

Dismantling the Queer Reading of Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle"

Salman M. Salama Abdul-Hamid^{1&2}

¹ Department of English Language, Faculty of Education, Damanhour University, Egypt

² Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Taibah University, KSA

Correspondence: Salman Mohammed Salama Abdul-Hamid, Department of English Language, Faculty of Education, Damanhour University, Egypt. E-mail: salmanmohamed949@hotmail.com

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Abstract

This article aims to prove the inaccuracy of the queer reading of Henry James's "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903). The paper shows how the queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick misinterprets the character of John Marcher as concealing homosexuality. The paper is not just affirming that there are no signs of homosexuality in the selected work, but it also transforms the argument to show how James, as a psychotherapist, treats the anxiety and fear of his male protagonist who behaves strangely in a world full of sophistication. The article concludes that the queer reading of "The Beast in the Jungle" is imprecise and provides a new psychological reading which is based on Implosion Therapy. This new reading adds strength to the perspective which refuses to sexualize everything in James's work.

Keywords: queer theory, implosion therapy, Henry James, John Marcher, Sedgwick

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on analyzing the character of John Marcher in an attempt to dismantle the queer reading of James's novella and to provide the researcher's own reading of James's protagonist. To achieve this, the researcher does a metacritical analysis of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's essay "The Beast in the Closet: James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic" (first published in 1986 in her book *Epistemology of the Closet* which was instrumental to the rise of queer literary theory) in order to question the theoretical foundations upon which she based her queer interpretation of James's novella to prove the falsehood of Sedgwick's claim and her frequent twist of meanings. In addition, based on Implosion Therapy in Psychology, the researcher provides his own new reading of the character of John Marcher.

Henry James's depiction of John Marcher in "The Beast in the Jungle" has generated much controversy and his masculine protagonist is widely interpreted. Without clear textual evidence, some critics tend to describe James's masculine figures as "unconventional," "untraditional," or write about James's own failure to "embody orthodox masculinity" (Haralson & Johnson, 2009, p. 414). This paves the way to the queer reading of James's male protagonist which starts with the publication of that Sedgwick's essay. Generally, some other critics support the queer reading of James's work; they are such as Wendy Graham in *Henry James & Thwarted Love* (1999), Hugh Stevens in *Henry James and Sexuality* (2008), Leland Person in *Henry James and the Suspense of Masculinity* (2013) and Eric Savoy in his collection of essays on Jamesian queerness.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's essay "The Beast in the Closet: James and the Writing of Homosexual Panic" (*Epistemology of the Closet*, pp. 182-213) ushered in a new phase of literary criticism dedicated to exploring James's work, in general, and "The Beast in the Jungle" (1903), in particular, through the lens of queer theory. Sedgwick (1993) points to the "homosexual panic" she and other critics find in James's "The Beast in the Jungle" (p. 208). After Sedgwick's essay, James's writing in general, and "The Beast in the Jungle" in particular, has emerged under the rubric of queer theory.

2. Discussion and Analysis of Sedgwick's Essay

This paper aims to answer the following questions: First: Why Henry James, in particular, is Sedgwick's focus of interest? Second: How is Sedgwick's queer reading of "The Beast in the Jungle" inaccurate? Third: How can we understand the character of John Marcher in the light of Implosion Therapy? Actually, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick,

the mother of queer theory, sees in James a fertile land for her *queer* project. In her essay, she states that James's writing "shows how in James a greater self-knowledge and a greater acceptance and specificity of homosexual desire" (p. 208). Sedgwick sees in every sentence written by James hints of homosexuality because her argument is thoroughly founded on groundless biographical facts. The researcher completely refuses the queer project's reliance on James's own sexuality to justify their viewpoints since literary historians know very little about James's secret sexual life. However, it seems that Sedgwick has answered what literary history has not hitherto clarified. Consequently, everybody has to listen to Sedgwick because she has the absolute truth.

