

**Performance of Hallucinatory Figure
in Mary Chase's *Harvey* and David Auburn's *Proof***

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Abstract

*Having a disordered mind, the hallucinatory distorts an individual's ability to separate truth from illusion, confusing dream with reality, making them almost indistinguishable. For the hallucinatory, the images seen and the voice heard are real. The characters are haunted by loss or grief, and from that loss or grief the hallucinatory figure is born. Although the hallucinatory figures are featured in some of the theatrical works, but they have gone largely unnoticed. There is no systematic study on hallucinatory figures or their purpose within the play. Nor is there any analysis of the different ways in which a playwright may choose to shape them or the affects their reveal has on the audience's perception of the character. It is the purpose of this study to create a systematic guide to the hallucinatory figure on the stage through Mary Chase's (1906-1981) *Harvey* (1945) and David Auburn's (1969-) *Proof* (2000).*

Keywords: Hallucination, Truth, Illusion, Loss and grief

أداء شخصية المهلوس في مسرحتي "هارفي" لماري شاس و"الإثبات" لديفيد أبرن
المستخلص

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استاذ مساعد بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية- كلية الآداب- جامعة بنها

يمتلك المهلوس عقلية مضطربة ومن خلالها لا يستطيع التفرقة بين الحقيقة والخيال، ومن ثم لا يستطيع أيضا أن يميز بين ما يراه في أحلامه أو في الواقع حيث أنه يتخيل الصور والأصوات كأنها حقيقة داخل عقله المضطرب. و من خلال الشعور بالفقد والحزن الذي يطارد نفسه، تنشأ شخصية المهلوس وبالرغم من كثرة هذه الشخصيات المهلوسة التي تناولتها الأعمال المسرحية فانهم لم يحظو باهتمام كبير. لم يكن هناك منهج منظم أو غرض معين لإظهارهم علي خشبة المسرح، ولم يكن هناك أي تحليل للطرق المختلفة لإبرازهم علي المسرح. لهذا فالغرض من هذه الدراسة إبتكار طريقة منهجية لشخصية المهلوس علي المسرح من خلال مسرحتي "هارفي" لماري شاس و"الإثبات" لديفيد أبرن، فلقد حان الوقت أن يتقبل المجتمع هذه الشخصيات المختلفة والسماح لهم بالاندماج بين البشر دون النظر الي اختلال عقولهم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهلوسة، الخيال والحقيقة، الخيال والواقع، الفقد والحزن، شخصية المهلوس، المجتمع الأمريكي

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Hallucination has been generally defined as “percepts arising in the absence of any external reality-seeing things or hearing things that are not there” (Sacks ix). Having a disordered mind, the hallucinatory distorts an individual’s ability to separate truth from illusion, confusing dream with reality, making them almost indistinguishable. For the hallucinatory, the images seen and the voice heard are real. The hallucinatory figure can be created by a “wandering mind” (xiv), which is identified as a haunted mind. The characters are haunted by loss or grief, and from that loss or grief the hallucinatory figure is born.

Although the hallucinatory figures are featured in some of the theatrical works, but they have gone largely unnoticed. There is no systematic study on hallucinatory figures or their purpose within the play. Nor is there any analysis of the different ways in which a playwright may choose to shape them or the affects their reveal has on the audience’s perception of the character. It is the purpose of this study to create a systematic guide to the hallucinatory figure on the stage through Mary Chase’s (1906-1981) *Harvey* (1945) and David Auburn’s (1969-) *Proof* (2000).

