetual process in accordance with and reliant on its circumstances. Thus, cognitive function of the narrator within the narrative of *Sister Carrie* is arguably imperative to fully comprehend Carrie's self and the emulation that comes to fragment it. Edna's self,

although equally regulated by the external as Carrie's self, is constituted by emotional reactions, provoked by persons, and a romantic desire, which she seeks to realize (Leblanc 300). Edna "can never affirm [her] 'self' merely through silence and [erotic] fantasy," Wolff observes, because of the "vital connection between the 'me' and the 'not-me' that validates [her selfhood] and identity" (12). Edna's 'me' thus relies on a 'not-me' to facilitate selfhood. The cognitive privilege, dialogue and internal focalization enables the reader to see this. After Arobin writes Edna an "elaborate note of apology" (98) for making a sexual advance towards her, she visits Mademoiselle Reisz and elaborates on her idea of leaving. The narrator observes that

> There was nothing which so quieted the turmoil of Edna's senses as a visit to Mademoiselle Reisz. It was then, in the presence of that personality which was so offensive to her, that the woman, by her divine art, seemed to reach Edna's spirit and set it free. . . The room looked cheerless and dingy to Edna as she entered. . . 'Ah! Here comes the sunlight! exclaimed Mademoiselle. . . 'Aren't you astonished? 'Passably. Where are you going? to New York? to Iberville? to your father in Mississippi? where? 'Just two steps away,' laughed Edna. . . I'm tired of looking after that big house. It never seemed like mine. . . I'm tired bothering with them.' 'That is not your true reason, *ma belle*. There is no use in telling me lies. I don't know your reason, but you have not told me the truth.' (100-101)

The narrator's cognitive privilege permits the reader to learn that "there was nothing which so quieted the turmoil of Edna's senses as a visit to Mademoiselle Reisz," the "divine art" (100), who "seemed to reach Edna's spirit and set it free" (101). The narrator articulates Edna's emotional reaction by labeling it a "turmoil" (100) and explains that Mademoiselle "quieted the turmoil" (100), accessing "[her] . . . spirit and . . .[setting] it free" (101). This narrative meditation on her dependency on Mademoiselle Reisz arguably illustrates how psychologically accustomed to and dependent Edna is on emotional reactions and Reisz to experience herself as having a self. Frequently when Edna visits Reisz, she is in a state of emotional turmoil, relying on Mademoiselle to mitigate it through a dialogue with her. In their intimate conversation, Mademoiselle Reisz seemingly assists Edna in comprehending her turmoil, discussing her potential departure with her and enabling Edna to see purely herself, devoid of the narrator's meditation and Reisz's aid, that her house and a potential emotional longing for it may be the reasons for her turmoil. Given that Edna's self seems to be represented as constituted by intense emotional reactions, one may argue that it is unstable, with the cognitive privilege enabling the narrator to render Edna's emotionally turbulent state and the dialogue, consisting of internal focalization, to mitigate it. Edna's experience of herself and self-image is affected by her emotional reactions, constituting a source of identity for her and dictating her behavior.

Often in *Sister Carrie*, the authorial and figural mind fuse together intermittently when Carrie's successive thoughts arise as she emulates, rendering it close to literal consciousness representation. As opposed to fusion between the narrator (the authorial mind) and Edna (the figural mind) in *The Awakening*, like when the narrator fuses with Edna as she herself represents her emotions in conversations with Mademoiselle Reisz, combining the character's ideology with that of the narrator's (Herman and Vervaeck 27), the authorial and figural mind of *Sister Carrie* frequently fuse together when Carrie's thoughts are represented and transcribed by the narrator as she encounters objects. After acquiring money from her new-found fame, Carrie contemplates purchasing a carpet that costs "ten thousand dollars" (337). She has recently escaped from Hurstwood. The narrator descends to Carrie's subliminal level and transcribes her thoughts:

> Carrie looked vacantly at the richly carpeted floor. A new light was shining upon all the years since her enforced flight [from Hurstwood]. She remembered now a hundred things that indicated as much. She also imagined that he took it on her account. Instead of hatred . . . a kind of sorrow generated [which she had felt before]. Poor fellow! What a thing to have had hanging over his head all the time. (337)