Just to clarify Sedgwick's method of thinking, in her book *Tendencies* (1993), she claims that "what it takes—all it takes—to make the description "queer" a true one is the impulsion to use it in the first person" (p. 8). Thus, in Sedgwick's view, to find a particular queer meaning in a literary work, one needs to isolate it from anything else in the work; and then simply says that it is there. One also may connect it to anything in the universe outside the literary work. This is because, according to this understanding, all meaning is subjectively constructed. In *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), Sedgwick makes bodies and pleasures the basis that explains everything, even our truth. Sedgwick starts her book with a very strange generalization; she explained that our understanding of any aspect of modern Western culture is not only incomplete, but also damaged if it does not "incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition" (p. 1). Moreover, Sedgwick declares that "knowledge meant sexual knowledge, and secrets sexual secrets" (p. 73). This means that all our interpretations of literary works since the publication of Sedgwick's book must be sex-oriented, and all literary criticism must be comprehended through the lens of homo/heterosexual definition. The researcher believes that readers of contemporary criticism are not familiar with such strange claims and generalizations. This is always Sedgwick's habit of judging literary works without giving enough textual evidence and when she gives, she severely distorts the text. What is so strange is that Sedgwick considers her claim as a "tradition" (p. 183) and bases her argument on it. It seems that Sedgwick's start is so confused since she fails to provide fixed criteria through which one can read any literary work *queerly*. The result is that when two men meet accidentally for the first time or when a man refuses to marry or get in love, Sedgwick immediately starts to talk about the "male homosexual panic" (p. 183) that can be read in the scene.

Sedgwick proceeds to provide her *queer* premises on which her project is based. In order to prove the presence of what she calls "male homosocial bonds that structure *all* culture-at any rate,"!!! (p. 184) she quotes Claude Lévi-Strauss's definition of marriage and Heidi Hartmann's definition of patriarchy in their book *The elementary structures of kinship* (1969). Like Lévi-Strauss, Sedgwick believes that marriage is not a relationship between a man and a woman. On the contrary, it is a relationship between two groups of men in which "the woman figures only as one of the objects in the exchange, not as one of the partners" (p. 184). Furthermore, Sedgwick approves Hartmann's definition of patriarchy as "*relations between men*", which "establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women" (p. 184). After quoting Claude Lévi-Strauss and Heidi Hartmann, Sedgwick starts to talk about the "widespread, endemic male homosexual panic as a post-Romantic phenomenon" (p. 186). Furthermore, she introduces a new term which is "Paranoid Gothic" which means "Romantic novels in which a male hero is in a close, usually murderous relation to another male figure" (p. 186). She is actually paving the way for her queer reading of "The Beast in the Jungle". This is the way Sedgwick comes out with such an indisputable conclusion: men really desire each other, but it is the society's intolerance of homosexuality that forces them to remain in the closet.

This understanding is completely misleading for the following reasons: First, Sedgwick misleads her readers when she bases her argument on the above-mentioned quotations. It is not reasonable in the twentieth century that has witnessed the widely celebrated feminist movement that advocates women's rights and her position in the social network to degrade women and consider them, in Lévi-Strauss's words as "one of the objects in the exchange". Second, Heidi Hartmann's words indicate that women are intellectually, morally and socially inferior or of lower rank compared to men who are there to "dominate women". They marry women as a means to bond with other men and this "homosocial" bonding also causes "homosexual panic." Thus, the entire Western culture is governed by feelings of homosexual desire. Third, from the very beginning of her essay, Sedgwick is used to surprising us with her unjustifiable generalizations. Logically, no one can believe Sedgwick when she says "male homosocial bonds that structure *all* culture-at any rate" (p. 184). This is because it is irrational to declare that all cultures of the world are male supremacist. Apparently, as most queer theorists, Sedgwick is trying here to transgress laws of equal rights. Lee (2005) asserts that queer theorists naturally "reject the compromising liberal finitude of equal rights". They wish to "*queer* society, to expose the essential *queerness* of everyone and everything" (p. 427). Fourth, we must try to convince ourselves here, after reflecting on Sedgwick's *queer* conclusion, that genuine love in literature is just a great lie. This means that Romeo did not love Juliet; he was a