This study will identify two different kinds of hallucinations which will appear in the plays. The first representation includes a figure that is both seen by the audience and by a character on the stage. These figures are physically embodied by an actor and are generally linked directly to the immediate family within the play. The second representation includes a figure that is not seen by the audience but is visible to a character on the stage. In this particular form of representation, the audience sees that the character can see the figure but does not directly see the figure themselves. This particular representation will be referred to through the dialogue which is used to create the figure. This performance on stage determines participation from the audience as the absence of a physical actor engages their imagination and actively asks that they suspend their disbelief. Each of these plays features a comparison between a hallucinatory figure that is either physically present or one that is constructed through the dialogue. Throughout the two plays, the hallucinatory figure reveals something essential about American life and the character of human being who need to connect to another being, allowing the characters and the audience to explore a different world.

The hallucinatory figure has been tackled theatrically for many centuries. It has been used in many Shakespearean plays such as *Richard III and Julius Caesar*, and most famously in *Macbeth*. In *Macbeth*, it is the title character that experiences several hallucinations including that of his friend Banquo, who is representative of Macbeth's guilt. For Lady Macbeth, the blood that she sees on her hands is a clear indication of the guilt that ultimately leads her to her death. There is also Macbeth's famous dagger speech in which he is confronted by a hallucinatory object.

Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee.
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain? (II, i. 33-39).

In this passage, Macbeth states that he sees the dagger before him but understands that it is a simply a trick of the mind. Macbeth's hallucination provides the audience with a vivid image of his inner thoughts and the war that is conflicting inside him. While the focus of Macbeth's speech is a hallucinatory object, the power it holds in demonstrating his wandering mind is undeniable; the presence of the hallucinatory object encourages Macbeth to action. The difference between a hallucinatory figure and a ghost lies in the plan of the character. In *Macbeth*, we are invited to watch as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's mental states breaks down due to the presence of their hallucinations, but in *Hamlet* the ghost is not a representation of Hamlet's deteriorating mind. The Ghost appears with plans that encourage Hamlet to action. "If thou didst ever thy dear father love-[...] Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder. [...] Murder must foul, as in the best it is; But this must foul, strange and unnatural" (I.V. 708-713). It is the Ghost that demands that this murder be avenged and not a discovery that Hamlet makes it is easy to see the difference between a hallucinatory figure and a ghost. A hallucinatory figure is a clear mark of an individual character's psyche but the ghost is an employee brought forth to have his or her needs achieved.

The hallucinatory figure nowadays represents the struggles ordinary people face in their everyday lives in order to find success and fulfill their rightful place in society. Society views those who have hallucinated experience as either blessed by the divine or marked with evil. On the contrary, hallucinations are neither divine nor evil but they

are a projection of the human psyche. Despite being in society, people still have quick judge on hallucinations since they categorize them as abnormal and seek to separate them from normal people. In Mary Chase's *Harvey* and David Auburn's *Proof*, we are confronted with an individual who hallucinates and is thereby marked as abnormal, yet who also has the power to alter society's judgmental look.

In his work *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Michel Foucault states that there was a great discussion on madness and reason:

In the serene world of mental illness, modern man no longer communicates with the madman; on the one hand, the man of reason delegates the physician to madness, communicates with society only by the intermediary of an equally abstract reason which is order, physical and moral constraint, the anonymous pressure of the group, the requirements of conformity. As for a common language, there is no such thing; or rather, there is no such thing any longer; the constitution of madness as a mental illness, at end of the eighteenth century, affords the evidence of a broken dialogue, posits the separation as already effected, and thrusts into oblivion all those stammered, imperfect words without fixed syntax in which the exchange between madness and reason was made. The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness, has been established only on the basis of such silence (x-xi).

It was the enforcement of mental institution that silenced this argument and exiled madness (Whitebook 319). Around the eighteenth century, as Foucault states, society began to alter its view on some of those who were different by labeling them as unreasonable, insane, or mad. This change in perception eventually led to the "gradual, localized, and piecemeal" process of separating people who are mentally ill from normal society (Caputo 236).