The narrator transcribes that "[a] new light was shining upon all the years since her enforced flight," remembering "now a hundred things that indicated as much" (337). Here, the narrator summarizes Carrie's seemingly emotional memories by rendering her successive thoughts. "A new light was shining upon all the years since her enforced flight," the narrator observes (337). "Instead of hatred," the narrator assesses, Carrie had felt sorrow for Hurstwood when she abandoned, which, also now, elicits a "kind of sorrow" (337). Contrary to Edna in *The Awakening*, who summarizes her memories herself with first-person pronouns, like when she confers with Mademoiselle Reisz and "retraces" her "thoughts" (Chopin 34), it is the narrator of *Sister Carrie* who narrates the emotions Carrie once possessed. Yet, it is arguably unclear if the feeling agent is Carrie or the narrator, as the descriptions appears to be "literal descriptions" (Herman and Vervaeck 127) of how Carrie feels. The narrator summarizes Carrie's memories by transcribing her thoughts, but it remains ambiguous if Carrie is the feeling agent of the "sorrow" as opposed to "hatred," or if it is more of a literal description of Carrie's mental state as opposed to genuine feelings she experiences. The fusion between the authorial mind and figural mind generates confusion as to who narrates and feels, rendering the narrator's transcriptions close to literal consciousness representation.

Carrie's self, as opposed to Edna's self, is temporal and relative. Ebby writes that "[o]ne's self is neither autonomous nor finished; it is relative and a work in progress" (1). That Carrie's self is autonomous and relative enables her to continually envision new mental

states that she seeks to realize – a "story of consecutive transformations of the self" (Ebby 2). Carrie's self, Ebby contends, is constantly "evolving toward the acquisition of more elegant objects and comparison with more glamorous people" (2). This "acquisition of more elegant objects and comparison with more glamours people" (2) inspires new mental states – of wealth, fame – that Carrie attempts to impose onto reality. Psycho-narration, Cohn observes, "has almost unlimited temporal flexibility. It can as readily summarize an inner development over a long period of time . . . or expand and elaborate a mental instant" (34). The narrator's narration of Carrie's self – that he summarizes her mental developments through her states and images of money, retraces her emotions, like the sorrow, represents "old" successive thoughts and transcribes these in the present, like when the thoughts about Chicago are presented – contributes to the representation of her self as temporal. The narrator, at various times, alternates between revealing details about Carrie's feelings in the past and present, omitting what she feels in the present only to later retrace her states and explaining them in the present, summarizing a development in her self. The narrator, for instance, does not reveal that Carrie felt sorrow, or even hatred, when she abandoned Hurstwood, but opts to reveal this when she contemplates purchasing a carpet, which, in itself, bears no resemblance to Hurstwood except for its association with material wealth. This mental, temporal shift in the narrator's transcription effects how the reader perceives Carrie's self, as the narrator's representation of it – here, the thoughts – are what the reader is permitted to see of it. The association of Hurstwood and wealth, Carrie's mental image of wealth and how it evolves permits the narrator to alternate between the past and present to both represent and provide details about her self's development. Hence, the narration contributes to and even enhances the representation of Carrie's self as temporal and relative by transcribing her thoughts about the past in the present. "This method," Cohn notes, "is arresting in a literal sense . . . [as it] draw[s] attention to . . . the temporal progression of the narrative" (43).

Arguably, although the narration itself of *The Awakening* can be characterized as temporal, the narrator does not seem to represent Edna's self as such. The narration of *The Awakening* encompasses elements of temporal narration, such as when the authorial mind (the narrator's mind) and the figural mind (Edna's self) seem to coincide as Edna attempts to "retrace" (34) her thoughts when she is with Mademoiselle Reisz. However, it is Edna that assumes the role of the narrating agent and represents her thoughts herself, not the narrator, as in *Sister Carrie*. In *Sister Carrie*, it is the narrator who transcribes Carrie thoughts about the past. Often, Carrie's thoughts, which frequently emanate from the material objects she emulates, enables her to recreate and self-construct new mental states of wealth that she

aspires to attain and realizes, envisioning and literally fashioning a new self. Carrie's process of mentally self-fashioning a new self renders itself apt at narrative mediation, since the process transpires primarily in her mind (the figural mind), which is what the narrator represents. As Edna's romantic and emotional awakening increases, so does arguably her role as a somewhat growing, independent meditator of her romantic desire and emotional life. After the narrator declares that Edna "was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her. . ." (32), commenting "on the whole course of Edna's experience" (Glendening 59), she assumes a growing, gradual role of a meditator of her erotic life, as illustrated in her intimate conversations with Mademoiselle Reisz. Edna's growing role as a meditator of her erotic life permits her to "grow" closer to the narrator. "During the process," Mou argues, "Chopin also allows Edna to approach closer and closer to the narrator's opinions," charting "Edna's remarkable journey of growth" (104). Although Edna herself retraces her emotions and thoughts to render cohesion to her previously incomprehensible reactions, the narrator's comments, cognitive privilege and external focalization do not imply that Edna's self, contrary to Carrie's self, is temporal and relative, but rather constituted by immediate emotional reactions as provoked by present events (retracing her thoughts, conversations, Reisz playing the piano).