liar and a homosexual in the closet. He was, in fact and according to Sedgwick's unmistakable understanding, sexually attracted to Capulet; the patriarch of the house of Capulet and Juliet's father in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Similarly, Tristan was not in love with Isolde; the Irish princess in the famous three acts music drama by Richard Wagner. He was in love and desired King of Ireland, Isolde's father, but it is the society's intolerance of his homosexuality that forces him to remain in the closet and to pretend that he is in love with Isolde.

Lee (2005) also draws our attention to the fact that the legislations of closing gay bathhouses and sex clubs that were decreed after the AIDS epidemic during the late 1980s and early 1990s, "had a lot to do with the birth of queer politics and queer theory" (p. 425). It is noteworthy here to remind ourselves that Sedgwick's essay was first published in 1986 in her book *Epistemology of the Closet*. Although many gays welcomed the new regulations as a life-saving measure, "others saw them as attempts to suppress gay sexuality" (p. 425). This explains, in Lee's words, why queer theorists "wish to dissolve the categories of sexual identity" and, with them, "the way in which society has invested sexual identity with moral value" (p. 426). As a result, the new queer dogma that queer theorists adopt becomes: "Instead of whom you have sex with, queer theory is interested in how you obtain sexual pleasure" (p. 426). This is why Sedgwick, in her essay, declares that "the treatment of certain other physical pleasures is given an immediacy that seems correspondingly heightened" (p. 191). Apparently, Sedgwick is trying here—in line with the prevailing queer philosophy in this decade—to alter the focus of interest from "whom you have sex with" to how you "obtain sexual pleasure." Strangely enough, she, once again, alters the course of discussion to a new claim; she bases her argument on Freud so as to prove that the homosocial desire or men's hidden desire for men is the pivotal clue in understanding the inner workings of John Marcher or any literary protagonist living or remaining in the closet.

After basing her argument on Claude Lévi-Strauss's definition of marriage and Heidi Hartmann's definition of patriarchy, Sedgwick also founds her argument on Freud's essay on Dr. Schreber and "the mechanism of paranoia." In fact, Freud is also to blame because he looked for hints of homosexuality in every close male relationship. Sedgwick believes that "Freud's formulation, in the case of Dr. Schreber, that paranoia in men results from the repression of their homosexual desire" has everything to do with conditions "of intense male homosocial desire" (p. 187). Freud claims that paranoia is derived from an individual's repression of homosexual desire. Schreber's feeling of being persecuted by another man arises, for Freud, from Schreber's hidden desire for that man. In this way, Sedgwick can find the so-called "homosocial desire" not only in "The Beast in the Jungle", but anywhere in literature as well as long as two men are involved. Actually, Sedgwick's adoption of Freud's theory lays the groundwork for a fatal generalization. How can one believe that when men marry or make love to women, they do so to express their love or hatred to each other!!? Moreover, Sedgwick does not mention a single word concerning such noble feelings that humans feel and live every day and every minute; feelings such as true friendship between men or true love between men and women. Alas, all now is governed and motivated by the repression of homosexual desire in Sedgwick's viewpoint.

With regard to "The Beast in the Jungle", Sedgwick starts talking about it saying that it is one of the "bachelor fictions" in which "the woman desires the man but the man fails to desire the woman" (p. 195). Sedgwick believes that James's protagonist, John Marcher, "does not even know that desire is absent from his life, nor that May Bartram desires him, until after she has died from his obtuseness" (p. 195) and instead of giving some textual evidence to support her claim, she goes back to the myth of James's supposed homosexuality. She tries to sexualize James's biography in order to prove that he seems "to have made erotic choices that were complicated enough," and these "erotic choices" that permeate James's biography, in Sedgwick's belief, have made him "an emboldening figure for a literary discussion of male homosexual panic (p. 195). Sedgwick then comes with her *queer* judgment that Marcher's story with May Bartram is just a retelling of the "tragic story of James's involvement with Constance Fenimore Woolson;" a story in which this intelligent American woman author, who clearly loved him," (p. 196) without knowing that James, "in whose life the pattern of homosexual desire was brave enough" (p. 197), did not desire her.