Lennard Davis in his "Constructing Normalcy" points out that if we look at "the word 'normal' as 'constituting, conforming to, not deviating or different from, the common type or standard, regular [or] usual', it is easy to see that anyone deemed as living outside of this construct may be ostracized, especially if the construction of normality implies that the majority of the population must or should somehow be part of the norm" (3, 6). The interesting parallel that relates Davis to Foucault is that with the creation of normal we are confronted with its binary opposite, "abnormal", which must exist in order to establish the norm. Foucault performs the same kind of operation with respect to

reason: madness is the opposite of reason. Therefore, he defines the two binaries (reason/madness and normal/abnormal) establishing the idea that those who fail to conform, must live outside of normal or reasonable society (3).

Madness is not a medical term. It is a commonsense category, reflecting our culture's recognition that Unreason exists, that some of our number seem not to share our mental universe: they are 'irrational', they are emotionally withdrawn, downcast, or raging; their disorderly minds exhibit extremes of incomprehensible and uncontrollable extravagance and incoherence, or the grotesquely denuded mental life of the demented. (Scull 2)

People are conditioned to care about what others think. Tim Stanly confesses: "After all, people seem to have an inherent desire to compare themselves to others. But the idea of norm is less a condition of human nature than it is a feature of a certain kind of society" (230). Hallucinations according to society are more often considered to portend madness or something horrible happening to the brain --- even though the majority of hallucinations have no such dark implications.

Harvey and *Proof* contain interesting parallel ways with the representatives of social norms who interact with characters that see a hallucinatory figure. Neither Elwood nor Catherine seem to take much stock in what society thinks of them and both possess unique and exceptional gifts that cause them to be ostracized. Elwood's belief in the presence of a large, white Pooka forces him outside of society's embrace though he is considered to be an exceptionally kind and caring individual. Catherine's aggressive behavior, lack of formal education, and mathematical genius cause her to be deemed abnormal. The societies in both *Harvey and Proof* are portrayed as cruel and harsh in contrast to these uniquely gifted characters. Representatives of social norms seek to isolate Elwood and Catherine instead of allowing their gifts to be developed. Chase and Auburn make it clear that these gifts might move society forward, suggesting that it is society, not those unusually abnormal, that should change.

In both plays, the central characters are considered to be abnormal, yet both possess unique and exceptional gifts that, if left to the devices of society, would be locked away forever. For both Elwood and Catherine, the arrival of their hallucinatory figure is due to the loss of a parent. As an ever-present issue disturbing American life, the need to fit in and be accepted to societal pressure can force those outsiders of the norm to experience a mental break, resulting in the presence of a hallucinatory figure. It is through the construction of their hallucinatory figure that the

audience is forced to consider if it is the individual or society that should change.

In Chase's *Harvey*, we are introduced to Elwood, whose kindhearted nature allows him to greet everyone he meets as a potential friend. He is a lovable eccentric who has as his closest friend an invisible six-foot white Pooka named Harvey. As Elwood is not in the business of being impolite, he introduces his hallucinatory figure to several people, causing them to run away from Veta's (his sister) social gathering. Fed up with the effect of Harvey on social lives, Veta moves Elwood committed to a local sanitarium. After a series of comic encounters, Veta goes to release Elwood after she finally understands who and what Harvey is.

Defined as a "mischievous fairy creature that comes from Irish mythology" a Pooka is a shape shifter that can appear in any form (Upstage 6). For Elwood, Harvey takes the shape of six-foot and one half-inch tall white rabbit. According to society's judgment, a man whose constant companion is an invisible white rabbit is troublesome. Although there is no six-foot white Pooka that physically appears on the stage, his presence is established by Elwood, who addresses him directly and often carries his hat and coat for him. There is only one moment where the audience is allowed a visual of Elwood's hallucinatory friend. This visual comes in the form of an oil painting that displays "Elwood seated on a chair while behind him stands a large white rabbit, in a polka-dot collar and red necktie" (Chase 43). While it is suggested that this painting only exists because Elwood has enough money to convince an artist to create it, it is more likely that Harvey is much more than just an imaginary friend that Elwood employs to keep him company. He is also a hallucinatory figure that may serve a wider purpose for the whole society.