The narrator of *The Awakening* engages the implied reader as a discursive intelligence to communicate details about Edna's incomprehensible reactions and growing romantic awakening, whereas the narrator of *Sister Carrie* uses the psychic life of Carrie as a springboard for "general truth about human nature" (Cohn 23). In authorial narration, such as in *Sister Carrie*, the psyche of the Carrie is suited to reveal aspects of human nature, with the narrator providing generalizations to assert a "narrative stance" (Cohn 23). "Not only is he far more interested in his own commentary on events than in the meditations these events may release within his characters," Cohn observes, "he is also committed by his narrative stance" (23). At the end of Carrie's action-based desire and emulation of wealth, the narrator uses her quest as a springboard to reveal aspects of human nature, writing that

> now Carrie had attained that which in the beginning seemed life's object, or, at least, such fraction of it as human beings ever attain of their original desires. She could look about on her gowns and carriage, her furniture and bank account. Friends there were, as the world takes it – those who would bow and smile in acknowledgment of her success. For these she had once craved. . . Beauty also – her type of loveliness – and yet she was lonely. . . Thus in life there is ever the intellectual and the emotional nature – the mind that reasons, and the mind that feels. Of one come the men of action . . .; of the other, the poets and dreamers. . . As harps in the wind, the latter respond to every breath of fancy. . . it must be remembered that reason had little part in this.

> Chicago dawning, she saw the city offering more loveliness than she had ever known, and instinctively, by force of her moods alone, clung to it. . . Oh, the tangle of human life. (353)

As opposed to morally condemn Carrie's behavior, the narrator opts to represent it as a natural repercussion of her desire, as a part of human nature. He asserts that "in life there is ever the intellectual and the emotional nature – the mind that reasons, and the mind that feels," and insinuates that desire, "life's object," is what humans beings seek to "attain" (353). However, material objects do not equate to genuine happiness, as Carrie, despite having obtained "such fraction of it as human beings ever attain of their original desires," "was lonely" (353). The narrator is "uncritical . . . of Carrie, as evidenced by passage after passage of favorable, sympathetic, or frankly apologetic commentary," Seltzer argues (Seltzer 192). These "apologetic commentar[ies]" (192) occur as generalizations about human nature infused with Dreiser's own thoughts about human nature. Carrie's mental state becomes a springboard for "truths" about human nature, as the narrator refrains from being "critical" (192). However, though perhaps not intentionally, this "commentary," Seltzer contends, may obscure "the innermost meaning of her interminable longing – central to her character and dramatized throughout the narrative" (192). "Understandably most readers have remained oblivious to this meaning since, as the novel abundantly illustrates, Dreiser himself could not apprehend what he had delineated in his portrayal of Carrie's lonely fate," Seltzer astutely observes. One may argue that the "apologetic commentaries" simultaneously communicate what actually beckons Carrie's behavior: a longing (though never explicitly stated) for love and emotional relatedness. The narrator of *The Awakening* does not insert apologetic comments concerning Edna's growing romantic awakening, but reveals details to the implied reader, whom serves as a discursive intelligence in the narrative. Sullivan and Smith observe that "the language describing the awakening is excessive," like in "Mrs. Pontellier was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her (Chopin 31-2). The language used by the narrator is, according to Sullivan and Smith, "excessive" (65) and may reveal the author's "fondness" (65), mirroring her embedded ideology, but it arguably conveys and characterizes the entailments of her inward romantic awakening to the implied reader: social awareness. This type of commentary both indirectly characterizes Edna's awakening while simultaneously "communicating" with the implied reader.

Both Edna and Carrie's selves, however, may be represented as unrealized. Harold Bloom argues that "the narcissistic Edna singly drifts from one mode of reverie to another, until she drowns herself in the sea, which for her . . . represents . . . the inmost self" (3).