It appears that Sedgwick is trying to found her queer reading on psychobiography, which gives an account of the life of an author trying to show how the author's life affects his/her own writing, in order to find an explanation for John Marcher's riddle. This means that Sedgwick stresses the effect of James's unconscious motives on his work, namely James's textual production is primarily the expression of James's repressed emotions. This is actually a good approach but the real problem lies in Sedgwick's employing of it since James's own biography does not contain a single explicit declaration of his so-called homosexuality. Contrary to Sedgwick's claim, several entries in James's diaries and letters indicate that he does have noble love stories with several women. Haralson & Johnson (2009) assert that James did have a sympathetic love story with his cousin Mary (Minny) Temple. Haralson & Johnson state that Mary's 1870 death is frequently seen as "a major reason James never

married. He immortalized Minny in several of his women characters, most notably Isabel Archer in *The Portrait of a Lady* [1881] and Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove* [1902]" (p. 440). James received the news of her death in England and with great shock. To his mother, in *The complete letters of Henry James, 1855-1872*, he wrote: "Her death is full to overflowing of sadness. It comes home to me with irresistible power, the sense of how much I knew her and how much I loved her" (p. 336). Moreover, James seemed to have felt great sorrow because of losing a cousin whom he loved and idealized. They were both young, she cared for him and he cared for her, and in an early letter, in *The complete letters*, he revealed how he tried to commemorate her death (as well as her life) through his fiction:

While I sit spinning my sentences, she is *dead*: and I suppose it is partly to defend myself from too direct a sense of her death that I indulge in this fruitless attempt to transmute it from a hard fact into a soft idea. Time, of course, will bring almost even-handedly the inevitable pain and the inexorable cure (p. 345).

Consequently, Sedgwick's reliance on psychobiography does not benefit her queer project, particularly if one puts into consideration the following biographical facts, which are stated by Zacharias (2008): James "develops friendship with Minny Temple" in 1861 (p. 6). In March 1870, "Minny dies of tuberculosis and James returns to Cambridge in May" (p. 7). In a letter to Grace Norton in 1880, James writes, "I shall never marry; I regard that now as an established fact" (*Letters*, Vol. 3, p. 54). In 1880, James "Meets Constance Fenimore Woolson" in Florence (p. 8). Depending on this biographical evidence, I can declare that James does not *desire* Constance Fenimore Woolson because of his homosexual orientation, but because he decides not to marry after the death of his beloved Minny. Sedgwick's analogy is thus wrong. Neither James nor his protagonist, John Marcher, suffers from "homosexual panic" that forces them not to desire women and to live in the closet of their phobia.

Strangely enough, Sedgwick contradicts herself when she admits that "The Beast in the Jungle" does not seem to "center emotionally or thematically on such [homosexual] bonds" (p. 200). She asserts that the homosexual panic in "The Beast in the Jungle" is not manifested in such a clear way but it can be concluded and understood from "fear of heterosexuality or of the other sex" (p. 201). Although she has previously claimed that male homosexual desire is the essence of culture and criticism, she claims that in "The Beast in the Jungle," which is written at the beginning of the new century, "the possibility of an embodied male-homosexual thematics has a precisely liminal presence. . . I would argue that to the extent that Marcher's secret has a content, that content is homosexual" (p. 201). Obviously, we can consider this quote as a clear Sedgwickian confession that her queer reading of James's novella is just based on what is "liminal" or felt or experienced by a reader depending on his/her conscious awareness. One may indignantly accept this if Sedgwick means, such as in Reception Theory, to emphasize the role of the reader in making meaning from a literary text. Unfortunately, she bases her entire project on guessing and feelings. The researcher can see that Sedgwick is trying here to force her queer reading of "The Beast in the Jungle" on her readers via imposing her *queer* project on the text. Who can believe that men's reluctance and lack of desire to women are because of concealing homosexual desire!!?