Before Harvey's arrival, Elwood seems to have been praised for his manners and kindness. After exhibiting the bizarre behavior of seeing Harvey, however, he is labeled "the biggest screwball in town" (3, 6, 35).

JUDGE: I always liked that boy. He could have been done anything-been anything-made a place for himself in this community.

MYRTLE: And all he did was get a big rabbit.

JUDGE: He had everything. Brains, personality, friends. Men liked him. Women liked him. I liked him.

MYRTLE: Are you telling me that once Uncle Elwood was like other men-that women actually liked him-I mean in that way?

JUDGE: Oh, not since he started running around with this big rabbit...Of course there was always something different about Elwood (35).

Elwood was adored by the community and seemed to have a glorious future ahead of him, but with Harvey's arrival everything had changed. People change their mind about Elwood, twisted him from a beloved member of society to the idiot person.

It is noted that Harvey's arrival corresponds perfectly with the passing of Elwood's mother. Veta notes that Elwood, who had never married, was very close to their mother and when she and Myrtle Mae came to live with Elwood after their mother's death she noticed Harvey's appearance (13,15). It is obvious that Harvey's arrival paved the way for Elwood's loneliness and as Sacks points out in *Hallucinations*:

Especially common are hallucinations engendered by loss and grief.... Losing a parent...is losing part of oneself; and bereavement causes a sudden hole in one's life, a hole which-somehow-must be filled. This presents a cognitive problem and a perceptual one as well as an emotional one, and a painful longing for reality to the otherwise. (231)

Harvey, as Elwood's hallucinatory figure, acts not only as a friend but as a comfortable person to Elwood:

Harvey and I sit in the bars and we have a drink or two and play the jukebox. Soon the faces of the other people turn towards mine and smile. They are saying 'We don't know your name, Mister, but you're a lovely fellow'. Harvey and I warm ourselves in all these golden moments. We have entered as strangers-soon we have friends... They talk to us.... Then I introduce them to Harvey. And he is bigger and grander than anything they offer me. (Chase 54)

Harvey is a tool that helps Elwood psychologically through the grieving process. Harvey's appearance is a result of the passing of Elwood's mother. He appears directly after her death; therefore, he can be identified as a construct of Elwood's grief.

The society in *Harvey* is included of selfish individuals who wish for nothing outside of their own needs. However, because of the society's view against Elwood, they insist that he should be removed from society, considering him as a deviant. Veta, whose biggest concern is getting social recognition, cares little of how her brother's life would be affected if he were institutionalized. She takes the first step separating Elwood from society. She locks him in the study of their home to ensure that he can do no further damage to their social lives as she states that Elwood's behavior is "a slap in the face to everything we've stood for in this community" (14). After this initial act of separating Elwood from the rest of society, she then attempts to place him in Chumly's Rest, a sanitarium for mentally ill patients. For the concern for how society views Elwood,

Veta finally admits that her desire to commit him is more for her benefit than his. "I want him committed out here permanently, because I cannot stand another day of that Harvey" (14). Yet while she is there, she admits that she sometimes sees Harvey, "Every once in a while, I see that big white rabbit myself...he's every bit as big as Elwood says he is" (15). This admission lands her in the institution instead of Elwood. After Veta is released, she claims that Elwood is a dangerous person, but the truth is that he is only dangerous to their social standing. When Elwood is finally confined to the sanitarium, Veta pushes herself to believe that she wants Harvey gone, "I never want to see another tomorrow. Not if Myrtle Mae and I have to live in the house with that rabbit" (66). But it is not Harvey that she wishes to expel from the house as much as she longs to have her social life back. "Our friends never come to see us-we have no social life; we have no life at all. We are both miserable" (66). However, once she realizes that Elwood is who he is because of Harvey, she turns against society's judgmental gaze and decides that living outside the norm is not so bad. It is not until Veta chooses to embrace a life outside the norm and give up her selfish that she is able to understand the power of Elwood's hallucinatory figure.