"[F]ar from being a rebel, moved by sympathy with victims of societal oppression," Bloom contends, "Edna is even more isolated at the end than before" (3). The narrator illuminates Edna's growing psychological isolation, remarking that "[s]he felt no interest in anything about her. The street, the children, the fruit vender, the flowers growing there under her eyes, were all part and parcel of an alien world" (73). Even though Edna's awakening entails social awareness, the narrator also contends that her now-self-absorption, in her emotional reactions and romantic desire, cause her a sense of psychological isolation. It is "this model . . . of Edna's self," Bloom argues, "a narcissistic self-investment, that awards Edna a new ego" (8). Andrew Delbanco writes that "Edna's 'awakening' never wholly renovates her consciousness" (100). Edna's self is, according to the narrator's representation, isolated, since she is absorbed in her "world within" (Chopin 32) and abstains from devoting attention to her "world about" (32). The servitude of the African-American servants enables Edna to hold her children at a distance and allows her unstable self to persist: "The boys were being put to bed; the patter of their bare, escaping feet could be heard occasionally, as well as the pursuing voice of the quadroon" (70). Her children's life is seemingly abstract to Edna, "a bit of background noise" (100). Thus, though it is unclear if the narrator intends to characterize Edna's self as isolated because of its reliance on emotional reactions, it is implied to be isolated.

As opposed to isolated, Carrie's self is represented as constantly remodeling itself according to the mental states of wealth Carrie imagines, and as affected by the objects she emulates (evident in its fragmentation). Though it may appear, as the narrator contends, that "Carrie had attained that which in the beginning seemed life's object" (353), it is made clear, because of the narrator's authorial narration and cognitive privilege (unrestricted access to the figural mind), that Carrie's emulation will not end. Carrie's self is constituted by material objects and the value she associates with them, implying that she will "come into contact" with new objects to emulate. "The developmental issue" (Zender 70) she encounters is not how to envision a new Carrie, but how to acknowledge "this unresolved need in [her] present life – how to connect . . . to present emotional and developmental possibilities" (Zender 70). Zender's crux coincides with Seltzer's point, that Carrie longs for emotional relatedness. However, given the details the narrator's transcription of Carrie's successive thoughts and his external focalization have revealed about her emulation process – that it instinctively self-creates through observation and envisioning new selves imposed onto reality – it can be asserted that Carrie's self does not realize this deep psychological need.

3   Conclusion

The narrators of *The Awakening* and *Sister Carrie* render two different representations of a literary self. As the analysis has shown, the narrator of *The Awakening* represents Edna's self as reliant on emotional reactions and a romantic desire to facilitate a selfhood. Given that the emotional reactions and the desire for a romantic fusion relies on, in this analysis, Mademoiselle Reisz, her self is modulated by and conditioned by her. By combining theory on emotional detachment caused by repression and psycho-narration, the reader is fully permitted to see the nuances in the narrator's use of psycho-narration to convey details regarding Edna's self to the reader. Combining these two also enables the reader to conceive what role and effect psycho-narration has in the representation of Edna's unstable self. The narrator's use of indirect characterization through dialogue, thoughts and emotional reactions, the internal and external focalization, and the "dialogue" with the implied reader further enhances the impression of Edna's self as emotionally unstable. They "communicate" Edna's unstable, interdependent relationship with its external circumstances throughout the novel, subtly conveying her self's source of emotional stability and psychological cohesion. The focalization, which seems to alter in accordance with Edna's growing romantic awakening, further illuminates how reliant Edna is on emotions, often unstable and provoked by Mademoiselle, to experience a type of identity, whether it be romantic or emotional. Given that her "world within" (32) is deeply elicited and modulated by the "world about" to facilitate her erotic fantasy, Edna "can never affirm . . . [her] 'self' merely through silence and [erotic] fantasy," Wolff observes, because of the "vital connection between the 'me' and the 'not-me' that validates [her selfhood] and identity" (12). This "denial of agency . . . creates a situation where she might as well not have the power to choose," as "circumstances of personality and environment conspire to produce what looks like a negative fate that keeps Edna from realizing her potential," Glendening writes (69). In this view, the narrator represents Edna's romantic desire for a fusion and unstable emotional reactions as determinative forces.