Sedgwick also maintains that in "The Beast in the Jungle", James uses some "lexical pointers to a homosexual meaning" (p. 203) and she quotes with emphasis the following quotation from the novella:

The rest of the world of course thought him queer, but she, she only, knew how, and above all why, queer; which was precisely what enabled her to dispose the concealing veil in the right folds. She took his gaiety from him (pp. 9-10).

Apparently, this is a pure Sedgwickian twist of meaning. The researcher would like here to comment on James's use of the word *queer* in his work in order to prove that James does not mean *gay* when he uses it. James repeatedly uses the term *queer* to describe his characters not only in "The Beast in the Jungle," but also in other literary works such as *Roderick Hudson* (1875) and in "The Pupil" (1891). James uses the word *queer* fourteen times in *Roderick Hudson*, four times in "The Pupil" and four times in "The Beast in the Jungle". Critic such as Eric Haralson insists that James's frequent usage of the term in his work denotes that his characters can be thought of as homosexual figure. Eric Haralson confirms that "these characters can be meaningfully thought of as "queer" (or "gay") in an anticipatory sense" (p. 23). Actually, the term *queer* in its Victorian usage refers to a range of conditions without definite reference to homosexuality. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the earliest citation of *queer* meaning homosexual dates from 1922 ("queer"), six years after James's death. In the United States, this newer meaning (*queer* as homosexual) is used in spoken and written English after 1922. Moreover, according to *Microsoft Encarta Dictionary*, the word still has other meanings such as "not usual, eccentric, suspicious or nauseated." (Microsoft Encarta CD-ROM, 2008) Commenting on the usage of the word in English language, *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* writes:

Over the past two decades, an important change has occurred in the use of queer in sense 2d [homosexual]. The older, strongly pejorative use has certainly not vanished, but a use by some gay people and some academics as a neutral or even positive term has established itself (Merriam-Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2008).

One can notice that the "older, strongly pejorative use of the word" queer—as eccentric, unconventional, mildly insane, touched or obsessed—"has certainly not vanished". Consequently, one cannot claim that James means homosexual when he uses the word queer. This is only the understanding of Eve Sedgwick, Eric Haralson and the like. Furthermore, if one accepts Eric Haralson's claim that James's "queer" characters are "gay", it will be impossible for him/her to interpret James's description of the Lights, in *Roderick Hudson*, as "queer people" (pp. 107, 108) since it is so ridiculous to say that the whole family members, men and women, are gays and lesbians. In fact, when James uses the word queer, he employs it in its older and pejorative sense. Some selected examples from the above-mentioned literary works can support this declaration. In *Roderick Hudson* (Wildside Press, 2008), James refers to the Lights twice as "queer people" (pp. 107, 108) and to Christina Light's dress when she was five years old as "queer little dress" (p. 166). James also writes, "He spoke a queer jargon of Italian" (p. 180) and "a queer little old woman" (p. 238). In "The Pupil" (Oxford University Press, 1984), James writes "the queerness of the Moreens" (p. 192) and "Morgan had a queer little conscious lucid look" (p. 221). In "The Beast in the Jungle", James writes about Marcher: "He hadn't disturbed people with the queerness of their having to know a haunted man" (p. 8) and "He had never at any stage of his queer consciousness admitted the whisper of such a correction" (p. 16). Consequently, all these quotations make it impossible to claim that James means *homosexual* or *gay* when he uses the word *queer* and it is dishonest and illogical to take one example from James's work and twist its meaning while neglecting many other examples that cannot be twisted. For James, the word still carries its traditional range of meanings. James uses the language of his time, not ours, and the word has a very broad range of meanings rather than *homosexual* or *gay*.