Myrtle Mae is another representative character of society who seeks to separate abnormal from normal society. Her inability to see beyond her own needs and desires establishes her as the self-absorbed and unkind norm of society. Although she is of an age to meet young men, they often run away shouting "That's Myrtle Mae Simmons! Her uncle is Elwood P. Dowd-the biggest screwball in town" (3). She is unpleasant when all she done is whine and insist that Elwood needs to be locked away or somehow removed from their lives. Her insistence is rooted in her selfish desire to have the estate turned over to her mother so that they may enjoy the freedom of travel and societal acceptance (35). Chase is making a point which is although Myrtle Mae serves as society's voice, it is she who is a deviant. Through her behavior, the audience is invited to see her selfishness as anti-social. Elwood is nothing but kind and caring towards his deviant niece, often given her money and asking after her well-being. Myrtle Mae aptly demonstrates that it is not Elwood who needs to change but those around him.

Dr. Chumley who is a psychiatrist and the head of the sanitarium believes in separating those who are labeled as deviant from society. He becomes obsessed with locating Elwood, believing that he is a threat and the sanitarium is the only place he belongs (41). However, in his pursuit of Elwood, Dr. Chumley meets Harvey. This encounter makes him the third person to "see" Elwood's hallucinatory figure. Even if he believes in

Harvey or not, Dr. Chumely searches for a way to rid himself of the white Pooka. While Dr. Chumely tries to rid himself of that rabbit figure, the audience finally sees the appearance of Harvey. “Rattle of the doorknob. Door opens and shut, and we have heard locks opening and closing and see light from hall on stage. The invisible Harvey has come in. There is a count of eight while he crosses the stage, then door of Chumley’s office opens and closes with sound of locks clicking. Harvey has gone in” (56). Harvey has opened the society’s eyes to the possibilities of his existence. This physicalization suggests that Harvey has become more real over the course of the play, opening the minds of the audience to his existence.

Fearing from losing touch with reality, Dr. Chumley hopes that if he expels Elwood from his sanitarium, things will return to the way they were. But, as Dr. Chumley begins to realize the impotence of Harvey and his ability to stop time and predict future, he suggests to separate Harvey from Elwood. Dr. Chumley is willing to free Harvey in order to stay with him, “I’ve got to have that rabbit!” (65). He does not understand the relationship between Harvey and Elwood. Harvey came to Elwood in the first place precisely because he needs nothing from him other than his companionship. With Harvey, Elwood is perfectly happy just as he is, convincing the audience that being a part of the established norm does not always provide a full life. Sometimes living outside of society provides much more clarity on the important things. “My mother used to say me... ‘In this world, Elwood, you must be oh, so smart or oh, so pleasant’. For years I was smart. I recommend pleasant” (64).

Through statement like this, Chase indicates that the social norm isn’t desirable. Elwood is a kind and gentle person always eager to make a friend perhaps because he is different from other. Through the character of Myrtle Mae, Veta and Dr. Chumley, we see that it is in fact the “normal” person who is selfish and deviant. Despite Elwood’s differences and his hallucinatory figure, it is better to be outside the norm, offering a new perspective to all, rather than to be selfish and unkind person. Perhaps it is better to believe in a hallucinatory figure and reject society’s judgment in order to live a happy life. The play ends with Elwood words: “I wrestled with reality for forty years, and I am happy to state that I finally won out over it” (70).