Carrie's self, though represented as equally dependent on the external, in the form of material objects, is represented as relative and temporal. As the analysis has made clear, the narrator represents her self as a continuous emulation process; that is, a process in which Carrie observes, contrasts and emulates, leading to consecutive change and new mental states that she seeks to impose onto reality. As Ebby writes, "Carrie's psychology conforms to the prime tenets of invidious comparison: observation, contrast, emulation, and consecutive

change" (2). Carrie's "desiring relationship to objects is not a matter of greedy consumption but of hungry self-creation," she observes (2). This emulation process is represented as perpetual and as the core of her self, as it effects her perception of herself and cause her to experience herself as superior to "those who had been her equals and superior" (315). However, the narrator's cognitive privilege, unrestricted access and external focalization enable the reader to see that her self becomes deeply fragmented by her emulation process. The narrator's transcriptions of Carrie's successive thoughts highlight the destructive psychological repercussions emulation has on her. He, the authorial mind, access her self, the figural mind, and transcribes Carrie's thoughts as she encounters objects that she associates with wealth and socioeconomic superiority. The transcriptions of her emulation as it ensues come close to literal consciousness representation, providing insight into Carrie's process and how intertwined it comes to be with her sense of self. However, though the narrator never devotes explicit attention to it in his representation, the representation itself might imply that Carrie has unresolved psychological needs. These needs encompass how to emotionally relate to others and "longing for love and emotional relatedness" (Seltzer 192). A combination of psycho-narration and theory on action-based desire and Veblen's theory on emulation thus provide a nuanced picture of Carrie's self and the importance it constitutes in the text as a literary entity and agent.

As examined, the narrators' use of psycho-narration effects how the reader perceives Carrie and Edna's selves, as well as how the heroines' selves are comprehended as entities within the narrative. The narrator of *Sister Carrie* relies heavily on narrative techniques that render themselves apt for literal consciousness representation. These are, but not limited to, translation and transcription of her successive thoughts, mostly external focalization, consonance and fusion of the authorial and figural, and cognitive privilege, all of which relate to the authorial narrator's supreme knowledge of Carrie. These techniques are frequently used by him when he reveals details about her emulation process, like her emphasis on wealth, socioeconomic status and desire to realize her imagined mental states. The techniques allow the reader to access how Carrie's mental states inspire new ones she seeks to realize, culminating in action aimed at realizing them. The narrator of *The Awakening*, however, relies more on internal and external focalization, indirect and direct characterization and cognitive privilege to achieve her representation of Edna's self as unstable. In the beginning, the narrator's external focalization of Edna's erotic, emotional life is translated to the reader because of her unrestricted access to Edna's "world within" (32). Here, the narrator engages the implied reader as a discursive intelligence. As the narrative progresses, however, the

focalization alters more often to internal, as Edna her self serves as the meditator of her erotic life, representing it herself through her conversations with Mademoiselle Reisz. These differences in the narrators' use of psycho-narration create different representations of their selves. Thus, by examining their use of psycho-narration, the reader may be better able to comprehend the role it plays in representing a literary self, and how different narrative devices contribute to creating different representations.

As the thesis has shown, naturalist novels do not necessarily provide inept or inadequate portrayals of literary selves, as commonly held. The selves of Carrie and Edna are shown to be complex, arguably even realistic despite being literary selves. Though the theory used in this thesis is mostly intended to be applied to "real" people, it enhances and brings forth the subtle nuances in the narrators' representations. It illuminates the imperativeness of wealth in Carrie's self and the emulation process that constitutes it; and how reliant Edna is on emotional reactions and her romantic desire for a fusion to have a self. The theory illustrates what role emotions play in Edna's behavior and relationships; and the role of mental states in Carrie's self-creation. *Sister Carrie* and *The Awakening* both convey two complex representations of selves, with both naturalist novels bringing forth the complex bond between a self and external circumstance, desire and feelings, thoughts and mental states, and deep-seated psychological needs. Thus, theories can be applied to fictional characters, adding to the story and causing the characters' selves to become complex to its readers, refuting the claim that naturalist novels are inept at representing consciousness. By partly relying on theories about human beings to analyze the representation of Carrie and Edna's selves, they become complex representations of human beings. Thus, by applying theories intended to be used on "real people," the claim about naturalist novels being inept at depicting consciousness can be refuted.

More academic inquiry can be carried out into how naturalist novels represent literary selves and consciousness. Few inquiries into how naturalist novels represent consciousness have been conducted, perhaps because they are often read through a naturalist "lens" with focus on determinism, pessimism and the role of the environment and heredity. Other naturalist novels are arguably well-suited for this inquiry, such as *Washington Square* (1880) by Henry James or *An American Tragedy* (1925) by Dreiser, and may contribute to refute the long-held claim and bring forth new perspectives on naturalist novels. What is more, if the inquiry additionally combines narrative theory with other suitable theories, to form a concrete approach in which the theories complement and enhance one another, it can bring forth discreet nuances and new perspectives that may otherwise have been overlooked.

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