Sedgwick (1990) mentions some other "lexical pointers" from "The Beast in the Jungle" which implies James's hidden reference to homosexuality; they are such as "the great affair" (p. 6), "the catastrophe" (p. 7), "his predicament" (8), "the real truth" (p. 9), "his inevitable topic" (p. 11), "all that they had thought, first and last" (12), something "more monstrous than all the monstrosities we've named" (p. 18) and "all the loss and all the shame that are thinkable" (p. 19). Sedgwick finally comes with her conclusion "that a homosexual meaning becomes, to the degree that it does become, legible" (p. 203) and that "it is not a closet in which there is a homosexual man, for Marcher is not a homosexual man. Instead, it is the closet of, simply, the homosexual secret—the closet of imagining a homosexual secret" (p. 205). We can understand then that Sedgwick's queer reading of "The Beast in the Jungle" is not based on clear undertones of homosexuality in the novella, but on Sedgwick's attempts to make the story of John Marcher applicable and parallel to James's alleged and so-called homosexuality—which is impossible to be biographically proved—and on her supposed "lexical pointers to a homosexual meaning" (p. 203). These "lexical pointers" are elastic and can convey a variety of interpretations and connotations if just cleverly twisted in such a Sedgwickian way.

The researcher sometimes feels as if Sedgwick is practicing her queer project on people who have not read James's novella. It is May Bartram who mentions "the great affair" (p. 6) and Marcher replies a few words later "Here I am, you see. It hasn't been overwhelming" (p. 6). Then, May says once again "Then it hasn't been love" (p. 6). It is not logical to believe that May loved and remained faithful to Marcher in spite of her knowing that he is a gay in a period of time in which homosexuality was more offensive and socially-degraded than nowadays. Also, if "the catastrophe" (p. 7), as in Sedgwick's own understanding, really means Marcher's homosexuality, why then he keeps asking May Bartram to "watch with" him and not to leave him? The researcher thinks if he is really gay, he will enjoy men's company and will not be in such a terrible need for May. Moreover, if one reads the sentence from which Sedgwick quotes "his predicament" (p. 8), he/she will find out that it is as follows: "her interest in his predicament; from her mercy, sympathy, seriousness, her consent not to regard him as the funniest of the funny" (p. 8). It is neither sensible nor rational to believe that "his predicament" means Marcher's homosexual panic since homosexuality was not a funny thing in that particular time, and Marcher describes himself later in the same page as "a haunted man" (p. 8); a man who really fears a "crouching Beast in the Jungle" which is ready "to slay him" after "the inevitable spring of the creature" (p. 9). All this definitely clarifies that Marcher's fears are related to something in the future; something that has not happened yet. Consequently, it can be said that these so-called "lexical pointers" to homosexual panic in James's novella do not, in fact, indicate any homosexuality; they just denote Sedgwick's clever twist of meanings.

Whatever the content of Marcher's inner secret and repressed desire, the question that may surly persist in the mind is: What about May Bartram? Why does she prefer to waste all her life desiring a homosexual man? On

answering this question, Sedgwick admits that each one has a certain role in the other's life. For Marcher, according to Sedgwick, his relationship with May represents "a playacting of heterosexuality that is conscious of being only window dressing" (p. 206). And her presence in his life "does nothing to his closet but furnish it: camouflage it to the eyes of outsiders, and soften its inner cushioning for his own comfort" (p. 206). On the other hand, and in Sedgwick's viewpoint, May Bartram truly desires Marcher, and her "involvement with him occurs originally on the ground of her understanding that he is imprisoned by homosexual panic; and her own interest in his closet is not at all in helping him fortify it but in helping him dissolve it" (p. 206). If one supposes here that Marcher is a homosexual man and that he chooses May just to live peacefully in an antigay society, how can one believe that a beautiful young lady such as May could waste her entire life waiting for a homosexual man to convert into heterosexuality until she dies of grief because of his neglect. It seems impossible to believe such a claim unless we employ the same Sedgwickian criteria that May is also imprisoned by homosexual panic. Namely, she is a lesbian who is exploiting Marcher just to camouflage her closet to the eyes of outsiders. What is more, the final moment of "The Beast in the Jungle" shows how Marcher's anxiety and phobia- not homosexuality-have blinded him before May's death. Marcher realized that it was she whom "he had missed. This was the awful thought, the answer to all the past... The escape would have been to love her; then he would have lived" (p. 29). Beside May's grave, Marcher had a hallucinating image of the beast about to jump and attack him, and therefore, in order to avoid it, "he flung himself, face down, on the tomb" (p. 29) in absolute desperation.