Much like Harvey, David Auburn’s *Proof* exposes society’s inability to understand anyone who might live outside of the norm. After giving up the majority of her adult life to care for her mentally ill father, Catherine, who is only twenty-five, lives in constant fear that she will one day follow in his footsteps. Being genius at the mathematical field, Robert’s mind began to deteriorate and he got mad. Robert suffered from

his own hallucinations while Catherine's hallucination was her father. The use of her father as the hallucinatory figure speaks to Catherine's fear that she cannot escape her genetic past. The role of the hallucinatory figure in *Proof* serves to give voice to Catherine's psyche. While Robert is a physically constructed hallucinatory figure that appears on the stage as a hallucination in the established present of the play, he also appears in flashbacks that provide the audience with a strong understanding of the close relationship they have.

The play begins with Catherine and Robert on the porch celebrating their birthday. Although this appears to be a routine conversation between the two of them, the reality is Robert has already passed away. As a hallucinatory figure, Robert exposes Catherine's fears through the conversation she is essentially having with herself, suggesting to the audience that Catherine may suffer from the mental state as her father. Apart from the lack of physical touch, there are few clues leading up to the revelation that has already passed away but their conversation reveals to some extent the genius that Catherine has inherited from her father. Mathematically computing the days lost to her depression, Robert, as an extension of her psyche, blames her for losing valuable time, "those days are lost. You threw them away. And you'll never know what else you threw away with them-the work you lost, the ideas you didn't have, discoveries you never made because you were moping in your bed at four in the afternoon...by time I was your age I'd already done my best work" (Auburn 8,9). Robert as Catherine's voice, exposes her fears and draws a parallel between her hallucinations and Robert's:

ROBERT: A very good sign that you're crazy is an inability to ask the question, 'Am I crazy?'

CATHERINE: Even if the answer is yes?

ROBERT: Crazy people don't ask. You see?

CATHERINE: Yes...No...It doesn't work...

ROBERT: Where's the problem?

CATHERINE: The problem is you are crazy! ...you admitted-you just told me that you are... you just said a crazy person would never admit it?

ROBERT: Well. Because I'm also dead. (11)

This revelation that Catherine has been conversing with her dead father, establishes him as her hallucinatory figure, while further indication to the fact that she may need psychiatric care. Catherine ascertains, through Robert's voice, that his appearance could be a very bad sign. Foucault's claim that a madman cannot distinguish truth from illusion, then

Catherine's ability to acknowledge that Robert is not actually there may, in fact, be a good sign that she is not mentally ill.

Like Elwood, Catherine's need for a hallucinatory figure is to fill the hole that is created when her father passed away. Catherine has lived with her father for twenty-five years it is not until his passing that she experiences any form of hallucination making him a construct of her grief and also her fear. Her strong desire for "reality to be otherwise" suggests why Robert appears to her as the father she knew and loved prior to his sickness as opposed to the mentally ill father she took care of (Sacks 231).

The appearance of Robert as a projection of Catherine's psyche is not the only hallucination the audience touches in the play. Robert, in his deteriorated mental state, is unable to separate truth from illusion and as such has begun the search for an elusive mathematical proof. Although his illness is not identified, it is clear that Robert suffered from hallucinations of his own. "He believed that aliens were sending him messages through the Dewey decimal numbers on the library books. He was trying to work out the code.... Beautiful mathematics. Answers to everything...plus knock-knock jokes" (16,17). Catherine, who shares much of her father's genius, wishes to avoid the stigma of his insanity, yet it is a constant battle.

It is obvious that "genius and madness seem to go just like two sides of the same coin" (Nettle 11). Catherine, who shares so much of her father's intelligence, may also share his fate. She has written a proof that could revolutionize the mathematical world making the connection between father and daughter even closer.

Catherine, in hope of providing her father with more personal care than the institution, was tenacious about keeping him at home. Her sister Claire seeks to discredit this belief by stating that although he stayed at home and had nine months of lucidity, it was not worth the years that Catherine wasted. This interaction between the two sisters shows their contradictory beliefs as to the power of hospitalization. Although Claire notices the similarities between Catherine and Robert, but she is not quick to admit that she has investigated resources that might help her sister. Claire's belief that the medical system can more worthily help the mentally ill establishes her as society's voice. Although it is not shown in the play that Claire acts out of selfishness or concern of herself like the characters in *Harvey*, she is ill-equipped to contribute anything more to the mental health of her family other than providing the medical care she believes they need.

What Claire fails to understand is that by keeping Robert at home, Catherine facilitated a few months of clarity for her father. Catherine firmly believes that if Robert had been institutionalized he would not have experienced those months of lucidity and the act of shutting him away would have prevented him from returning to work at the university. After Catherine had left Robert in order to pursue her own education, he relapsed into his mental illness and was never productive again (39). Claire, fearing that Catherine is exhibiting the same instability her father did, treats Catherine as a child. However, this treatment is dropped when she alerts Catherine to the fact that some offices stopped by to check on her after she exhibited some erratic behavior towards them. Catherine tries to explain that Hal, one of Robert's old students, was attempting to steal a notebook from their home. Not believing that Hal is real, Claire, who represents the society's voice, suggests that Catherine may be in need of care.

Claire also acknowledges her fear of Catherine's tendencies towards mental illness when she explains to Hal that Catherine inherited a great deal of Robert's genius. "I probably inherited about one thousandth of my father's ability... Catherine got more. I'm not sure how much" (58). In keeping with her belief that her father might have been better off if he had been placed in an institution, Claire seeks medical help for Catherine, hoping that removing her from the stresses of society might somehow help her avoid her father's fate. In selling the home that Catherine has lived in for years, Claire leaves her with no choice but to move to New York where Claire will be better equipped to handle Catherine and take care of her needs. Before leaving, however, Catherine decides to antagonize her sister by stating that she sees New York as nothing but "restraints, lithium, and electroshock" and she will quietly take the treatments the facilities prescribe to her as she blames all of her issues, not on her father, but as Claire (66). What Claire fails to understand is that Catherine simply needs to feel understood. When Catherine feels disregarded and degraded, she lashes out and fights against society's wish to contain her.

At the center of the entire conflict is the discovery of a mathematical proof, a proof that could completely revolutionize the mathematical world. When Catherine claims to have written the proof, both Hal and Claire refuse to believe her, each burdened by their own inadequacies. It is hard for Hal to believe that Catherine could have written the proof, considering that the notebook in which the proof was written was found in her father's desk drawer. After working for years on his Ph.D., Hal cannot invent a proof that is important to Catherine's one.

Believing that the only normal way for anyone to make any form of accomplishment in the field is through years of study, Catherine breaks his perceptions and forces him to come to terms with the possibility of her genius. Claire's inability to believe Catherine's claim of authorship is bound tightly to her belief that Catherine is becoming more and more unstable. Claire insists that medical treatment and being close to Catherine is the only way to help. Hal, however, begins to believe Catherine and attempts to reassure her:

HAL: There is nothing wrong with you.

CATHERINE: I think I'm like my dad.

HAL: You're not him.

CATHERINE: May be I will be.

HAL: Maybe. Maybe you'll be better (70).

As Catherine begins to embrace the genius that she inherited from her father and learns that she cannot live her life hindered by the fear of becoming him, we begin to understand that she has released the hallucinatory figure. Living with her father who was labeled as insane traps Catherine within her own discourse, causing her to adopt and fear the label once placed on her father. While it is unclear if Catherine will ever shake the stigma or ever stop fearing the possibility that she may share her father's fate, she has revolutionized mathematics, contributing greatly to the society that cannot accept her abnormalities and would wish to see her silenced.