3. A New Reading of James's Novella

After reading a lot about Implosion Therapy, The researcher could better understand the character of John Marcher and became more convinced that Sedgwick's queer reading of James's protagonist is inaccurate. Although the term was first coined in the 1950s by Thomas Stampfl and the first published description of Implosive Therapy appeared in 1964 (Storms, 2016), the researcher can confidently assert that the technique was long ago implemented by Henry James in 1903 when he wrote "The Beast in the Jungle". James did have a particular interest in Psychology. He was the brother of philosopher and psychologist William James, and many of James's stories can be read as psychological ones. For instance, James regarded his masterpiece *The Portrait of a Lady* as a psychological novel that explores the minds of his characters. Moreover, many literary critics and scholars have praised James for his psychological and moral realism. Regarding Marcher's case, the researcher can assert that Henry James, our psychotherapist, is trying in his novella to treat the anxiety and fears of John Marcher with a psychological method. This method is known in psychology as *Implosion*, and it is defined as:

A behaviour therapy technique in which anxiety arousing stimuli are vividly presented in imagination; the patient repeatedly experiences intense anxiety in the absence of objective danger until the anxiety response is extinguished (Bhatia, 2009, p. 204).

Definitely, there is no any physical or concrete beast in the novella; it is only in Marcher's own imagination and marcher's own creation. The phobic nature of Marcher's life and existence is so obvious from the very beginning of the novella. John Marcher gives a free rein to his fears and fantasy until they control his own life, while at the same time keeping active attention of what is happening around him. The natural outcome is a life in which the imaginary vision of the supposed beast has controlled Marcher's existence. The researcher can say that while reading the novella, one feels as if having two Marchers; the superstitious Marcher who keeps talking about the beast which only exists in his imagination, and the real Marcher who is well aware of May Bartram's love "but in the chill of his egotism and the light of her use" (p. 29). Fortunately, the two perspectives intermingle to constitute the psychotherapy process in which Marcher gets rid of all his anxiety and fears that are so common in many of Marcher's modern contemporaries. However too late when it occurs, the researcher believes that at the end of the novella, Marcher does reach a moment of psychological relief, an instant of reconciliation with himself. The novella can be read as a parable about James' own life from a certain perspective. Just as Marcher, James never married, and it is possible to say that Marcher's loneliness and anxiety reflect what James regretted and what he called the "essential loneliness" of his life (Caws, 2006, p. 75).

In implosive therapy, and without direct contact, the psychotherapist (James) creates the simulation process in which anxiety is aroused by only imagining the stimuli (the beast). Moreover, in implosion therapy, the client (Marcher) imagines scenes that are related to the client's most feared mental image. In James's novella, John Marcher's life has been a fantasy of imagination: when he met May (the watcher of the implosive therapy) at the beginning of the novella, he "devoted more imagination to her than to all the others", and only then he realized that "she was there on harder terms than anyone" (p. 2). James has started Marcher's psychotherapy since the first moment he met May. When he met her, "he was really almost reaching out in imagination" (p. 3). The researcher was not surprised when he found out that May Bartram was well aware of Marcher's case because

speaking about a “crouching Beast” that was “destined to slay him” (p. 8) would be so strange unless we put in consideration that in implosive therapy, an individual often imagines the aspect of his/her fear, the cue, that may be associated with a particular fear or other emotions. May stayed by Marcher’s side not because of her falling in love with a man who is overwhelmed by homosexual panic, but because of “her mercy, sympathy, seriousness, her consent not to regard him as the funniest of the funny” (p. 8). To Marcher she once said: “We’ve had together great imaginations, often great fears” (p. 18) because Marcher was always preoccupied with the image of the beast which provoked his anxiety during his implosive therapy; “the torment of this vision became then his occupation” (p. 25). On one occasion and during his conversation with May, he asked her whether or not he had been “a bigger idiot” or whether he had lived with “a vain imagination” (p. 20). May’s reply was: “The door isn’t shut. The door’s open” (p. 20). May’s role was always to encourage Marcher to face his fears and to enjoy life. Furthermore, she was keenly conscious of “her giving him this constant sense of his being admirably spared” (p. 8). On the other side, Marcher put his trust in her; “he accepted her amendments, he enjoyed her corrections” (p. 3).

In addition, in implosive therapy, the client is repeatedly exposed to anxiety-provoking stimuli. “These stimuli are usually presented in the form of visual imagery guided by the therapist’s vivid descriptions” (Storms, 2016, p. 5). In “The Beast in the Jungle”, James, our therapist, frequently exposes Marcher to the image of the crouching Beast in the Jungle, and as the novella moves forward, the imagery becomes more frightening and more catastrophic. Marcher said to May: “I’ve repeatedly thought; only it always seemed to me of old that I couldn’t quite make up my mind. I thought of dreadful things” (p. 17). The client, during implosive therapy, is left to feel as much anxiety and fear as possible. This exactly what happens with Marcher in James’s novella when he, even in the company of May, is completely absorbed in thinking about “the imagination always with them”, and with her, he has spent “incalculable moments of glaring out, quite as with the very eyes of the very Beast” (p. 12). The healing powers of James’s technique in reducing Marcher’s fears and anxiety are so obvious and can be easily observed in the final scene when Marcher finds out that May’s dying, “her death, his consequent solitude—that was what he had figured as the Beast in the Jungle” (p. 22). Still, one may ask the following question: Why does James choose a beast to symbolize the fear and anxiety associated with Marcher and his modern fellowmen? This is actually because James’s works are alive with references to biblical events and classical mythology, and he recurrently makes good use of the mythic materials and creatures of Judeo-Christianity in order to shed light on the evil that become so prevalent in the modern world. James creates the beast so as to employ it as the anxiety-provoking stimuli in Marcher’s implosive therapy. At the end of the novella, Marcher’s fears and anxiety faded away when he got used to the anxiety-provoking stimuli (the beast), when he was exposed to the painful shock of May’s death, and when he found out that “the escape would have been to love her” (p. 29). He fell on her tomb out of despair; not out of fear. May’s death awakened Marcher whom she loved deeply and whom she spent all her life trying to convince to face the fear-inspiring stimuli in order to extinguish his fear. This is how James was the first to implement the technique of Implosive Therapy in his 1903 novella.

4. Conclusion

In brief, unlike Sedgwick’s claim and her queer project, there is no homosexuality in “The Beast in the Jungle.” The current paper evidences the blend of Literature and Psychology. In “The Beast in the Jungle”, James’s therapeutic novella, the client, John Marcher, was exposed to a phobic object represented by his imaginary beast which was the anxiety-producing event in the novella. Marcher’s exposure to and encounters with his imagined beast continued until his anxiety vanished. However, it vanished too late after May had died since, all in all, Marcher’s story paralleled that of James. Exactly such as James, Marcher was a confirmed bachelor. Beside May’s grave, came the final realization when Marcher finally realized that the imagined beast was not such harmful; the gross loss was losing May herself. In this psychotherapeutic novella, Henry James, the psychotherapist, let Marcher pass this traumatic experience and imagine the beast, but this turned out to be an effective technique not only when Marcher overcame his fears and anxiety, but also when he finally realized his grave loss of May Bartram. It is a Jamesian call for life and love; a call for every modern man to get out of the shell of his unjustified egotism, anxiety and paranoia, or else to remain confined forever in his prison of essential loneliness.

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