The hallucinatory figures in *Harvey* and *Proof* expose the faults of society while also aiding the characters who see them. The loss of Elwood's mother coincides perfectly with Harvey's arrival. Catherine lessens the pain of losing her father by creating him as a hallucinatory figure, while also increasing her fear that she may indeed be more like him than she wishes to admit. While Elwood has chosen a life with Harvey, Catherine's hallucinatory figure is released when she comes to terms with who she is and let's go of the fears that have kept her from fulfilling her true potential. In spite that Catherine and Elwood live outside of society but they make unique contributions through their individual genius. While society has attempted to expel the abnormal from the rational world, it is the abnormal, or those who live outside the realm of normality, that have the greatest gifts according to *Harvey* and *Proof*. Through her mathematical genius, Catherine contributes a proof that revolutionizes the field while Elwood, through his compassionate and friendly nature, allows those he encounters to see the world through gentler eyes. Each character, individually, works to undo the stigmatization those considered abnormal have suffered.

In classical antiquity madness was a gift. As society's perceptions of normality changed so too did the world of people considered mad. Although their tones differ--*Harvey* being comedic and *Proof* dramatic--both look at society's efforts toward normalization. The hallucinatory figure exposes society's inability to accept what stands outside the norm. The existence of the hallucinatory figures allows the characters in Mary Chase's *Harvey* and David Auburn's *Proof* to see the world differently, not absent of reason but perhaps more enlightened.

The hallucinatory figure is a gateway into the psyche of the individual, a device that exposes the haunted mind and gives life to the inner workings of the character's troubled subconscious. The hallucinatory figure reveals the desires and fallacies that accompany American life. Whether the characters dream of receiving social acceptance, the presence of the hallucinatory figure marks a decided break from reality and exposes the hallucinatory quality of the American Dream.

Chase and Auburn are faced with many choices during the process of creation. Obviously, determining the number and nature of the characters in the play is an important one. The inclusion of a hallucinatory figure, whether linguistically or physically constructed, is significant. It clearly marks an opportunity for audience members to gain a deeper understanding of the hallucinatory character's innermost desires, fears, and failures. Physically constructed hallucinatory figures give the audience a visual of the character's haunted mind, providing a glimpse into his/her subconscious as it is breaking down. By using a linguistically constructed hallucinatory figure, the playwright is given the opportunity to create a figure that takes on many different shapes and meanings without ever compromising the realism of the production. However, a playwright chooses to construct a hallucinatory figure, it is difficult to ignore the power it carries and the way in which it exposes the complexities of life.

At the center of each of these plays is a family falling apart. This fact invites the audience to wonder why the family and the hallucinatory figure are so intricately linked. Of course, the family drama has been a part of American theatre for years but what the hallucinatory figure represents in relation to the family is all the more real and tragic. As each of these families strive to fit into ideal American life, or have their lives perceived by the existing society as fitting in, the hallucinatory figure reveals the futility of such attempts and the fallacy of their dreams.

The hallucinatory figure works to unmask a haunted mind, providing the audience with an image- either seen or imagined- of the

characters' private thoughts. For Elwood and his family in *Harvey* and Catherine in *Proof*, the hallucinatory figure reveals the fallacy of social acceptance and the accomplishments that can be made outside of society's judgmental gaze. In each play, a character works to deal with the intense emotions surrounding some kind of loss. These strong emotions are given embodiment through the emotions connected to it in order to dispel the hallucinatory figure and move on with life. It is through the acknowledgement of their grief or loss that the characters are finally able to release the pressures that have disturbed their lives and embrace a life that is free from hallucinations.

Loss is something that all humans have an experience with, and as art imitates life, it only seems fitting that the theatrical world would work to define this loss in some real way. Used as a means of signifying loss, the hallucinatory figure works to fill the hole left in the characters' lives and provides the audience with a look into their haunted psyches. When we look back on *Harvey* and *Proof* that have featured the hallucinatory figure, we will find that the figure is always representative of a loss of some kind that is experienced by the characters. It is time to pay attention to the abundance of hallucinatory figures in theatrical works and always gives the readers and audience main questions to answer, "where is the loss in the hallucinating character's life and how does the hallucinatory figure work to fill the hole created by that loss?". It is time also for society to open their minds and accept those who are seen as different by allowing the great debate between reason and madness to recommence.

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